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## ATHENA Study Participant Newsletter April 2025 Issue 9

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

Date Tue 01/04/2025 11:18

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

### Participant newsletter April 2025



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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!



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### **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 859 participants so far and will continue recruiting until the end of April 2025.

Early next year, we will be able to let you know whether you were given placebo or amitriptyline.

We have 331 surgeries taking part in the study within 11 UK regions. You can view the location of recruiting surgeries in these regions via our interactive [map](#).



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## Questionnaires

**A BIG thank you to everyone for continuing to  
complete your questionnaires!**



**Please remember....**

- ...to continue to complete the questionnaires **even when you aren't taking the medication anymore.**
- ... when answering questions about pain to 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") if you are completing them online, or in the post, if you are completing them on paper.
- ... to complete as many questions as you can and remember to press 'submit' at the end.



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### **Bank Holiday weekend arrangements**

Our office is closed Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April to Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April inclusive but there will be skeleton cover for urgent queries via the ATHENA study mailbox: [athena-study@bristol.ac.uk](mailto: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 stay up to date with us via our website: [www.athena-study.bristol.ac.uk](http://www.athena-study.bristol.ac.uk).

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



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### Who we are

**Trial Co-ordinators:** Christine Hobson, Emma Bridgeman  
**Research Nurses:** Gillian Kirkup, Amy Herbert, Emily Baldwin  
**Administrator:** Zoë Wilkins

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**For further information or help:**

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