SEPAC

Screening and Early Detection to Prevent Anal Cancer; development of a biomarker screening tool

Participant Information Sheet

We are inviting you to take part in a research study

- You are being invited to take part in the SEPAC study, a clinical study for HIV-positive men and transgender women (male at birth) who have sex with men, aged 40 years or older.
- We are inviting 1000 HIV-positive participants to take part.
- We hope that this study will provide evidence that is needed to introduce a screening programme for anal pre-cancer in the UK, and therefore help to prevent anal cancer in the future.
- This study is conducted by University College London (UCL) and it is funded by Cancer Research UK.
- Before you decide whether or not to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you.
- Please take time to read this information sheet carefully. Discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.
- You are free to decide whether or not to take part in this research study. If you choose not to take part, this will not affect the care you get in the clinic in any way.
- You can stop taking part in the study at any time, without giving a reason.
- Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.
- Thank you for reading this. If you decide to take part you will be given a copy of this information sheet and asked to sign a consent form. You'll get a copy of that as well. You should not sign the consent form until you have read this information sheet.

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How to contact us

If you have any questions about this study, please talk to your doctor or nurse:

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1 What is the purpose of the study?

Anal cancer is rare but more common in people living with HIV compared to the general population. At present there is no screening programme for anal pre-cancer or cancer.

Most anal cancer is caused by HPV (human papillomavirus). HPV is the name of a group of viruses that includes strains that cause cervical cancer in women, as well as strains that cause genital warts.

Most people with HPV will never know it, and the virus is cleared without any treatment. In a small number of people high-risk strains of HPV cause abnormal cells that may lead to cancer, including in the anal canal. HIV-positive people may take longer to clear the HPV infection, increasing their risk of developing cancer.

About half of HIV-positive men and one in five HIV-positive women have cell changes in their anus caused by HPV, and those with abnormal cervical smears may be at a higher risk for anal cancer, regardless of whether they have ever had anal sex. HIV-positive individuals may be at higher risk of developing abnormal cell changes called **anal intraepithelial neoplasia, or AIN**. These pre-cancer changes can lead to cancer after many years.

We are asking eligible individuals if they would like to take part in this study. If you agree, you will have a clinical examination to check whether you have AIN or not.

As part of the examination you will have swab samples taken to see if there are abnormal cells in the anus, and other laboratory tests that may help us develop a better screening method to detect AIN.

2 Why have I been invited?

You are being invited to take part in this study because:

- You are an HIV-positive man or transgender woman (male at birth) who has had sex with men and aged 40 years or older
- You have no previous diagnosis of anal cancer
- If you have had AIN diagnosed before, you have not received surgical or laser treatment to the area

- You have not had other treatment for AIN in the last 12 months

If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to change your mind and withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

3 What do I need to know about the procedures in this study?

During the examination for the study, the clinician or nurse will take up to two swab samples from inside your anus (anal canal) for anal cytology (like a smear test), and up to two swabs for other lab tests that may detect anal pre-cancer. The clinician will also carry out a careful examination of your anal canal and the skin around it (perianal skin) using a microscope. This procedure is called **high-resolution anoscopy (HRA)**.

If the clinician suspects there are any AIN changes, they will take a tiny (1-3mm) sample of tissue (biopsy) from the affected area for further analysis by a pathologist. A digital ano-rectal examination (DARE) will be performed as well; the examiner will insert a finger into the anus to check for any lumps that may be a sign of cancer. You will be given a copy of your clinic's HRA examination information leaflet before the examination.

During the examination, the clinician or nurse will also take a blood sample. This will be used for lab tests to assess what part the immune system may have in development of AIN. The amount of blood you will be taken will be about 10mLs (approximately 2 teaspoons).

Most participants will be examined once. However, if AIN changes are detected during the first study visit, you will be invited to re-attend approximately 6 months later, for a second check.

In the case you are only seen once, your participation in the study will last for approximately 1 month from the time you sign the consent form. If you are invited for the second study visit, you will remain in the study for approximately 8 months.

In the rare event that either the swab samples or the biopsies (if taken) show inconsistent results you may be invited to attend for a repeat first study visit within 2 months of receiving your results.

With your permission we will collect some medical information (e.g. your last and lowest ever CD4 count) from your clinic records. If the clinic team conducting the HRA does not have access to your clinic records, with your permission, they will contact your HIV doctor to request this information.

