

Newsletter - October 2006

Collaborators' meeting: Wednesday May 10th 2006

We were delighted to welcome many of you to our collaborators' meeting in May. We hope that you enjoyed the opportunity to see our new building and to hear how the study is progressing. As in previous years, the meeting was chaired by Martin Vessey and Julietta Patnick; presentations included talks on HRT and histological types of breast cancer, on surgical management of breast cancer, on smoking and cancer, on pancreatic and ovarian cancers and on gallbladder disease. We hope to publish many of these results soon. The next collaborators' meeting will be held in 2008.

New publications

Since our last Newsletter three Million Women Study papers have been published. Two deal with methodological issues: a paper by Toral Gathani comparing the classification of Breast Cancer in screening clinic records and in ONS:

- Breast Cancer Histological Classification: Agreement between the Office of National Statistics and the National Health Service Breast Screening Programme. Breast Cancer Research 2005;7:R1090-R1096

and a comparison of self reported cervical smear histories from one of our follow up questionnaires and NHS records by Karen Canfell.

- The agreement between self-reported cervical smear abnormalities and screening programme records. J. Med Screen 2006 13:72-75

Emily Banks has also published a further paper on false positive recall following mammography.

- Hormone replacement therapy and false positive recall in the Million Women Study: patterns of use, hormonal constituents and consistency of effect. Breast Cancer Research 2006;8:R8

Blood collection in the Million Women Study

We are in the process of collecting blood samples from over 20 000 women in the Million Women Study. The aim is to extract and store DNA so we can include genetic factors in our analyses. We have begun collection in England, and will proceed to Scotland later on this year. Selected women are sent an invitation to

provide a blood sample and a further questionnaire to complete; they then go to their GP to have the sample taken. We are indebted to the GPs and practice nurses throughout the country who have agreed to help; without them we would not be able to collect blood from such a widespread study population. Samples are posted back to our laboratory where they are processed prior to DNA extraction. We hope that the results from this part of our study will provide us with a greater insight into the separate and joint effects (eg with other factors such as use of HRT) of genetic factors on susceptibility to disease within the Million Women Study.

Second general follow-up questionnaire

The whole cohort of 1.3 million women is being sent a second general follow-up questionnaire this year, on average 6 years since the first general follow-up (yellow). This new questionnaire (lilac) will provide us with updated and additional information on factors such as diet, exercise and general well being. It will also inform us of any incident illnesses and changes in diet or medication. A copy of the new questionnaire is available on our website in the questionnaires section.