

Research Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully, discuss it with others if you wish and decide whether or not you wish to take part. Please contact a member of the research team (Dr Daniel Horsfall [REDACTED], daniel.horsfall@york.ac.uk) if there is anything that is not clear or you require further information. Thank you.

The purpose of this research is to explore the impact upon the National Health Service (NHS) of people deciding to travel overseas for treatments, such as dentistry, cosmetic surgery, fertility treatment or hip or joint replacement. We have chosen these and other treatments as they may have implications for the NHS.

So far, little is known about how and why people make the decision to travel overseas for treatment, what the financial implications are for the people travelling overseas and the NHS, and how the medical tourism industry is developing.

We plan to discuss these matters with people who have experienced treatment overseas, people who work within the NHS (hospital managers), and people who represent professional bodies (British Fertility Society), and members of the medical tourism industry (agents/brokers).

It is anticipated that there will be much interest in the research findings, particularly from NHS policy managers, regulators, commissioners, clinicians and consumer interest groups. We plan to disseminate the research findings through policy, academic and stakeholder conferences and publications. We will provide details on how and where the project findings are being disseminated through the dedicated project website: <http://www.medicaltourismresearch.co.uk/>.

We would like to interview you about your experiences, whether positive or negative, of deciding to have treatment overseas. If you agree, a member of the research team will contact you to arrange a date, time and place which is convenient for you both to meet.

Beginning of the interview

You will be asked to read and sign a consent form explaining that the interview is anonymous, confidential, voluntary and tape-recorded. However, you will be free to withdraw your consent at any time, without giving a reason.

Your involvement in the research must be entirely voluntary. Therefore it is important that you understand by taking part in this research, you will not receive any medical or clinical benefits, nor any financial incentive or compensation. Your medical records will not be accessed and any treatment you might be having will be unaffected.

During the interview

The interview is likely to last around one hour. If at any point you find the interview distressing, the interview can be stopped if you wish. The interview is intended to be relaxed and informal. Participants from similar sorts of projects have likened the experience to having an in-depth conversation. One member of the research team will guide the conversation to relevant topics for the research, although you will be invited to raise areas relating to medical tourism that you deem significant based upon your experiences.

After the interview

The recording of the interview will be copied to a secure computer at the University and given a code to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The interview recording will be typed up by a professional transcriber who is known to the research team. She has also signed a confidentiality agreement approved by the NHS National Research Ethics Service. The audio recording of the interview will be deleted.

It is important to the research team that we disseminate the project findings with those who have chosen to take part in the research. We plan to update the website regularly throughout the project and will send you details of the address if you choose. However, if access to the internet is restricted for you, we will discuss alternative methods with you during the interview.

During the lifetime of the project, the interview data will be the responsibility of Dr Neil Lunt. When the funding for the project finishes in September 2012, the Principal Investigator, Dr Neil Lunt, will have sole responsibility for the data, which will be kept on his password-protected University computer for up to 3 years to allow for the dissemination of the project findings.

The research began in November 2010 and is funded by the National Institute for Health Research until October 2012. The research team involves 7 members at 5 Universities (York, Royal Holloway, Birmingham, Sheffield, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine). Ethical approval has been sought from the University of York Humanities and Social Science Ethics Committee and the NHS National Research Ethics Service. If you have any comments regarding the conduct of a member of the research team, please contact the Principal Investigator, Dr Neil Lunt ([REDACTED] neil.lunt@york.ac.uk) in the first instance. If you wish to discuss the research with someone other than the research team, please contact the York Ethics Committee ([REDACTED]).