RIGHT-2

South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS) is among 8 ambulance trusts in the UK taking part in vital research to address questions that clinicians and researchers have about the use of a medicine called glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) in the early phase of stroke. A growing body of scientific evidence suggests that GTN may be beneficial to patients suffering stroke by lowering blood pressure and that the earlier this can be given the better. A patch, which is cheap and readily available, could be a simple new way for paramedics to routinely treat patients in an ambulance following a suspected stroke.

The study is sponsored by the British Heart Foundation and led by the University of Nottingham. SCAS will take part between March and May 2018.

Background

Stroke is a common and devastating condition. It affects 1 in 6 people and leads to death in 25% of cases and dependency one year post-stroke in 40% of cases. The success of new treatments in hospital is limited due, in part, to the delay from symptom onset by the time the patient reaches hospital.

How the trial works

In addition to standard care provided to patients suffering acute stroke, patients attended by ambulance in the south Buckinghamshire area within 4 hours of having a stroke will be assessed for their eligibility to take part in the trial. Those who are eligible will be provided with information about the trial and their consent to take part sought. Some patients, due to their stroke symptoms, may be able to provide consent but unable to sign a consent form. In these situations a witness will be able to sign the form on the patient's behalf. Where a person is unable to weigh up the information provided in order to make a decision regarding consent, this will be sought from a relative. This is termed 'proxy consent'. Where no relative is available a paramedic may grant proxy consent. In all cases the patient will be followed up in hospital and their consent sought to continue in the trial.

Where consent is granted, a small patch will be applied to the patient's shoulder. This is a single blinded, placebo trial. The crew will administer trial medicine via a patch from a "trial pack". The crew will know what the patch contains (either GTN or placebo) but the patient won't – which refers to "single blinding". This will be followed in hospital with further patches over the next 3 days. Patients' progress will be monitored during their hospital stay, at 90 days and 12 months poststroke.

The trial is being conducted to identify how best to treat people who have a stroke to ensure their best chance of surviving and long term recovery as a result.

Further information

For general information please visit the Nottingham university website at http://right-2.ac.uk/

If you have any queries about the involvement of a relative, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 0300 123 9280 or via patientexperience@scas.nhs.uk