**Whitehall I study of London Civil Servants**

**Information for study participants**

**What is the Whitehall I study?** The Whitehall I study is a national study of the causes of death in 19,000 men who worked in the civil service in London from 1967-1970. A resurvey of surviving participants was conducted in 1997. The study is a collaborative project between the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University College London Medical School, and the University of Oxford, which aims to answer many outstanding questions about the factors affecting prolonged follow-up of men’s health. The main focus of the study relates to the effects of cardiovascular risk factors and employment grade, but the study also addresses a broad range of other health issues.

**What is the Whitehall I study investigating?** The Whitehall I study is investigating the combined influence of lifestyle, socioeconomic circumstances, and cardiovascular risk factors (measured both in middle and in old age) on cause-specific mortality in old age.

**Who is taking part in the study?** Between 1967 and 1970, men were invited to join the Whitehall I study when they were working in the civil service in London. Male civil servants received a study questionnaire with their invitation, which they were asked to complete and return at the time of screening. Measurements of their blood pressure, height and weight were recorded in addition to assessments of blood levels of total cholesterol and glucose. A resurvey was conducted in 1997 in which survivors were invited to complete a postal questionnaire and have measurements of their blood pressure, height and weight recorded by their GP and to provide a blood sample that was mailed to the study laboratory in Oxford.

**Who is involved in conducting the study?** The Whitehall I study is a nationwide study coordinated by experienced researchers based in Oxford and in London. The study is supported by public funds from the Medical Research Council and the British Heart Foundation. Our Privacy Notice can be accessed [here](https://www.ndph.ox.ac.uk/about/data-privacy-notice-1/ndph-privacy-policy-for-research-participants). To find out the staff members involved in the Whitehall study, visit the staff page at the [Clinical Trial Service Unit, Department of Population Health, University of Oxford](https://www.ndph.ox.ac.uk/)[, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine](https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/) and Research Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, [University College London](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/epidemiology).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **How is information about me collected currently by the Whitehall study?** The last postal questionnaires were mailed out to study participants in 1997. Information about men currently taking part in the study is obtained from [NHS Digital](https://digital.nhs.uk/) which holds information nationally from the records that health and social care providers keep about the cancer registrations and causes of death. Such information will be used to discover more about the long-term effects of cardiovascular risk factors recorded in middle and old age. Your identifiable data (name, date of birth, NHS number and postcode) will be sent to NHS Digital who record all deaths and cancer registrations, and they will link this information to individual participants in the study. NHS Digital also provide University of Oxford with information relating to cancer registrations on behalf of Public Health England (PHE) or a date and cause of death about any participants who may have died on behalf of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and sourced from civil registration data.  **Is the information about me collected by the Whitehall I study secure?** For the purpose of the General Data Protection Regulation (2018), the [University of Oxford](http://ox.ac.uk/) is the Data Controller for all data received from NHS Digital. Researchers at the London School of Hygiene and UCL Medical School are also Joint Data Controllers for anonymised copies of data for the Whitehall I study. The lawful basis for processing such data is a task in the public interest for the purposes of conducting medical research. All information is stored securely by the University and is kept confidential. Access to the computer database is by a unique combination of usernames and passwords and only authorised study personnel have access to participant information. The building in which the information is stored is secure, with authorised access by swipe card only. No individual participants will be identified in any study reports.  Anonymised information about study participants (which would not identify the participant), may be shared in the future with other approved medical researchers (subject to approval by the Steering Committee). Sharing of information with other researchers helps ensure that research is open to scrutiny and that best use is made of the information collected. Researchers at the University of Oxford (and at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and University College London) will remain responsible for the security and validity of the information held.  **What if I no longer wish for my information to be accessed or used in Whitehall I?** For the long-term results of the Whitehall I study to be as reliable as possible, the study team need to try to discover what has happened to everyone who initially agreed to enter the study. If participants do not wish to continue to have information about themselves collected or recorded then they should inform the study team using the contact details provided below. They will not need to give a reason for their decision, and withdrawing from the study will not affect their usual medical care in any way.  **Data retention period** The Whitehall study of London Civil Servants is a long-term medical research study that aims to collect data on causes of death and cancer incidence until all of the study participants have died.  **Legal basis for compliance with the General Data Protection Act**  The legal basis for processing personal data used in the Whitehall I study is outlined in the University of Oxford data protection policy. <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/dataprotection/>  **Data subject’s rights** The Information Compliance Team at the University of Oxford is responsible for policies to ensure the compliance with data privacy legislation, requests made by individuals about access or use of personal data for research and investigation of any complaints about data privacy.  **Contact details of University of Oxford’s Data Protection Officer and Whitehall study**  Questions about policy and data protection matters should be directed to the  Information Compliance Team by email: [data.protection@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@admin.ox.ac.uk)  Questions about information security at the University of Oxford should be directed to the  Information Security Team by email: infosec@it.ox.ac.uk  Questions about the Whitehall I study at the University of Oxford should be directed to Professor Robert Clarke (Whitehall I study) by email: [robert.clarke@ndph.ox.ac.uk](mailto:robert.clarke@ndph.ox.ac.uk) or by telephone (01865-743743) or by mail (Clinical Trial Service Unit, Nuffield Department of Population Health, Big Data Institute, University of Oxford, Old Road Campus, Roosevelt Drive, Oxford, OX3 7LF, UK). |  |