



## Duke University partner Raleigh Neurology Associates enrolls 100<sup>th</sup> MS patient in groundbreaking study

*Kannapolis-based MURDOCK Study has unique relationship with Raleigh medical practice to recruit people with multiple sclerosis*

**KANNAPOLIS and RALEIGH, N.C.—Jan. 21, 2015**—A Raleigh medical practice has enrolled its 100<sup>th</sup> patient into a Duke University health research project working to end multiple sclerosis.



*Dr. Bradley J. Robottom, general adult neurologist with Raleigh Neurology Associates*

Raleigh Neurology Associates recently reached the 100-patient milestone for the MURDOCK Multiple Sclerosis Study, a long-term health research project based at the North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis, N.C. Raleigh Neurology partnered with Duke in July 2014 to help recruit 1,000 people with multiple sclerosis and 100 people with Primary Progressive MS.

Simon Gregory, PhD, is principal investigator for the MURDOCK Multiple Sclerosis Study and associate professor at the Duke Molecular Physiology Institute at Duke University School of Medicine. He and his team are working to identify the genetic underpinnings of complex diseases like MS and understand disease development and progression at the molecular level.

While Duke recruits MS patients at several locations in North Carolina, Raleigh Neurology is the only independent enrollment site for the MURDOCK Study and enrolls between six and eight patients per week.

“It has been a wonderful partnership to work with Raleigh Neurology. They have not only helped us spread the word about the important MS research we are doing with Duke, but they have greatly increased the number of participants who have enrolled into this project as well,” said Sarah Maichle, the Duke clinical research coordinator who oversees enrollment in the Raleigh-Durham area. “We have been so excited at the opportunity to work with this prestigious practice, and we look forward to reaching our enrollment goal of 1,000 participants later this year.”

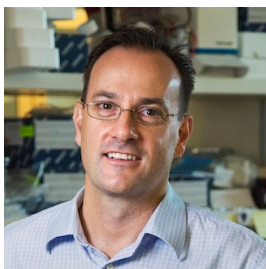
The sixth largest MS practice in the country, Raleigh Neurology has even hired a new part-time coordinator dedicated to MURDOCK Study enrollment.

“Working with Duke and the MURDOCK Study team has been truly exciting for Raleigh Neurology Associates and our patients. We currently have dozens of late phase clinical research ongoing, so being involved in genetic, molecular level research is exciting—especially with Duke University,” said Sean Walsh, director of Clinical Research for Raleigh Neurology. “Through this partnership, our patients have been able to easily participate in Dr. Gregory’s research, which we hope will lead to groundbreaking discoveries to enhance the quality of life for future generations.”

Together, Raleigh Neurology and Maichle, who enrolls people with MS at the Duke Center for Living Campus in Durham, have recruited more than 200 participants to the study. Total enrollment has reached 659 people with multiple sclerosis and eight people with Primary

Progressive MS. Volunteers contribute small samples of blood and urine, as well as two questionnaires related to medical history, demographics and MS diagnosis.

Without a cure or diagnostic test, multiple sclerosis remains a mysterious and unpredictable disease affecting as many as 400,000 people in the United States who suffer symptoms ranging from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. When someone has MS, his or her own immune system directs an abnormal response against the central nervous system.



*Dr. Simon Gregory, principal investigator for the MURDOCK Multiple Sclerosis Study*



*Sarah Maichle, clinical research coordinator for Duke's MURDOCK Study*

Although scientists have known about multiple sclerosis for centuries, researchers still do not understand how the disease progresses and why certain people respond to treatment while others do not. Gregory's team wants to generate biomarkers—measurable molecular indicators in the body—that would allow researchers to reclassify MS and lead to the development of tests that physicians would use to diagnose the disease and determine which treatments are best based on a patient's genetic profile.

Gregory's work in genetics opened up a new field of research into how the IL7R gene contributes to the development of MS after he and his collaborators identified the gene's association with the disease, forming the basis of ongoing study to understand the mechanism and signaling of IL7R.

To learn more or start the enrollment process, call Raleigh Neurology at 919-782-3456. In the Durham area, call Sarah Maichle at 919-695-6413. In the Charlotte area, call 704-250-5861 or visit [www.murdock-study.org](http://www.murdock-study.org). This is not a drug study, so participants will not receive any form of treatment. Enrollment takes about 90 minutes, and volunteers are compensated.



*Sean Walsh, director of Clinical Research for Raleigh Neurology.*

#### **About the MURDOCK Study**

The MURDOCK Study stands for the Measurement to Understand the Reclassification Of Disease in Cabarrus/Kannapolis. Duke launched the study in 2007 with a \$35 million gift from David H. Murdock, founder and developer of the North Carolina Research Campus and chairman of Dole Foods. The MS study is one of several sub-studies of MURDOCK, which aims to enroll 50,000 people in a community registry to identify links across major diseases and disorders and find ways to treat and even defeat some of today's leading causes of illness and death. MURDOCK Study researchers are working to improve treatments for heart disease, obesity, osteoarthritis, hepatitis C, osteoarthritis and Alzheimer's, as well as multiple sclerosis.

#### **About Raleigh Neurology**

Founded in 1983 by Dr. Keith L. Hull Jr. and Dr. S. Mitchell Freedman, Raleigh Neurology Associates is one of the largest private neurology practices in the nation. During its 31-year-history, the practice has grown to include 27 physicians and two locations in the Raleigh/Durham area. Backed by resources, expertise and state-of-the-art facilities, Raleigh Neurology's providers are highly qualified and specially trained to diagnose and treat a wide range of neurological disorders.

#### **Media contact:**

Emily Ford, communications specialist  
Duke Translational Medicine Institute  
MURDOCK Study  
704-642-2208 mobile, 704-250-5878 desk  
[emily.ford@duke.edu](mailto:emily.ford@duke.edu)