



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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Blood left over from routine patient tests could help research

Patients are being invited to donate blood left over from routine tests as part of a wider scheme to aid medical science.

The scheme – which involves researchers from the University of Edinburgh – is creating a confidential database of people in Scotland who are in principle willing to take part in medical research studies.

Now people registering for the scheme – called the Scottish Health Research Register (SHARE) – are being asked to donate their leftover blood samples for use in research.

The Scotland-wide initiative marks the first time leftover blood samples will be used in this way. The collaboration between Universities and the NHS in Scotland is supported by NHS Research Scotland and funded by the Chief Scientist Office of the Scottish Government.

More than 55,000 people have signed up to the register, which aims to recruit 100,000 people before the end of the year.

By signing up, people aged 16 or over agree to be contacted about participating in medical studies. They allow SHARE researchers to access coded information in their medical records to see if they might be suited to taking part in health research studies. Their records remain confidential throughout.

If a person is identified as potentially suitable, they will be contacted by SHARE, told about the study and invited to take part.

Participation in the research can be as simple as filling in a lifestyle questionnaire about diet and exercise. Those with specific illnesses may be approached to take part in a trial for a new therapy.

Healthy people may also be invited to take part in research for comparison.

This latest development means that people who register for the scheme grant permission for their blood to be passed to scientists, without the need for an additional sample to be taken.

Professor Brian McKinstry, of the University of Edinburgh and lead Director of SHARE, said: “Having a list of potentially interested volunteers with links to their health history will

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be an incredibly powerful tool for medical science. It will help make Scotland a world leader for medical research.”

A recruitment campaign in South East Scotland for SHARE: The Scottish Research Register will be launched at a civic reception hosted by the Right Honourable Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, on Thursday 19 March.

Professor Sir John Savill, Head of the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, has already opted to join SHARE and is urging others to follow suit: “This is an invaluable initiative that we hope will strike chords with the unselfish and altruistic nature of the Scottish people.”

The RT Hon Lord Provost, Donald Wilson, said: “Scotland has always been known as a pioneering place for medicine and this initiative will be the first of its kind. It is so easy to sign up and those who do will be helping to develop medical research. I am delighted to help launch the register in the Lothians, and I urge people to consider registering for SHARE in order to help Scottish science.”

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SHARE website: www.registerforshare.org/