



“I was taken on due to poorly controlled high blood pressure and willingness to cooperate”

Sandy's Story

My father died from hypertension while his medication was being changed in hospital. He was 59. I am now 72 and feel I am on borrowed time for which I am most grateful.

When I got a letter from the local Health Trust with an invitation to a clinical trial for chest problems (asthma and bronchitis) I went along but on arrival, and testing, I was rejected as unsuitable because I'm not a smoker...

But they suggested I qualified for a hypertension trial and I quickly said, 'Yes', because in light of my father's early death I am keen for my own high blood pressure to be well controlled and it wasn't being.

I used to work for a pharmaceutical company and understand the need for patients to join clinical trials. Participating in clinical trials offers the opportunity for more rigorous health monitoring than is possible with a routine GP appointment and I feel this is a privilege.

I joined a study funded by the Heart Foundation (PATHWAY). I was taken on due to poorly controlled high blood pressure and willingness to cooperate.

The study has involved tests including: blood pressure measurement; height and weight; urine; blood; electrocardiogram.

Coming to the William Harvey Clinical Research Centre was not a problem, apart from inconvenient distance from home so visits were not an issue apart from travel. The Heart Centre is welcoming and informal. All the staff are charming and friendly and seem to have good communication between themselves – anyone seems to be able to help you at any time.

So visiting the clinic always a pleasure: helpfulness and friendliness of staff; willingness of David Collier, the centre's clinical director, to be contacted if needed. There is a real sense of being 'cared for'.

I did suffer intolerable side effects on several of the drugs being tested, .e.g. cramps, heart thumping, swollen legs, breathing difficulties, fainting, dizziness. But the drugs were quickly changed when these effects were reported and I have received the benefits of having the chance to try different drugs under monitored conditions in the hope of finding a combination that will stabilise my blood pressure and increase my understanding of my condition Unwanted side effects from drugs

unsuitable for me are an obvious disadvantage , but inevitable if one is going to try them.

I did not ask family permission to join the clinical trial but my husband supports my decision. The wider family are aware and are supportive and, although I don't talk about it with friends, I am pleased to have done it. My blood pressure is improved but still not yet fully stabilised as the study ends so I am grateful for the offer of continued monitoring that has been made.