

## **NIHR and NHS press release**

**STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL: 00:01 Saturday 13 March 2021**

### **UK COVID-19 research passes one million participants**

More than one million participants have now taken part in COVID-19 research across the UK, the National Institute for Health Research and NHS can proudly announce.

NIHR data shows that a total of 1,075,000 participants have taken part in COVID-19 research, across more than 180 studies. Of these, more than 100 studies were funded by the NIHR, amounting to more than £108 million given to dedicated COVID-19 research.

This remarkable feat has been achieved across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales by members of the public, NHS doctors and nurses, NIHR research staff and researchers, regulators, life science companies, research funders and policy makers.

Their efforts have enabled world-leading research into therapeutics such as dexamethasone and tocilizumab, delivery of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, and more. Ground-breaking platform studies such as RECOVERY, PRINCIPLE and REMAP-CAP have all made a significant contribution to the global understanding of COVID-19.

These discoveries have significantly improved outcomes for people who get the virus, especially those most at risk of becoming severely unwell and hospitalised. Without such significant support from the public, this vital research would not have been possible.

To coincide with the announcement of one million participants, the NIHR and NHS are jointly launching the #ResearchVsCovid 'thank you' campaign to celebrate the efforts of participants, researchers and healthcare professionals for their involvement in COVID-19 research. People are encouraged to join in with their own thank yous to anyone they know who has been involved in COVID research in some way.

The campaign kicks off with a series of video thank yous to participants, researchers and NHS staff. These celebratory videos will feature well-known figures including England's Chief Medical Officer Prof. Chris Whitty and NHS England Chief Executive, Sir Simon Stevens, and will draw attention to the incredible work and dedication that led to this research.

#### **Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer for England and co-lead for the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), said:**

"Reaching one million participants in COVID-19 research shows the impressive selflessness of people across the UK who have volunteered to take part. This research has led to vaccines, better treatments and improved care.

"A huge thank you to everyone who has taken part in, led or enabled the research."

#### **NHS chief executive Sir Simon Stevens said:**

"During the darkness of this pandemic, NHS clinical researchers, UK scientists and one million volunteer patients have together helped illuminate a more hopeful path for humanity.

"Thanks to their remarkable and selfless work, they have made unique and decisive contributions to therapies and vaccines for our shared global fight against Covid-19. It is amazing to consider that more than one million people in this country who have selflessly volunteered to participate in our research will themselves help save over a million lives worldwide."

## #ResearchVsCovid - key statistics

**\*All data correct as of 9th March 2021\***

- A total of 1,075,000 participants have taken part in COVID-19 research, with 925,505 participants recruited to over 90 urgent public health (UPH) COVID-19 research studies;
- 149,286 participants have been recruited to 89 COVID-19 non UPH studies;
- 34,527 participants have been recruited to eight COVID-19 vaccine studies;
- £108.4 million of funding from the NIHR and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has been provided to over 100 new, dedicated COVID research studies. These figures do not include pre-existing studies that were repurposed to deliver research into COVID-19 having previously been focused on other issues. (For a further breakdown see notes below.)
- Minority ethnic participation in UPH therapeutic and vaccine studies was 9,915 - approximately 9% of the total.
- The UK has achieved 'first global' recruitment in at least six studies, meaning the UK was the first country to recruit a participant to a global study.

## Case study

Katherine and Paul Millbank's story - Dexamethasone

It was when Paul gave permission for his wife Katherine to take part in a COVID-19 medical trial that her health quickly improved. Katherine was administered [dexamethasone](#) on the 3rd April - identified as the first drug to improve survival rates in certain coronavirus patients used in the NIHR-funded and supported study RECOVERY (Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 thERapY) - and in the space of just a week, Katherine went from being well, to becoming very unwell and admitted to hospital, to being "at death's door", and finally to having a "massive recovery" and sent home by the 10th April 2020 - her birthday.

While Katherine was unconscious for much of the time, at one point in a coma, Paul spoke regularly with the extremely supportive staff at Stoke Mandeville hospital. "I was told I should be prepared for either outcome in a 50/50 scenario", says Paul about Katherine's prospect of getting better. "I was told Katherine was on the cusp of getting to the point where her situation was unrecoverable. How quickly she came around was because of dexamethasone," he says.

"There's a big sense of relief going from the feeling of crying to friends and family, and hugging her clothes to be close to her, to having your wife sit on the settee again on her 55th birthday."

### Thank you

Katherine, who also took part in the Genomicc study, says it can't be underestimated how grateful she was to have been included in the RECOVERY trial. "Till the day I die, I'll be eternally grateful to the NHS and the ICU team - I call them my angels because of their dedication. And Oxford University and the research team for all the hard work they've done. All three should be attributed for saving my life."

Paul echoes his wife's gratitude to the NHS: "Everybody I spoke to - from the moment I rang 111 to all the way when Katherine was in ward 7, through ICU and into ward 4 and all the doctors afterwards, was amazing. One of the most touching things was when I sent an Amazon gift list to all my friends and they all chipped in, and I was told that the staff area at the hospital was absolutely full of chocolates, hand sanitisers, face masks, coffee - the lot. We need more people in research than ever, it's to the benefit of all of us."

**Katherine and Paul are available for interview**

**Also available for interview:**

- Professor Anthony Gordon, Chief Investigator of the REMAP-CAP study.

Prof. Gordon can discuss the remarkable work done across the UK to set up and deliver vital COVID-19 research from an expert researcher's point of view.

**Assets** - including video thank yous from Prof. Chris Whitty and Sir Simon Stevens, and hi-resolution photos of Katherine and Paul Millbank can be accessed here:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cul2ukaz6b\\_pBvY7g\\_mmBjD9DatFafu](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cul2ukaz6b_pBvY7g_mmBjD9DatFafu)