



Title:
Genomic and lifestyle predictors of foetal outcome relevant to diabetes and obesity and their relevance to prevention strategies in South Asian peoples

Short title:
GIFTS

Project No.:
FP7-278917-GIFTS

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Euro 3.89 million

EU Contribution:
Euro 3.0 million

Coordinator:
Professor Graham Hitman,
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University of London

Project Manager:
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Start:
01 February 2012

Duration:
36 months

Website:
<http://www.gifts-project.eu>

GIFTS Project Update: The GIFTS programme, funded by a FP7 EU grant, brings together investigators from South Asia and Europe with wide-ranging expertise to investigate early life programming to improve diabetes prevention strategies in people from South Asia. The project started in February 2012 and we have now entered our 2nd year. Below we have reported some updates from different partners but a lot more can be found on our website www.gifts-project.eu. GIFTS has also been mentioned in the South Asian Network for Asian Disease (SANCD) Bi-annual newsletter, a copy of which can be found in the Media Centre on the GIFTS website.

18 month Project Report: in July 2013 we have submitted a progress report to the European Union (EU) with a detailed update on all the work packages. A summary of the report can be found in the Media Centre section of the GIFTS website. As a whole the GIFTS programme has progressed well and the report has been accepted by the EU. Further to this we are now in the process of submitting some minor amendments, including a request for a 12 month non-paid extension to account for some delays we had in setting up the intervention studies in Bangladesh due to the instable political situation. We now have Ethical clearance and the interventions are due to start in the next month.



Baseline studies of lifestyle and nutrition: Novel cohorts of pregnant South Asian women have been established in Bangladesh (n=386) and Pakistan (n=255) and are in progress in Norway (n=40) and the UK (n=224). Baseline data has been collected on women and their newborns including: anthropometry, blood tests and health, lifestyle and dietary questionnaires. Establishing these cohorts has not only resulted in a unique data set but it has also provided an in-depth insight into the practicality of conducting clinical research in these communities/environments and the challenges which may be encountered. The picture above shows some investigators and staff involved in the running of the studies in Bangladesh and Norway, meeting with Prof Graham Hitman at a visit in Dhaka.



Qualitative studies: The qualitative study based at Newham Hospital is going very well. The aim of this research is to explore the experience of Asian women with current or past diabetes in pregnancy, and use these findings to make interventions and services more patient centred. The team has now decided to carry out some narrative interviews with some women in order to validate these findings. The team working at the University of East London have conducted 30 individual interviews with South Asian women with recent pregnancy experience. Data analysis has begun and researchers are exploring further some of the themes, which have emerged through the focus group discussions with women of Bangladeshi and Indian origin. They will then focus on analysing and writing up the findings. A parallel study will also be conducted in Oslo.

Childhood Outcomes: In Bangladesh, the Perinatal Care Project GIFTS Survey is also progressing very well. The aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of participation in women’s groups on nutritional phenotypes/anthropometry and genetics of children born subsequent to exposure to the Perinatal Care Project., which run from January 2009 to June 2011 in 3 rural districts of Bangladesh, compared with children born to women in control areas, who did not receive the intervention. Buccal smear samples for genetic and epigenetic analysis have been collected on all children (n=2,559) as well as anthropometric measurements. DNA extraction is currently underway at Queen Mary University London while the team in Bangladesh is busy carrying out the Statistical analysis of the collected dataset.



Dissemination: The website was re-launched. Updates from the 18 months reports, integration of social media, an overview about important conferences in the field of diabetes and a few new features have been released. To find out more about GIFTS please visit our website: www.gifts-project.eu.

An e-learning portal targeting everyone working in the field of diabetes prevention providing the newest information and useful tools and the results from the GIFTS project is right now in the development process and will be available for free in the near future.

New coordinator: Finally I would like to share with you my little news, which is that I have been appointed GIFTS Research Coordinator in January 2014. My name is Virginia Govoni, I came from Italy to UK about 6 years ago to study and develop my research experience in cardiovascular disease and risk prevention. I am based in our London offices at the Queen Mary University from where I am closely coordinating the London collection of Work package 2 and assisting Prof Hitman in the coordination of the whole GIFTS program. The whole team made me feel extremely welcome I am very excited about this position, I shall be doing my best to keep the project running to schedule and maintain a close collaboration with the partners. Please feel free to contact me by filling up the contact form on the website.