

# Improving social connection in older people

<b>Submission date</b> 11/07/2011	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
<b>Registration date</b> 19/10/2011	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Last Edited</b> 10/02/2016	<b>Condition category</b> Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input type="checkbox"/> Results
		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
		<input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Social isolation and loneliness are common in older people and are associated with poor health outcomes, including depression, insomnia, lower quality of life, illness and death. In spite of the evidence supporting an association between health and social relationships there have been relatively few scientific studies in this area. This study aims to determine whether a short-term volunteer visiting programme for older people who experience loneliness can improve their mental and physical outcomes.

### Who can participate?

People over 65 years of age from two counties in Ireland (Co. Meath and Co. Kilkenny) who feel lonely.

### What does the study involve?

Participants are randomly allocated to the intervention group or the control group. Participants in the intervention group receive ten home visits over ten to twelve weeks from a volunteer visitor. The volunteer visitor is an older person who has been trained for the purposes of the study. The visits are social and informal with the aim of helping the older person think about improvements they would like to make in relation to contact with friends, family and their local community. Both the control and intervention participants have four home visits from a member of the research team to collect data. Two of these visits are before the start of the intervention and two after the intervention.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The research team does not anticipate any risks associated with participating in the study.

### Where is the study run from?

Mercer's Institute for Research on Ageing (Ireland)

### When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

May 2011 to January 2012

### Who is funding the study?

Atlantic Philanthropies (USA)

Who is the main contact?

Dr Gillian Paul

## Contact information

### Type(s)

Scientific

### Contact name

Dr Gillian Paul

### Contact details

Mercer's Institute for Research on Ageing

St James's Hospital

Dublin

Ireland

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## Additional identifiers

### Protocol serial number

N/A

## Study information

### Scientific Title

A randomised controlled trial of a community based volunteer visiting programme for older people experiencing loneliness

### Study objectives

To ascertain if a volunteer visitor scheme can improve mental and physical health of older people experiencing social isolation and loneliness

### Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

### Ethics approval(s)

Joint Adelaide and Meath Hospital, Dublin Incorporating the National Children's Hospital and St James's Hospital Ethics Committee approved on 19/08/2011, Ref: 2010/31/01

### Study design

Randomised controlled trial

### Primary study design

Interventional

### Study type(s)

Quality of life

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Loneliness and social isolation in older people

**Interventions**

1. Participants in the intervention group will receive ten home visits from a volunteer visitor who has been trained for the purposes of the study
2. The visits are informal and social
3. Discussions between the participant and volunteer progress to focus on problem solving, and goal setting with the aim of assisting the participant in making a new social connection

**Intervention Type**

Behavioural

**Primary outcome(s)**

De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale measured pre and post intervention at one month and three month follow-up.

**Key secondary outcome(s)**

1. Oslo Social Support Scale
2. Hospital Anxiety And Depression Scale (HADS)
3. 8-item Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD-8)
4. Control, Autonomy, Self realisation, Pleasure 19 scale (CASP 19)
5. Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA)
6. Lubben Social Network Scale
7. Pittsburg Sleep Questionnaire
8. Body mass index (BMI)
9. Timed up and go
10. Grip strength

The outcomes will be measured pre and post intervention at one month and three month follow-up.

**Completion date**

31/01/2012

**Eligibility****Key inclusion criteria**

1. Over 65 years of age
2. Living at home
3. Experiencing loneliness - must pass a screening test (score 3 or more on the 11 item De Jong Gierveld loneliness scale or answer Yes when asked question 5 from the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale)

**Participant type(s)**

Patient

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Senior

**Sex**

All

**Key exclusion criteria**

1. Have been socially isolated all their lives
2. Visual or hearing impairment severe enough to make social contact difficult or impossible
3. Require nursing assistance
4. Dementia, psychotic illness, alcohol misuse, any tendency to violence, or personality disorder

**Date of first enrolment**

01/05/2011

**Date of final enrolment**

31/01/2012

**Locations****Countries of recruitment**

Ireland

**Study participating centre**

**Mercer's Institute for Research on Ageing**

Dublin

Ireland

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**Sponsor information****Organisation**

Ageing Well Network (Ireland)

**Funder(s)****Funder type**

Charity

**Funder Name**

Atlantic Philanthropies (USA)

**Alternative Name(s)**

The Atlantic Philanthropies, atlanticphil, Atlantic, The Atlantic Philanthropies (Bermuda) Limited, AP

**Funding Body Type**

Private sector organisation

**Funding Body Subtype**

International organizations

**Location**

Bermuda

## Results and Publications

**Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan****IPD sharing plan summary**

Not provided at time of registration

**Study outputs**

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes