Multiple Sclerosis Study Recruitment Grows and Continues in North Carolina
March 20, 2014

Kannapolis, North Carolina: Despite the lingering winter weather, Ms. Elisa Gozdzialski (pictured here) had an appointment with Duke Clinical Research Coordinator, Ms. Sarah Maichle, last week. It was Ms. Gozdzialski’s enrollment visit to join the MURDOCK-Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Study; her joining represented the study’s newest milestone – 500 study participants and growing. Her willingness to join the study was motivated by the hope that participating will lead to better treatments for those, like her, affected by MS. Ms. Gozdzialski said: “After my diagnosis and starting treatment, I became very aware of and thankful for all of the other MS patients who went through studies that led to the amazing medicines and treatments I've received.”

Some people suffer from MS on a daily basis while others go through periods of relapses or reoccurrence. However, both are plagued by a set of debilitating and sometimes, life-altering symptoms that infringe on one’s quality of life and daily activities. We have known of the existence of MS for more than two hundred years, further, it has been understood for decades that multiple sclerosis has an inherited component however we do not understand how the disease progresses and why certain people respond to treatment while others do not. It is because of questions like these that Dr. Simon Gregory, principal investigator of the MURDOCK Study-Reclassifying Multiple Sclerosis and associate professor of Medicine at the Duke University Medical Center, is collaborating with the Duke-MURDOCK Study, local healthcare providers and researchers to find the answers.

With operational support from the Duke-MURDOCK Study office, based on the North Carolina Research Campus, and now recently expanded to include Durham, Raleigh, and surrounding
regions of the Piedmont, Dr. Gregory and his clinical research team have recruited 500 individuals with MS each of whom has contributed small samples of blood and urine as well as two questionnaires related to their medical history and demographics and MS diagnosis. A subset of participants who are afflicted by Primary Progressive MS are also being recruited. This effort is believed to be one of the few in the world of its type. No geographic limitations exist for recruitment into the MS cohort. The prevalence of this disease in the United States (400,000 diagnosed individuals) demands the need for further study. The Duke-MURDOCK Study represents a well-defined and growing cohort of MS participants who are being profiled to better elucidate distinguishing features of this disease to understand its progression.

“It is only through the selfless participation of MS patients that we have been able to look for biomarkers of chronic immune system challenge, to go beyond the role that single genes may have in MS, and to explore the impact that non-DNA based mechanisms may have in the development of the diseases,” said Dr. Gregory. “Simply put, the MS community has provided the inspiration to find a cure to the disease, and Elisa’s participation represents a significant milestone in our MS research efforts.”

Ms. Gozdialski noted, “I’m hoping that my involvement with this study will lead to even more improvements that will make this journey easier for someone in the future.”

If you or someone you know has MS, please contact the MURDOCK Study office (704-250-5861) to learn more about enrolling or visit www.murdock-study.org. This is not a drug study so participants will not receive any form of treatment. Compensation is provided.