

# NEW PROGRAM COULD SAVE NHS MONEY AND IMPROVE PATIENTS' HEALTH

Submitted by: VR.PR

Monday, 2 February 2009

---

A FOOD INTOLERANCE CLINIC IN EVERY GP PRACTICE?

NEW PROGRAM COULD SAVE NHS MONEY AND IMPROVE PATIENTS' HEALTH

February 2, 2009

A program to train practice nurses to run food intolerance clinics in every GP practice, based on a three year research project at the University of Surrey, was launched on Friday January 30, by FAIR the Foundation for Allergy Information Research.

Research undertaken for the project showed that nearly 40% of the patients in primary care who responded to a postal questionnaire believed themselves to have health problems. Of these 33% attributed their problems to a food intolerance while 70% said they would be interested in attending a food intolerance clinic.

For the project, four nurses were trained to operate intolerance clinics across the UK. The clinics offered individual sessions with the food intolerance nurse who took a detailed history while the patient was asked to fill in a food and symptom diary. All patients were then put on a two-week healthy-eating diet. This proved to have a significantly beneficial effect on the health of over 50% of the participants.

Patients who feel no better on the healthy eating diet were then put on a two-week wheat and dairy-free diet. Of those who completed the two-week wheat and dairy-free diet 49% felt that their symptoms had improved.

Patients who derived no benefit from either diet could then be referred on for further investigation.

The benefits of the program include:

1. A significant improvement in patient health. Over 70% of those who attended the clinics during the research project felt markedly better. If they had been previously been seeing their GP, they could now be discharged.
2. Cost of implementation. The only investment required to roll out the program is the relatively modest cost of training the nurses (3 days over a period of 6 weeks) and the nurses' time to run the clinics.
3. Savings. Significant savings in terms of GP appointments and prescriptions for previously 'difficult' patients with unresolved health problems who could now be discharged.
4. Clarity. A small but significant number of patients with other or more serious problems could be identified and referred on for further investigation.

The training program, based on the research project, is now being developed. It has already been accredited by the Royal College of Nursing and will be rolled out across the UK beginning in the spring of this year.

Hazel Clayton, Director of FAIR said the proposed Practice Nurse training program, would now go ahead in the spring of 2009. The program which has been accredited by the Royal College Of Nurses will be launched in England, and will provide training for dedicated nurses to operate food intolerance clinics within each PCT throughout the country. The aim is eventually to have a practice nurse qualified to conduct a Food Intolerance Clinic, in every GP surgery.

For more information on the Food Intolerance Practice Nurse Training Program:

Hazel Clayton  
Director, FAIR  
h.clayton@allergyresearch.info

01750 21838 07773 872197

For summary of the research findings:

<http://www.allergyresearch.info/main/university-of-surrey/20090129200214/>

Note to Editors:

The Foundation for Allergy Information and Research conference was held in London at The Royal College of GPs on Friday the 30th January to announce the findings of the three year research PROGRAM conducted on behalf of FAIR, by Surrey University. The meeting was chaired by Roger Jones, Professor of General Practice and Primary Care, Kings College, London and the papers were presented by Professor Jane Ogden, who led the program, and her researchers Joe Pope and Mia Nelson.