We may also request some information from you during your assessment that may not be in your clinic records. The information will be stored securely by the research team at UCL. This information will not have your name on it.

With your permission the research team at UCL will securely store your personal details (clinic number, full name, month and year of birth, email address, mobile number and NHS number) in order to contact you about possible follow-up. A member of the clinic team will transfer the information securely to the study coordinator at UCL.

We would also like to be able to check for relevant information about your health from national cancer registries, e.g. the National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service (NCRAS), on occasions after you have joined the study. This will help us understand the long-term risk of anal cancer development.

We will inform your usual HIV clinic doctor about your participation in the study, and the results of tests. If you agree, we will also inform your GP; you will need to indicate on the consent form whether you want us to write to your GP.

4 What would happen next if I was found to have anal pre-cancer?

Previous research has shown that up to a third of patients undergoing screening for anal pre-cancer are found to have high-grade AIN. These pre-cancer changes can lead to cancer after many years, but they may also resolve on their own without any treatment.

If your biopsy results show the presence of anal pre-cancer a member of the clinical or research team will contact you and discuss the results with you. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss any concerns you may have, and be referred for further support if appropriate.

You will be invited for the second study visit in approximately 6 months' time. The procedure at the second study visit will be the same as the first visit, excluding the blood sample, which will only be collected once.

In the very rare event that your test results show that you may already have an anal cancer, the study doctor will discuss this with you and refer you to see a cancer specialist within 2 weeks under NHS referral guidelines.

5 What will I need to do if I take part?

There is nothing in particular you need to do, other than follow the instructions on the HRA examination information leaflet before the examination and attend your study appointment. Specific instructions on when and how to get to your appointment will be provided by a member of the clinical or research team.

6 Are there any disadvantages or risks in taking part in this study?

No major adverse effects are expected from taking part in this study.

Patients often find the HRA procedure uncomfortable, although it is usually very well tolerated. Potential risks relating to HRA and biopsy are bleeding or infection, but these are extremely rare. Taking blood can be uncomfortable, but rarely results in any serious problems. Side effects include feeling light-headed or faint, fainting, formation of a blood clot/bruising, or infection where you were injected. The study examinations will be carried out by highly trained members of the team who have extensive experience of conducting HRA. It is extremely unlikely that you will develop any serious complication from the procedures in this study.

7 What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We cannot say that there is any direct benefit to you from participating in this study. In the very rare event that we find anal cancer, it is likely that it will be small, relatively easy to treat and detected earlier than if you were not part of the study. There is no payment for participating in this study.

8 Are there any alternatives to this study if I do not take part?

Currently, there is no screening programme to identify individuals with anal pre-cancer or cancer in the UK. Patients who are diagnosed with high-grade AIN disease (anal pre-cancer) are mostly identified because they have been referred to a specialist clinic with anal symptoms or found by chance when having surgery for another reason.

9 What will happen when the research stops?

There is currently no standard treatment for anal pre-cancer that has been shown to prevent anal cancer from developing. Some clinics offer topical or laser treatment to clear the pre-cancerous AIN disease. We do not know whether this will prevent future anal cancer. Most commonly, patients are monitored regularly for signs of new disease. After this study is finished, you will be offered follow-up and/or treatment according to current practice. This may include referral to another centre for treatment.

The research team responsible for the SEPAC study is also developing further studies to investigate how best to monitor patients with AIN, and early treatment studies. At the end of this study, with your permission, a member of the clinical or research team may contact you about these further studies. You will then be able to consider whether you want to take part.

If you decide not to allow us to contact you about future studies, then we will abide by your wishes and not contact you. You do not have to give a reason, and the standard of care you receive will not be affected. You will be asked about this on the consent form that you will need to sign before you are entered into SEPAC study. Even if you decide not to agree to future contact, you can still participate in this study.

10 More information about taking part

Do I have to take part?

No, it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

If you decide not to take part, you will continue to receive standard care at your clinic. A decision to not take part will not affect the care you receive in any way.

Can I stop taking part after I've joined the study?

Yes, you can stop taking part in this study at any time and without giving a reason. You can talk to your study doctor or nurse first. They can advise you about any concerns you may have. A decision to stop taking part at any time will not affect the standard of care you receive. If you would rather receive 'standard care' in the NHS your study doctor will be able to advise you.

Will I receive my anal cytology and biopsy test results?

