



MRC Lifecourse
Epidemiology
Centre



University of
Southampton

Newsletter

2023

Coming Soon – Hertfordshire Cohort Study webinar! Wednesday 14 June, 5.30pm–7.00pm

Last year we asked you whether you would like to hear more about some of the findings that have emerged from the research you have helped us with over the years. Many of you said that you would like us to arrange a webinar, and we are delighted to confirm that we have now fixed a date – this will take place on Wednesday 14 June, 5.30pm to 7.00pm by zoom. It will be recorded for anyone who cannot join but would like to view it after the event. As well as a number of short presentations from our researchers,



it is also an opportunity for you to ask us some questions. The full programme, and details of how to sign up are listed on our website: <https://www.mrc.soton.ac.uk/herts/contact/register-your-email-for-hcs-webinar/>. Please register if you would like to attend, and please do share the word with your families.

A New Director for the MRC Lifecourse Epidemiology Centre!



After serving as director of the MRC LEC for the last 20 years, Professor Cyrus Cooper is stepping down. Everyone receiving this newsletter will remember his messages of thanks at the start of each one. Throughout his career Cyrus has contributed substantially to the global understanding of the diseases of musculoskeletal ageing, including being key in the definition of osteoporosis and sarcopenia, and it is difficult to imagine where musculoskeletal research would be without him, he will be greatly missed. He is now succeeded by Professor Nick Harvey, who is

Professor of Rheumatology and Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Southampton. Nick has been a key member of the team at the MRC LEC for over 15 years and we look forward to welcoming him to his new role as Director as we continue to work with the Hertfordshire Cohort Study.



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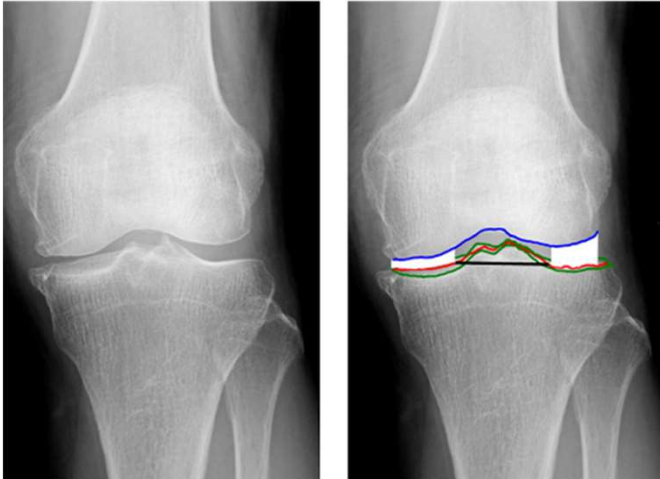


www.mrc.soton.ac.uk/herts/



@MRC_LEU #HertsCohort

International Collaboration with the University of Tokyo



Many of you will remember having knee x-rays as part of the Hertfordshire Cohort Study in 2011-2012 and answering questions on whether you had any pain or limited movement in your knees. These x-ray images are being used in an exciting international collaboration with researchers at the University of Tokyo. The images are fed into a computer program in Tokyo that automatically calculates the space between the bones in the knee joint, and the size of any bony growths called osteophytes that may have formed in the

joint. We plan to examine whether these measurements are related to knee pain and function. This research has the potential to improve the objectivity and accuracy regarding the diagnosis of knee osteoarthritis. We would like to offer a big thank you to everyone who helped us with this work.

Hertfordshire Cohort contributes to genetic study of the effect of heart medication on bone

Scientific research benefits a lot from collaboration and the Hertfordshire Cohort Study is proud to be part of several international groups including the CLOSER consortium. Applications to work with us are passed to a senior researcher and considered on a case by case basis. One recent example of this working well is a recent study of how heart medication might impact bone health. There is a theory that beta-blockers, a type of medication which acts on the heart to reduce heart rate and lower blood pressure, may influence bone cells. One way to investigate this further is by looking at genetic markers but these types of study are difficult because the findings need to be replicated (repeatedly seen) in different populations. A US study had found some potential genetic targets to investigate the theory above but needed to see whether they were also present in other populations and so the Hertfordshire Cohort Study teamed up with cohorts in Rotterdam and Malta to investigate this. This research will contribute to finding targets which may be relevant to our understanding of heart and bone diseases.



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