Staff Information Sheet

At the Molecular Psychiatry Laboratory, University College London, we are researching the genetics of Bipolar Affective Disorder and Schizophrenia. We have recently received a grant from the Stanley Foundation, in the United States of America, to increase recruitment of patients.

What do we do with patients:

- Interview using the SADS-L (Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia, Life-time version).
- Ask about medication history and side effects.
- Ask them to donate a blood sample and, in some cases, a saliva sample.
- With their consent, gain access to their case notes and score an OPCRIT.

What do we do after they have been involved:

- The DNA samples are used to look for mutations in specific genes.
- If a mutation is found, we can then analyse how that might influence the function of the protein it codes for.

What is happening now:

We have been looking at Ankyrin-3 (a gene which codes for Ankyrin-G protein). Ankyrin-G is known to modulate the influence of Lamotrigine on sodium channels. Through this research, it may be possible, in the future, to modify the effect of Lamotrigine when it is prescribed by clinicians for patients. Although we are not aiming to find predictive tests for Bipolar Disorder or Schizophrenia, we are hoping that we will be able to minimise (or potentially eliminate) side effects of treatments.

Inclusion criteria:

At the moment, we are looking for patients over 18 with an ICD-10 or DSM-IV diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder or Schizophrenia. They must be of European ancestry with at least 3 British grandparents. This enables us to avoid confounding ancestral genetic differences from differences related to mental illness. This makes it easier to identify mutations in the most scientific way.

What you need to do:

If you have suitable patients who are willing to be involved contact:
The Research Team on Research@kmpt.nhs.uk or KMPT Assistant Clinical Research Coordinator Paul Heron Paul.heron@kmpt.nhs.uk 01622 723 100 x 212, or our Principal Investigator in KMPT Professor Hana Soliman Hana'a.Soliman@kmpt.nhs.uk on 01322 622230

You can also speak to the study team on 020 3108 2193.