You will be given your anal cytology and biopsy results, but you will **NOT** receive other test results as these are research tests and are not part of standard care. This will not affect the care you receive or how your specialist doctor decides to manage your case.

What will happen to any samples I give?

A blood sample, anal swab samples, and in certain cases biopsies, will be collected as part of this study. Some samples will be for routine testing, while others relate to this study. Samples collected for this study will be regarded as a gift from you to the SEPAC study team.

After any routine tests in the local laboratory, swab samples will be transferred to Queen Mary, University of London (QMUL) or its partner institution at University of York for further processing. After testing, the samples will be stored securely and indefinitely at QMUL. The blood sample will be securely stored at UCL.

Samples remaining after testing for this study may be used for further research, subject to additional ethical approval. All research samples will be identified only by the laboratory number, your study number and initials. They will not have your name on them, to protect your identity. By signing the consent form, you are giving your permission for your samples to be stored and/or tested.

What will happen to information about me collected during the study?

All information about you, including the laboratory test results and medical information, will be sent securely to the SEPAC research team at UCL. Only clinicians and other NHS staff will have direct access to your medical records.

What will happen to information collected about me after the study?

UCL is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom. We will be using information from you and your medical records in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. UCL will keep identifiable information about you for 20 years after the study has finished.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible.

You can find out more about how we use your information by contacting data-protection@ucl.ac.uk

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) will collect information from you and your medical records for this research study in accordance with our instructions.

CNWL will use your name, clinic number, NHS number and contact details to contact you about the research study, and make sure that relevant information about the study is recorded for your care, and to oversee the quality of the study. Individuals from UCL and regulatory organisations may look at your medical and research records to check the accuracy of the research study. CNWL will pass these details to UCL along with the information collected from you and your medical records. The only people in UCL who will have access to information that identifies you will be people who need to contact you about the research study or audit the data collection process. The people who analyse the information will not be able to identify you and will not be able to find out your name, NHS number or contact details.

CNWL will keep identifiable information about you from this study for 5 years after the study has finished.

When you agree to take part in a research study, the information about your health and care may be provided to researchers running other research studies in this organisation and in other organisations. These organisations may be universities, NHS organisations or companies involved in health and care research in this country or abroad. Your information will only be used by organisations and researchers to conduct research in accordance with the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research.

This information will not identify you and will not be combined with other information in a way that could identify you. The information will only be used for the purpose of health and care research, and cannot be used to contact you or to affect your care. It will not be used to make decisions about future services available to you, such as insurance.

What will happen to the results of the study?

When the study is completed, we will report the findings at medical conferences and publish the results in medical journals, so that other healthcare professionals and researchers can see them. We will also present and discuss the findings at clinics' user group meetings. Your identity and any personal details will be kept confidential. No named information about you will be published in any report of this study.

Who has reviewed the study?

All research in the NHS is looked at by an independent group of people called a Research Ethics Committee (REC) to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed by the London-Westminster REC, which has given a favourable opinion on conducting this study in England.

If you have any concerns?

If you have any concerns about the way you have been approached or treated during the study, please talk to your study doctor or nurse. If you are still unhappy, or if you wish to complain, please use the normal NHS complaints process.

For any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact: PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service)

Tel: 0300 013 4799 or email: feedback.cnwl@nhs.net

In the unlikely event that you are harmed by taking part in this study, compensation may be available. If you suspect that the harm is the result of the Sponsor's (University College London) or the hospital's negligence then you may be able to claim compensation. After discussing with your research doctor, please make the claim in writing to Dr Richard Gilson (r.gilson@ucl.ac.uk) who is the Chief Investigator for the research and is based at University College London. The Chief Investigator will then pass the claim to the Sponsor's Insurers, via the Sponsor's office. You may have to bear the costs of the legal action initially, and you should consult a lawyer about this.

How have patients and the public been involved in this study?

The research team at UCL conducted group presentations and workshops with HIV clinic users while developing a proposal for a similar study which included the requirement to undergo HRA examination. The experiences from those meetings helped to design this study.

The SEPAC project oversight group has a patient representative who has reviewed the study documentation, including this information sheet.

11 Contact for further information

Research Nurse Deirdre Sally : 07471 032319

Support, advice and information is also available from:

- NHS CHOICES: https://www.nhs.uk

This completes the Participant Information Sheet.