



## PRESS RELEASE: SCOT STUDY 4000<sup>th</sup> PATIENT

A major research project into the safety of long term pain relief for sufferers of arthritis has taken a significant step forward this week with the recruitment of its 4000<sup>th</sup> patient volunteer.

The SCOT study is designed to examine the effectiveness and safety of drugs commonly used to treat the pain of arthritis. Patients in the East Midlands are being invited to join the study, which could benefit millions of arthritis sufferers around the world.

*"This study is designed to answer an important scientific question, which has the potential to improve the care of the thousands of arthritis sufferers across the UK. It is the first large-scale safety study of its kind, and really will make a difference to future prescribing within primary care."* Professor Chris Hawkey, Professor of Gastroenterology, University of Nottingham

The group of drugs most commonly prescribed to treat the pain of arthritis, Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) includes familiar names such as ibuprofen (Brufen®) and diclofenac (Voltarol®) which are commonly used to relieve joint pains. Often they do that job well, which is why they are so popular.

Millions of prescriptions are written in the UK every year for NSAIDs, not counting all the ibuprofen sold 'over-the-counter' in pharmacies and shops. Despite this, like all drugs, NSAIDs can have side effects. These include irritation of the digestive system and effects on blood pressure and the heart.

In recent years a new group of NSAIDs has been developed called 'Cox-2 inhibitors'. These Cox-2 inhibitors have been shown to be less harsh on the digestive system than the most popular existing NSAIDs, leading to fewer stomach ulcers and bleeding. However, early studies on one of these new drugs suggested an increase in the risk of raised blood pressure and heart problems, but the balance between benefits and possible risks is not known.

The aim of the SCOT study is to find out if celecoxib - the most widely prescribed of the Cox-2 inhibitors - is better, worse or just the same as the other available NSAIDs in terms of cardiovascular and digestive system safety.

The SCOT study, led by Professor Tom MacDonald, of the Medicines Monitoring Unit at The University of Dundee, is supported by seven other Universities and

research institutes across Scotland, England, Denmark and the Netherlands, making it one of the biggest ever studies run by a Scottish university.

Professor Chris Hawkey, of the Nottingham Digestive Diseases Centre at Nottingham University Hospital (QMC), is running the SCOT study locally, and has successfully recruited over 200 patients and 25 GP practices around the Trent area. He hopes to recruit 1,000 patients over the next year.

“This information will be of great value to everyone who needs to take these drugs on a regular basis, which is millions of people around the world. The findings will allow doctors and people with arthritis to make the best choice, not just for their joint pains but also for their general health,” said Professor Tom MacDonald, lead researcher on the SCOT Trial, based at the University of Dundee.

Recruitment of volunteers and GP practices to the study is still taking place, so if you are interested in taking part in the SCOT study, speak to your GP directly to ask if they are taking part, or check the website for details ([www.scottrial.co.uk](http://www.scottrial.co.uk)) or email [info@scottrial.co.uk](mailto:info@scottrial.co.uk) or telephone 0115 823 1053.

#### Notes to editors

- **Arthritis affects around 10 % of adults at some time in their life.**
- **Diclofenac and Ibuprofen account for around [INSERT %] of all NSAID prescription in [INSERT COUNTRY HERE]**
- **Celecoxib accounts for around [INSERT %] of all NSAID prescriptions in [INSERT COUNTRY HERE].**
- **The SCOT Study is currently running in over 470 GP centres across Scotland, the Midlands, Yorkshire, and the Home Counties of England and across Denmark & The Netherlands.**
- **The SCOT study is sponsored by The University of Dundee, and supported locally by The University of Edinburgh, The University of Glasgow, The University of Aberdeen, The University of Birmingham, The University of Nottingham, The University of Odense Denmark and Julius Clinical Research (The Netherlands)**
- **The SCOT study is funded by an investigator initiated grant given to The University of Dundee by Pfizer.**
- **The protocol, all data and results are owned by the SCOT study steering committee and are not owned by Pfizer**
- **The current patent for Celecoxib expires in 2014, allowing the drug to be produced generically and sold at a significantly lower price, slashing the price the NHS has to pay.**