



Embargo

11.00am on Monday, September 25th

**BREAST CANCER PREVENTION TRIAL STARTS
IN NORTH EAST**

A NEW Cancer Research UK trial, seen by experts as the next big step in preventing breast cancer, was launched in the North East on Monday, September 25th.

Five women are diagnosed with breast cancer every day in the North East and 42,000 are diagnosed with the disease in the UK each year.

Two women from South Tyneside and one from Teesside joined breast cancer surgeon Professor Tom Lennard and Vikki Bridgett, research nurse, at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Newcastle, to promote the trial known as IBIS-2.*

Ann Brown, 60, from Whitburn, Patricia Hasler, 60, from Jarrow, and Judith Warriner, 57, from Stockton on Tees, were the first women the sign up for the study in the region.

IBIS-2 is the first trial ever to investigate whether a breast cancer treatment drug called anastrozole can prevent the disease in postmenopausal women at higher risk of developing breast cancer.

Previous research on the drug as a treatment for early breast cancer showed that it reduced the risk of developing another cancer in the opposite breast by over 50 per cent but this will be the first time the drug is being investigated as a preventive measure.

The IBIS-2 trial started in the UK in 2004 but this is the first time that women in the North East have been offered the chance to take part.

The study is open to women aged 40-70 years old, who have passed the menopause, have a strong family history of breast cancer or who have been told by their doctors they have other risk factors. This includes women whose mother or sister had breast cancer or ovarian cancer by the age of 50 or under.

Tom Lennard, Professor of Breast and Endocrine Surgery at Newcastle University and the Royal Victoria Infirmary, said: "We are happy to be part of such a pioneering study which could prove so important to women who are at higher risk of developing breast cancer. We feel that this study has the potential to change many lives and help lead to thousands fewer women in the UK from developing breast cancer each year."

Researchers are looking for 6,000 women worldwide to take part in the prevention study. There are currently 18 countries taking part in the trial and 37 trial centres in the UK alone.

The study will compare anastrozole with a placebo and look at how many women develop breast cancer as well as any side effects of the drug. Although only half of the women on the study will receive anastrozole, all of the women will receive a bone scan, a mammogram and the best available care.

Researchers from the Royal Victoria Infirmary are encouraging women interested in joining the study, to come forward and find out whether they are eligible.

Vikki Bridgett, research sister at the Clinical Research Facility at the RVI, added: “We are keen to hear from women who are interested in joining the new trial. Please call us if you would like to find out more or discuss if this trial is suitable for you.”

Cancer Research UK is the leading funder of research into breast cancer in the UK, spending £25 million last year on this form of cancer alone. The IBIS-2 trial is one of the ways that Cancer Research UK is supporting research into the prevention of the disease.

During October, breast cancer awareness month, Cancer Research UK’s All Join Together campaign hopes to engage women, men and children in pink-themed fundraising activities to support research into breast cancer.

Women can find out more about the IBIS-2 study by ringing Vikki Bridgett at the Clinical Research Facility at the RVI on 0191 282 0070 or visiting www.ibis-trials.org

IBIS-2 Fact File

- IBIS-2 is a breast cancer prevention trial supported by Cancer Research UK
- IBIS-2 is now open to women in the North East
- To take part, you need to be aged 40-70, have passed the menopause, have a strong family history of breast cancer or have been told by your doctors that you have other risk factors.
- This includes women whose mother or sister had breast cancer or ovarian cancer by the age of 50 or under.
- The IBIS-2 study is investigating whether a breast cancer treatment drug called anastrozole can prevent the disease in postmenopausal women at higher risk of developing breast cancer.
- Five women are diagnosed with breast cancer every day on average in the North East and 42,000 are diagnosed with the disease in the UK each year.
- To find out if the trial is right for you, call Vikki Bridgett at the RVI on 0191 282 0070 or visit www.ibis-trials.org

ENDS

For media inquiries please call Julia Haran, Cancer Research UK Regional Press Manager, on mobile 07900 137 935.

Notes to Editors

- IBIS-2 stands for International Breast Cancer Intervention Study II.
- Anastrozole’s trade name is Arimidex. It is one of a group of drugs called aromatase inhibitors. In post-menopausal women, an enzyme called aromatase is the main source of oestrogen. Aromatase inhibitors block the action of aromatase, reducing the levels of oestrogen in the body.

- The International Breast Cancer Intervention Study 2 (IBIS-2) has been designed to investigate the new breast cancer treatment drug, anastrozole, as prevention in women who are at an increased risk of breast cancer due to family history and other risk factors but have never had the disease.
- There are currently 18 countries taking part in the trial and 37 trial centres in the UK alone.
- The study is looking to recruit 6,000 postmenopausal women with a greater chance of being diagnosed with breast cancer. Details about risk are given on www.ibis-trials.org.
- The IBIS-2 study is a randomised, blinded placebo controlled Phased III clinical trial. The trial will run until 2008. Initial results are expected in 2010.

About Cancer Research UK's All Join Together campaign

- Cancer Research UK's All Join Together campaign aims to make all women aware of their risk of breast cancer and to raise funds to fight the disease, which is now the most common cancer in the UK.
- During October, breast cancer awareness month, Cancer Research UK's All Join Together campaign hopes to engage women, men and children in pink-themed fundraising activities to support research into breast cancer.
- To find out more and register for a fundraising pack visit www.cancerresearchuk.org/breastcancer or call your local fundraising office on 08701 60 20 40.
- One in nine women will develop breast cancer at some point in their lives. A woman's risk of the disease increases with age – the older the woman, the higher her risk. For example, a woman's risk of developing breast cancer by the age of 30 is around 1 in 2,000 but by the age of 60 it's around 1 in 25.
- Eight out of ten cases of breast cancer are diagnosed in women over fifty.
- Cancer Research UK is the leading funder of breast cancer research in the UK, spending £25 million last year. This work covers all aspects of the disease, from understanding its molecular causes and investigating new ways to prevent and diagnose the disease, to developing improved treatments and researching the psychological aspects of breast cancer.
- For further information on Cancer Research UK's All Join Together campaign visit www.cancerresearchuk.org/breastcancer