


Understanding Society Information Leaflets Nurse Assessment

11/03/13


This document compiles three documents used to provide information to potential participants in the Wave 2 or Wave 3 Nurse Health Assessments.

The documents are

- Leaflet to accompany advance letter: Understanding Society The Nurse Visit
- Leaflet to be given at the doorstep. Understanding Society The Nurse Visit: Information for Participants
- Leaflet about venepuncture. Giving a Blood Sample: Frequently Asked Questions



Understanding Society: The Nurse Visit



The next stage...

Thank you for taking part in the interviewer visit. We would like to invite you to take part in an additional stage of the study which we are carrying out this year.


What does it involve?

This stage is a visit by a registered nurse who will contact you over the next month.

When the nurse visits, they will ask you a few questions about your health and will then explain a bit more about the other elements of the nurse visit, which are outlined on the opposite page.

As a thank you...

We hope you will agree to take part and we are offering you a £10 voucher as a token of our appreciation for your time.



The measurements...

Physical measurements:

These include blood pressure readings, height, weight, body fat percentage and waist measurements.

Why? High blood pressure can be a health problem. Waist and body fat measurements tell us about your body shape, which can be related to health.

Lung function measurement:

We would like to measure the amount of air you can breathe out of your lungs and how quickly you can get it out. This involves blowing into a tube.

Why? This test tells us how well your lungs are working.

Upper body strength:

This measurement involves gripping a handle which will provide a reading of grip strength.

Why? Grip strength is an indication of physical functioning.

A blood sample:

The nurse will ask you if you would be willing to provide a small blood sample.

Why? Your blood can tell us very important things about your health status.

Please remember that all of the above elements of the nurse visit are optional. If you don't want to do one of the above measurements then please just tell the nurse when they visit. As with the first stage of the survey, we take great care to protect the confidentiality of all information and test results. Your nurse will give you another leaflet when she/he visits, which explains the different measurements in more detail.

Any questions?

Our nurse will try to answer any questions you have. Or, if you like you can speak to one of us using the contact details below:


NatCen Research Team Freephone: 0800 652 0401

Survey Doctor - Dr Ian Forde Tel: 0797 422 8120

www.understandingsociety.org.uk



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The Nurse Visit: Information for Participants



Introduction

This survey is being carried out for the Economic and Social Research Council, by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex, with the National Centre for Social Research. A few months ago you kindly took part in the interview stage of the survey which consisted of an interview and a self-completion booklet.

An important part of this survey is looking at stability and change over time. We all know how important our health is – it has an effect on many other parts of our lives, today and as we get older.

Because health is such a key part of our lives, we think it is important to get an accurate measure of your health, and the health of people like you. To enable this to be done in as safe a way as possible, we would like to arrange for a nurse to visit your household to take some measurements.

The nurse visit

A registered nurse will ask you some further questions and will ask permission to take some measurements. The measurements are described on the opposite page. You need not have any measurements taken if you do not wish but we very much hope you will agree to them, as they are a valuable part of this survey. If the survey results are to be useful, we need information from all types of people in all states of health. As with information obtained in the first part of the survey, we take great care to protect the confidentiality of all information and test results.

Is the survey compulsory?

No. In all our surveys we rely on voluntary participation. The success of the survey depends on the goodwill and co-operation of those asked to take part. The more people who do take part, the more useful the results will be. You are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. However, we will not be able to remove individual information after the survey results have been published.

Everything you say is confidential unless you tell us something that indicates that you or someone else is at risk of harm, or about illegal activity which could harm the public.

Who has reviewed the study?

The survey has been looked at by an independent group of people called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your safety, rights, wellbeing and dignity. This study has been given a favourable opinion by the Oxford Research Ethics Committee.

The measurements

Blood pressure

Blood pressure is measured using an inflatable cuff that goes around the upper arm. High blood pressure can be a health problem. However, blood pressure is difficult to measure accurately. A person's blood pressure is influenced by age and can vary from day to day with emotion, meals, tobacco, alcohol, medication, temperature and pain. Although the nurse will tell you your blood pressure along with an indication of its meaning, a diagnosis cannot be made on measurements taken on a single occasion.

Lung function

We would like to measure the amount of air you can breathe out of your lungs and how quickly you can get it out. This involves blowing into a tube. The amount of air you are able to breathe out depends partly on your height, your age, and how fit you are. Your result can only be interpreted in the light of these factors. This test (spirometry) tells us how well your lungs are working.

Height, weight, waist measurement, bioelectrical impedance

Lately there has been much discussion about the relationship between weight and health. Your waist measurement is useful for assessing distribution of weight over the body. The bioelectrical impedance measure is similar to a set of bathroom scales, but they measure the amount of fat in the body.

