

## **Newsletter – July 2019**

### **Save the date: Friday September 13th 2019**

For our next collaborators' meeting, here in Oxford. As before, this will be a joint Million Women Study/AgeX breast screening trial meeting. Invitations to follow.

### **New postal questionnaire**

Another postal re-survey questionnaire is currently being mailed out, twenty years after study recruitment. We are still getting a wonderful response from participants. Data collected repeatedly over many years is immensely valuable, especially now when supplemented by our online questionnaires.

### **Branching out: participant interviews**

One of the study Principal Investigators, social science epidemiologist Dr Sarah Floud, is piloting a new part of the study, interviewing women about their life experiences around retirement from paid work. The aim is to help assess the possibilities for health and lifestyle changes- and barriers to change.

### **...and a new Participant Panel**

Sarah is also setting up a new Participant Panel to help us as we further develop the study. The first meeting is planned for the autumn.

### **Diet and breast cancer- few associations**

The very large size of the study meant that we could look systematically at a wide range of foods, nutrients and dietary patterns- and we found that most were not related to breast cancer risk. By far the strongest link was **an increased risk with increasing consumption of alcohol** – as we had already found. Higher intakes of fruit and fibre were weakly associated with lower breast cancer risk, but these links may not be causal.

*Key et al, 2018, Int J Epidemiology*

### **Cancer risk in women breastfed as children – possible link with bowel cancer**

Women in the study who were breastfed as infants were about 20% more likely to develop bowel (colorectal) cancer and bowel polyps in adulthood- but there were no differences in risk for breast cancer or for 6 other cancers. These are novel findings which we hope may lead to further understanding of how bowel cancer develops.

*Yang et al, 2019, Eur J Epidemiology*

### **Smoking is associated with risk of interval, but not screen-detected, bowel cancers**

Using linked Million Women Study and NHS bowel cancer screening data, we compared risk factors for cancers found by screening with those diagnosed in the interval between screens. Smoking was associated only with interval cancer risk—a finding which fits with other evidence that different types of bowel tumour have different risk factors, and are not all equally well picked up on screening.

*Blanks et al, 2019, Int. J Cancer*

**Thank you to all our participants, friends and collaborators for your continued support**

For more of our recent papers, please visit the study progress section of our web site:

[www.millionwomenstudy.org](http://www.millionwomenstudy.org)

If you have any comments or suggestions, please email us on:

[millionwomenstudy@ndph.ox.ac.uk](mailto:millionwomenstudy@ndph.ox.ac.uk)