



# NEWSLETTER



## Welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of the INTERVAL Newsletter

A lot has happened since the INTERVAL study finished in 2016 and we're excited to tell you how your participation is yielding results and facilitating future studies. **Thank you for all your help!**

### **INTERVAL main trial results**

In November 2017, the main results from the INTERVAL trial were published in *The Lancet*, one of the world's oldest and best known medical journals. In over 100 years of blood donation practice, INTERVAL is the first-ever trial to assess the impact of varying the frequency of blood donation on donor health and the blood supply. Results from INTERVAL have shown that more frequent blood donations from donors can be done without causing harm to donor health. These findings have provided policy-makers with evidence that more frequent collection from donors than is now standard can be done over two years without causing harm to donor health, allowing better management of the supply to the NHS of units of rare blood groups.

You can find the full paper here: [www.intervalstudy.org.uk/files/2017/09/INTERVAL-Main-Results.pdf](http://www.intervalstudy.org.uk/files/2017/09/INTERVAL-Main-Results.pdf)

### **Research using data and samples from the INTERVAL study**

Data and samples collected during the INTERVAL study have been used for a variety of research purposes and are helping NHS Blood and Transplant to improve their service.

For example, in collaboration with investigators from Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, we have developed and validated a computer program that can comprehensively and cost-effectively determine blood group type with more than 99 percent accuracy. This study has shown how genetic techniques already at our disposal could be routinely applied to understand antigens, molecules in the blood capable of inducing an immune response. The immune system recognises antigens as foreign and thus it is important to know which antigens are found in donated blood. The study represents one of the first applications of using genomic information for routine clinical benefit.

We are also analysing data from Phase II of the INTERVAL trial. Results from this analysis will provide information on the acceptability and impact of donating more frequently over a longer time period and inform NHS Blood and Transplant on the most appropriate approach to remind donors about their donation appointments.



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## What else is happening?

### ***Linkage with electronic health records***

As you are aware, INTERVAL was designed from its inception to be a multi-purpose study. The initial purpose was related to improving the efficiency and safety of blood donation. Additional purposes include detailed study of the health of blood donors and studies of health-related outcomes. We will conduct such studies by linking data from INTERVAL to electronic health records using secure and anonymised procedures.

### ***Invitation to join a national bioresource***

INTERVAL donors can still join the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) BioResource, which is a national government-funded research initiative. By joining, you agree to be approached for medical research, in particular 'recall-based' studies in which you will be recruited according to specific characteristics (e.g. genetic, lifestyle, etc.). This approach can rapidly advance understanding of how diseases develop and, ultimately, improve their prevention and treatment. If you are interested in learning more, please visit: <https://bioresource.nihr.ac.uk/>

### ***General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)***

You are probably aware of the GDPR, which is a new regulation in EU law on data protection and privacy for all individuals. You will have received numerous emails from organisations, telling you how they have updated their policies. In regard to the INTERVAL study, you do not need to do anything as your samples and data will continue to be stored securely, in compliance with the consent form that you signed at the beginning of the study and the GDPR. Your data is anonymised and unique identifiers are stored separately from samples and data. If you have any questions or concerns, however, please do contact us: [donorhealth@medschl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:donorhealth@medschl.cam.ac.uk)

### **Find out more**

As an INTERVAL participant we will continue to update you on the study. Published papers will be posted on our website: [www.intervalstudy.org.uk/publications/](http://www.intervalstudy.org.uk/publications/) and we'll let you know, by email, when they are available. To make sure you receive our emails, please let us know if you change your contact details.

If you are interested in our research on blood donor health, please visit the website of our Unit, the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Blood and Transplant Research Unit (BTRU) in Donor Health and Genomics: [www.donorhealth-btru.nihr.ac.uk/](http://www.donorhealth-btru.nihr.ac.uk/)

We are active on Twitter—please follow us: @DonorHealthBTRU