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Press Release

RNHRD LEADS NATIONAL RESEARCH INTO THE IMPACT OF PSORIATIC ARTHRITIS

A team at The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS Foundation Trust (RNHRD FT), known locally as 'the Min' is spearheading a national research project looking at new ways to measure how Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA) can affect a person's life and ability to work.

Psoriatic arthritis (PsA) is a disease where joints around the body become inflamed and sore. It can develop at any age and makes moving about difficult and painful. People who have PsA also have, or will develop, the skin condition psoriasis.

Dr Will Tillett, Research fellow from the RNHRD says "There are physical ways we can measure PsA, for example counting affected joints and performing blood tests but we can get a much more complete understanding of how active and severe their condition is by assessing other aspects such as a person's overall quality of life and physical function.

The research will provide valuable information to ensure patients are getting the best treatment for their condition."

Unemployment levels are high amongst those with PsA and this is likely to be related to the severity and duration of the condition.

Dr Tillett goes on to say : "We'll be looking at the effect PsA has on a person's ability to work to get a better understanding of the condition and the treatments we can offer."

This study, called LOPAS II (Long Term Outcome in Psoriatic Arthritis Study) is a national multicentre trial which is extremely ambitious in design and scope. It will involve hospitals across 18 different areas of the country from Barnstaple to Newcastle. Professor Neil McHugh, Consultant rheumatologist and head of the connective tissue diseases team at the RNHRD and Dr Tillett are heading up the study from the lead site in Bath.

400 patients will be asked to take part in the research over the next year. Detailed information on their arthritis will be collected at their clinic appointments as well as information regarding quality of life and ability to find work. The study will report on its findings after the participants have been followed for two years.

Professor Neil McHugh says: "As a specialist hospital, research and development is an important part of our work at the Min. Many of our employees are leading experts in their field and are members of national research bodies or specialist organisations. Research informs our treatment programmes and contributes to a better understanding of many of the conditions we deal with."

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Press contact:

Emma Mooney, Marketing and Communications Manager RNHRD
01225 465941 ext 299 emma.mooney@rnhrd.nhs.uk

Or Caroline Kenny, Marketing and communications officer RNHRD

01225 465941 ext 278 caroline.kenny@rnhrd.nhs.uk

Notes for Editors:

- The RNHRD NHS FT is a national specialist rehabilitation and rheumatology hospital based in Bath. Offering services to adults, children and young people, the trust has expertise in general and complex:
 - Rheumatological and musculoskeletal conditions
 - Neurological rehabilitation
 - Chronic pain management
 - Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME
- RNHRD's Bath Psoriatic Research Unit is based at the Bath Institute for Rheumatic Diseases (BIRD)
- Rheumatology is a key specialism of the RNHRD, including inflammatory joint diseases such as PsA. Our expert team of clinical colleagues use their well-established expertise to provide specialist services on an inpatient, day-case, outpatient and outreach basis for adults, children and adolescents.
- The study has been funded by Abbott pharmaceuticals and supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) through the Comprehensive Clinical Research Network.