Blood sample

We would be very grateful if you would agree to provide us with a sample of blood. Analysis of the blood samples will tell us a lot about the health of the population. You are, of course, free to choose not to give a blood sample and the nurse will ask for your written permission before a blood sample is taken.

This part of the survey involves a small amount of blood (no more than 20ml or four teaspoons) being taken from your arm by a qualified nurse.

Frequently asked questions

What will happen to the blood sample I give?

The blood sample will be stored at a secure facility, your name and address will not be attached to the sample and so your sample will remain confidential. Your blood will not be analysed immediately, but will be available to scientists for scientific analysis. Any analysis will have to be approved by an independent committee set up by the ESRC. The stored blood will not be available for commercial purposes.

Before being used in future research, some of the information we have collected in this survey (but not any details which would identify you) may be attached to the sample. You can withdraw your consent to store your blood at any time, without giving any reason, by asking the investigators in writing for your blood to be removed from storage and destroyed.

When the sample is tested for research, it will no longer be possible to link it to you, so you will not be told the results of the testing. It will not be possible to remove your results from reports, as the results cannot be linked to you.

Will any genetic tests be made?

The anonymous samples may, in the future, be tested for DNA or genetics. Any analysis like this could not be linked to you and no names of individuals will ever be revealed or identified in the presentation of the results. The blood samples will not be tested for the HIV (AIDS) virus and will not be available for paternity testing, life insurance, mortgage applications or police records.

If I have any other questions?

We hope this leaflet answers the questions you may have, and that it shows the importance of the survey. If you have any other questions or concerns about the nurse measurements, results or samples please do not hesitate to ring one of the contacts listed below. Your co-operation is very much appreciated.

Contacts

Neil Barton
National Centre for Social Research
Kings House 101 -131 Kings Road
Brentwood
Essex, CM14 4LX
Freephone: 0800 526 397

Dr. Ian Forde
Survey Doctor
Tel: 0797 4228120



Giving a Blood Sample: Frequently Asked Questions

The NatCen survey nurses follow 'best practice' principles which meet current national standards used within the NHS.

This leaflet gives answers to some of the questions people often ask about giving a blood sample.

If you have any further queries, please ask the NatCen survey nurse.

Why do you need to take a blood sample?

The analysis of the blood samples will tell us a lot about the health of the general population. It is an important addition to the information you have already given us.

What about hygiene standards?

The survey nurses maintain the highest hygiene standards to reduce any risk of infection. We use a new sterile needle and tubes for every person.

Is any special equipment needed?

Before a needle is inserted into your vein, the survey nurse will apply a tourniquet (a band put round your arm to control your blood flow). This keeps more blood in the vein, making it easier for the nurse to see and access it.

Does it hurt?

Blood sampling may cause some discomfort. Very rarely, you may feel a stronger sensation. Please tell the nurse immediately if you are at all concerned.

What if I feel faint?

Anyone might feel faint during or immediately after giving a blood sample, although most people don't. If you begin to feel faint at all, tell the nurse as soon as possible, if you can. The nurse will be watching you for any signs of fainting, and if necessary will stop taking the blood sample.

If you actually faint, which can happen but is very unlikely, you will be advised not to drive for at least 30 minutes once you have come round.

How long should I keep the dressing on afterwards?

The nurse will apply a dressing after taking the sample. You should leave this dressing on for at least 30 minutes after the blood sample has been taken.

Will I get a bruise?

Bruising occurs when blood leaks from a vein into the surrounding tissues. The nurse will make every attempt to reduce bruising through applying pressure to the affected vein after taking the blood sample. However, bruising does sometimes occur. This may be slightly uncomfortable for a day or so after giving the sample but usually no action is required. If it gets worse (for example if the bruise hurts more or gets much bigger), you should seek further help, for instance from your GP or NHS Direct.

Should I avoid any activities after giving the sample?

To reduce any risk of bruising, where possible we suggest you avoid any heavy lifting or strenuous exercise for the rest of the day you give your blood sample.

Will I get any results from my blood sample?

The sample that you give us will be sent to a secure storage facility. Once the sample is stored, the sample becomes confidential and it is not possible to identify an individual from the blood sample. This means that we are unable to send individuals any results from their sample.

If you experience any of the following, you should seek further help, for instance from your GP or NHS Direct:

- severe pain
- numbness or persistent 'pins and needles' in the arm, hand or fingers
- swelling which is large or increasing in size
- painful redness/inflammation.

If you have any further queries contact NatCen on 0800 526 397 during office hours.

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