

A trial of a possible remyelinating drug in multiple sclerosis

Nerves within the brain and spinal cord are normally protected by a surrounding layer of a substance called myelin. In multiple sclerosis, the immune system of the body attacks this myelin, stripping it off the nerve fibres. This causes the nerves to malfunction, leading to your multiple sclerosis symptoms. Animal studies have shown that a group of drugs can stimulate cells in the brain to repair damaged myelin. This process is called “remyelination”. One of the drugs in this group is bexarotene, a capsule already used as an anti-cancer medication. We believe that bexarotene may also promote remyelination in people with multiple sclerosis, which could potentially reverse or alleviate symptoms. The purpose of this research is to assess whether bexarotene causes side effects in people with multiple sclerosis who are also taking disease-modifying drugs and also to assess whether it really can promote remyelination.

Participants in the trial take several capsules (which might be bexarotene or a placebo) a day for 6 months and remyelination is assessed by one MRI scan at the beginning of this six-month period and one at the end.

The trial centres are at Cambridge and Edinburgh. Participants need to live reasonably close to these centres as frequent visiting (at times weekly) is required. Participants should have relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis, need to be able to walk, and should be taking a first-line disease-modifying drug (beta-interferon, copaxone, Tecfidera, etc.).

If you wish to be considered for the trial, please ask your GP or consultant to refer you to:

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