**RHEUMAPS study**

(RHEUmatic and musculoskeletal conditions: geographical MApping of Prevalence and outcomeS)

**Public and Patient Involvement**

The rural population is older and growing at a faster rate compared to urban areas. Musculoskeletal diseases are the commonest cause of disability in the elderly. For those with Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Diseases (RMDs), diagnostic and treatment delays are associated with poorer outcomes. In addition, many individuals are older and have other complex health care needs. Most specialist services are located in urban areas, yet up to one third of the UK population live in rural areas.

This creates significant challenge to delivering care. Furthermore, the current COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant disruption to usual health and social care and is impacting differently on different groups of the population and within different parts of the country. The impact of the pandemic on the ability to meet the healthcare needs of people with RMDs is unclear.

In order to achieve equitable access to care for everyone, no matter where they live, and help plan services, we first of all need to understand how many people there are with RMDs living in rural versus urban settings, their health outcomes and the ways in which they use and access healthcare.

To do this, we will use routine health care data across general practice, hospital outpatient and inpatient care in Scotland and Wales. We will work with people with RMDs living in rural areas to understand their experiences and priorities for care and design a survey to explore the priorities for care of patients with RMD living in rural areas across the UK.

The information we gather will be used to support service planning and decision-making for people living in rural settings. It will also help us understand the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on care for people with RMD.

**Are you interested in being involved with our work?**

We are looking for members of the public to advise and join our research team. We are committed to involving people with a personal experience of a rheumatic condition at every stage of the research. We know this will make our research stronger and hope you will find it a worthwhile use of your time. You can find out more about the study here: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/iahs/research/epidemiology/mapping-rmd-study-1688.php>.

**What skills do you need?**

You might have a rheumatic condition, look after someone with a rheumatic condition, or have a relative who is affected. You don’t need any particular skills except for an interest and enthusiasm for the study. You will also need an email account and access to the internet. Reasonable payment will be made to cover your time and expertise.

**How would you like to get involved?**

We have three main ways to get involved – let us know what would suit you best by indicating yes /no in each box. Or please let us know if you have any other suggestions about what you could do:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ways of being involved** | | **What you would need to do** | **Yes / No** |
| 1 | Join our PPI Group | Provide a patient / public perspective to our meetings, either by telephone or videoconference (no travel required) |  |
| 2 | Offer occasional or one-off advice on our research design, ideas and findings | Read and consider study related documents, suggest comments and/or improvements. Provide patient / public perspective on research ideas and findings |  |
| 3 | Dissemination of results | Take part, and suggest ways in which the results of the study can be communicated to patient groups and the public in order to maximise the impact of the study |  |
| Any other suggestions: | | | |

**What happens next?**

Please complete and return this form by email to [RheuMap@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:RheuMap@abdn.ac.uk). If you agree, we will keep your contact details so we can get in touch with you when an opportunity arises and matches your interests. Your details will be kept securely on a password protected area which is restricted to our patient and public involvement team.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Email Address** | **Home Address** |
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**Privacy information:**

The University of Aberdeen is the sponsor for these research-related patient and public involvement (PPI) activities. We act as the controller under data protection law. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

We will keep information about you for a maximum of 2 years after your last contact with us for PPI activities. Whilst under our control, the University will not disclose your information to anyone else, other than if we are required to do so by law.

You can withdraw from taking part in PPI activities at any time by emailing us at [RheuMap@abnd.ac.uk](mailto:RheuMap@abnd.ac.uk). For further details on how we handle your information, and about the rights you have to control your information, please see our privacy notice at <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/iahs/research/epidemiology/privacy-notice-1601.php>