

ATHENA Study Participant Newsletter March 2024 Issue 6

ATHENA Shingles Study <athena-study@bristol.ac.uk>

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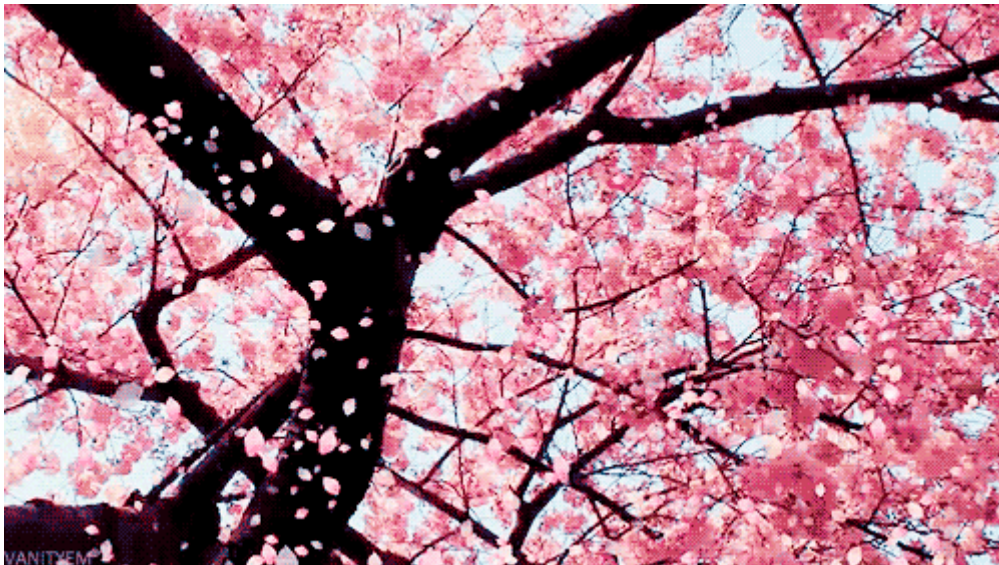
To:ATHENA Study Mailbox <athena-study@bristol.ac.uk>

Participant newsletter
March 2024



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Welcome to our [ATHENA study Spring newsletter](#)



Welcome to our Spring Newsletter!

We wanted to thank you for your continuing support and to update you on progress so far.

By taking part in ATHENA, you are helping us find out if low dose amitriptyline can prevent long term nerve pain or discomfort from shingles (post-herpetic neuralgia). Whether you think you are in the placebo or amitriptyline group, both are equally important in this study!

By completing questionnaires you are making a vital contribution to

the success of the study.

THANK YOU for choosing to be part of this research.

Best wishes from the ATHENA Study Team!



A reminder of why your involvement is important

The most common complication of shingles is post-herpetic neuralgia, an unpleasant "nerve pain" which persists after the shingles rash has gone.

Amitriptyline is commonly used to treat nerve pain but we do not know whether it can also prevent post herpetic neuralgia.

A study over 20 years ago suggested that it may but it was small and poorly done. Our study will find out for sure whether amitriptyline should be routinely used in this way. Only with the results from this study can we be sure of the best thing to do.



Study Recap and Update

We are delighted to tell you that we have recruited 615 participants so far. We aim to recruit our target of 846 by the end of September 2024 with the study finishing in October 2025.

Around this time, we will be able to let you know whether you were given placebo or amitriptyline.

We have 277 surgeries recruiting within ten UK regions:

- West of England
- Wessex
- Thames Valley/South Midlands
- South West Peninsula
- North West London
- North West Coast
- Greater Manchester
- Kent, Surrey and Sussex
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and Humber

You can view the location of recruiting surgeries in these regions via our interactive [map](#).



Questionnaires

The 90 and 360 day questionnaires are slightly longer and we will send you a £10 voucher when you complete each of these.

To be able to find out whether low dose amitriptyline is effective in preventing long term pain after shingles, we need you to continue to complete your questionnaires. Thank you to those who have already completed their 360 days in the study.

Questionnaires are sent to you 30, 60, 90, 120, 180 and 360 days after your rash appeared. Please try and complete them as soon as you can.

The 90 day questionnaire asks a few additional questions to check how you are at an important timepoint, soon after you have stopped taking your medication.

Remember....

- ...to continue to complete the questionnaires even if you stop taking the medication so we can find out how you have been getting on and answer the research question properly.
- ...when answering questions about pain, include all kinds of pain or discomfort in the area of your shingles rash, including that triggered by air blowing on the skin, by clothing rubbing against the skin, or by hot or cold temperatures.
- ...to look out for the emailed questionnaires (check your "spam" folder) if you are completing them online, or in the post, if you are completing them on paper.
- ...to help us to answer the research question by completing as many questions as you can.
- ... you will receive an email (or phone call) when it is time to stop taking your study medication. You may wish to dispose of any unused study medication at your local pharmacy.
- ..you can contact us by email at any point if you have any queries or questions. You can find our email address at the bottom of this newsletter.

THANK YOU!



Bank Holiday weekend arrangements

Our office is closed Friday 29th March to Tuesday 2nd April inclusive but there will be skeleton cover for urgent queries via

the ATHENA study mailbox: athena-study@bristol.ac.uk.

If you have an urgent medical query during this time, you are advised to contact your GP or 111 as you would usually.

Remember to also update us if your email address changes in the future as this is how we will continue to contact you over the coming months.

You can also stay up to date with us on Twitter: @AthenaStudy or keep yourself informed about study updates on our website: www.athena-study.bristol.ac.uk.

A Happy Easter to our participants.
A big THANK YOU for your participation and support.



Who we are

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athena-study@bristol.ac.uk

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