The MURDOCK Study gathers data from a number of sources, including the questionnaire completed by each participant at his or her enrollment visit, follow-up information collected each year from our participants, and data analysis from other sources.

The use of research controls, specifically sample controls, is one way to ensure that MURDOCK researchers are gathering accurate and reliable data. For example, a researcher who wants to better understand a disease, such as asthma, will compare samples (blood or urine) from both people who have asthma and people who do not. The samples from participants without asthma are matched on characteristics such as age, race, and sex to serve as controls for the samples from participants with asthma.

Sample controls are very useful because they allow researchers to gather relevant data quickly and easily. If the sample and control groups are properly designed, relatively few participants can help answer questions about much larger populations.

For this reason, the MURDOCK Study continues to recruit volunteers who are healthy as well as volunteers who have health problems; both groups are extremely valuable for research purposes. Techniques like these enable researchers to gather accurate information, draw reliable conclusions, and understand diseases and treatments.

Now available! Tell your friends! Text “MURDOCK” to (704) 935-2635 to learn how to enroll. Standard rates will apply.

Find us on Facebook and Twitter
“Like” us on Facebook! On Twitter, mention us (@murdocktweet) and share your MURDOCK Study experiences with your followers.

Has your address changed?
Please help us keep our records current by contacting our office at (704) 250-5861 or murdock-study@duke.edu.

What’s Happening Now: Registry data from MURDOCK Study participants are being used to compare age-, sex-, and race-matched samples to samples from participants with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (MS). MURDOCK researchers are trying to determine if any substances produced by metabolic processes can be linked with the cause of chronic MS.
Volunteering in the New Year—Help Wanted

The MURDOCK Study team has re-launched our volunteer program in 2013 in recognition of the importance of community residents working as our ambassadors and liaisons. We are very interested in your ideas about how to improve recruitment into the MURDOCK Study.

Volunteers are asked to commit to one of the following:
1. Non-students: a minimum of 6 months of service that includes at least 8 hours per month
2. Students: a semester-based commitment to fulfill academic obligations for service hours (e.g., nursing students)

If you are interested in volunteer work, we would be glad to have you join us. The Volunteer Team meets regularly for lunch with MURDOCK Study staff to brainstorm and share ideas about how to improve recruitment.

Contact Perla Nunes, project leader for community outreach, at (704) 250-5858 or perla.nunes@duke.edu for more information. Download the volunteer application from our website at www.murdock-study.org.

Recap: A New Approach to Recruiting for the MURDOCK Study—Balancing the Study’s Population Characteristics

In our Fall 2012 newsletter, we outlined a new strategy—recruiting a representative sample—to enhance the existing MURDOCK Study Registry with data from individuals who accurately reflect our region’s characteristics, including sex, age, race, and ethnicity. In partnership with MURDOCK Study leadership and staff, Michelle Smerek, project leader for data management, mailed MURDOCK Study brochures to 100 randomly selected households (representing approximately 180 adults) selected from 2 of the 18 zip codes from which the MURDOCK Study recruits participants (28081 and 28215). These individuals have been invited to participate and will continue to be contacted until they respond. This pilot project is expected to last until April and will allow us to evaluate the responses of the selected households, determine the effectiveness of our recruitment methods, test our marketing materials, examine the characteristics of those who choose to enroll versus those who do not, and use new tools to implement this representative sample. We will use our findings to recruit another 15,000 participants from randomly selected households.

All individuals who join the MURDOCK Study are equally valuable in this unique community-based health research project.

Veggies are Good for the Heart

In a recent study, vegetarians had a 32 percent lower risk of hospitalization or death from ischemic heart disease compared with those who ate meat. Researchers wrote that the difference was likely due to lower non-HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol levels and systolic blood pressure in vegetarians. You can still lower your risk if you eat meat: stick to eating fresh, vibrantly colored vegetables and fish and lean meats, such as chicken or turkey! Reference: Crowe FL, et al “Risk of hospitalization or death from ischemic heart disease among British vegetarians and nonvegetarians: results from the EPIC-Oxford cohort study.” Am J Clin Nutr 2013; DOI: 10.3945/ajcn.112.

Study Participant Referral Sources for 2012

As you may recall from your enrollment experience, each MURDOCK Study participant is asked to identify how he or she learned about the study. We track this information to understand how our efforts and resources affect participant responses. The figures here provide a cumulative overview of referral sources for 2012.

A New Site Generates Excellent Response

The MURDOCK Study is excited to announce one of its newest sites in the enrollment network. The Bethesda Health Center (located in the 28262 zip code—North Mecklenburg County) has generated considerable interest and enthusiasm among clinic staff and patients. As a result, this new location has already enrolled 207 study participants (as of March 5, 2013). With the support of Wendy Mateo, director of the free clinic, and Pastor Rusty Price, this new site began enrolling participants in November 2012. During Bethesda’s first mass enrollment event on February 9, 2013, 50 individuals joined the study. This represents the study’s largest mass enrollment to date. MURDOCK Study staff members are thrilled with the response of clinic patients and welcome the opportunity to reach this geographic area.

The Refer-a-Friend Raffle is a chance for you to win! If a friend or family member joins the MURDOCK Study and names you as the referral source, you will be entered into a quarterly drawing for a $50 gift card to a business of your choice! Call (704) 250-5858 or email murdock-study@duke.edu to receive referral cards.

Bethesda Health Center (Centro de Salud Betesda) 133 Stetson Drive, Charlotte, NC 28262 (704) 597-1397

Bethesda Health Center offers free medical care, a food pantry and store, and social and educational services.