

Winter 2007 / 8 – Number 2

Welcome to the second edition of **HIMALAYA** – the newsletter of the ASCEND study! Thank you very much for your interest and participation in the ASCEND study so far. If you have not received **HIMALAYA** before, we hope this newslet-

ter will educate and entertain you, and tell you more about the study that you are playing such a vital role in. If you have, then read on and find out what we (and you!) have been up to since the first issue.

ASCEND MAKES STEADY PROGRESS

ASCEND has now randomised over 2,500 people, which means we are over one-quarter of our way towards our target of 10,000 participants. The picture opposite shows K2 (the world's second highest mountain), which is also one of the most dangerous to climb. K2 is in the Karakorum range on the border of Pakistan and China. K2 is 8,611 metres high and lies at the centre of the highest concentration of high mountains anywhere on earth. Base camp is at around 5,200 metres and one-quarter of the way up from there would be Camp 2, shown here. To get that far, any climber would be doing well!



Why does ASCEND need so many participants?

The more participants that a study has, the more reliable are the answers that it gives. Although we might be able to show that aspirin is or isn't beneficial in people with diabetes with fewer participants in the study, the answer would be less reliable and therefore other doctors might not trust it. That would mean that

other people might not get the correct treatment. Therefore, we want to recruit 10,000 people so that the answer we get is reliable and can be applied to the millions of people who have diabetes in the world. The results of ASCEND could literally save tens of thousands of lives, so it is crucial that we get it right!

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP ASCEND

Clinical studies like ASCEND depend on people like you being willing to take part. We would really appreciate your help in helping us find the next 7,500 people to take part in ASCEND. As a participant in ASCEND you will therefore receive a leaflet on



which you can give us the details of someone you know who might be able to take part. If you know anyone with diabetes who is over 40 years old, please ask them if they would be interested in taking part, and check that they would be happy for you to send us their details. Please reassure them that we would only use this information for ASCEND.

Where can people find out more?

They can:  visit the ASCEND website at www.ctsuo.ox.ac.uk/ascend; or



call a member of the study team on (Freefone) 0800 585323.

THE ASCEND TEAM

In the last issue of **HIMALAYA** was a picture of the whole ASCEND team, and we promised to give you more information on some of the individuals who work in it. Opposite is a picture of (from left to right) Lorraine Cobb, Andrew Collett and Susan Fathers who play a crucial role in ASCEND. They have organised the distribution of well over 100,000 screening questionnaires, as well as many thousands of other questionnaires, blood and urine kits and even this newsletter! You may have spoken to them on the phone. It would certainly be true to say that without them, the study could never happen. Thank you Lorraine, Andrew and Susan!!



TAKING MY TIME OVER THE 214 WAINWRIGHTS

We all know that exercise is good for you—especially if you have diabetes. Philip Lund—an ASCEND participant—tells us about how he came to enjoy walking in the Lake District and then climbed every peak in the popular walking guides written by Arthur Wainwright, despite being diagnosed with diabetes in 1995. “I completed the 214 Wainwright peaks - those in his original seven guide books - in June 2005. This fulfils a long held ambition, although it is not a particularly unusual event. However what may distinguish my completion of the round from others is that it was spread over nearly 44 years – possibly a record. I was introduced to the Lakeland Fells in 1961 by two brothers who lived in a house with the seemingly odd name of Jack’s Rake. This, I was told,



was because, during their ‘courtship’, their father had threatened their mother that he would push her off this precipitous ledge if she did not agree to marry him. The two brothers were part of the outcome of that proposal! I came to enjoy fell-walking as a result of a compulsory visit to the Lake District during my time at university. We climbed Coniston Old Man on a glorious March day and thereafter I was hooked. Not even near disaster when I was caught on sliding snow on Helvellyn, after successfully negotiating Striding Edge, dissuaded me. My ascents of the peaks have been with a wide range of people, but throughout these ascents the Wainwright books were my constant trusted companions, always there to direct and humour me.”

If you have a story that you’d like to tell, please don’t hesitate to contact us (details below).

WHAT IF MY MEDICATION CHANGES?

You will notice that every follow-up form that we send you (which we will do every six months after you enter the study) has a section where we ask you about your other current medication, and in particular other drugs used to thin your blood, such as aspirin, warfarin, clopidogrel (Plavix) and dipyridamole (Persantin or Asasantin). If a doctor does start you on one of these, please call a study doctor (on Freefone 0800 585323) to discuss it. You will re-

main part of the ASCEND study, but we may need to ask you to stop one of the study treatments. If a doctor is thinking about starting aspirin, please make sure they know that you are taking part in ASCEND, and let them know that they can also use the Freefone line to find out more about it.



ASCEND is coordinated by the Clinical Trial Service Unit of the University of Oxford



Freefone 0800 585323



www.ctsu.ox.ac.uk/ascend