FORECEE (4C) Research Sub-Study:
EPISURE-B Study Information Leaflet

You are invited to take part in the EPISURE-B Study, a collaborative research project between University College London (UCL), King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. This document provides an overview of this study, which is under the umbrella of the FORECEE study. Participation is entirely voluntary and whether you participate or not will not affect your medical care in any way. If you do join, you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving us any reason.

1. Study Background

FORECEE is an ambitious research programme aiming to develop new clinical tests for risk prediction and early detection of four cancers: breast, ovarian, womb and cervical cancer (referred to as the 4Cs). The strategy of 4C is unique in specifically targeting biological signals in samples taken from the cervix or vagina. To date, the programme has generated various tests that show promising prospects[1].

In line with this, we are developing a test to detect specific biological markers associated with endometrial cancer (cancer of the womb lining). In preliminary studies, this test showed excellent potential[2]. However, only 16 out of 562 women taking part in these studies were of 'non-white' ethnicity. We aim to focus this study on women of black and mixed ethnicity, as evidence shows black women are more likely to be diagnosed with endometrial cancer at a late stage and have a higher death rate from endometrial cancer compared to white women[3]. While the reasons for this may not be fully understood, we know that ultrasound may not be as good at excluding endometrial cancer in black women (often due to fibroids), meaning that they sometimes need more invasive tests to be able to diagnose or exclude a cancer[4]. This is a study looking into whether a simple smear test could effectively pick up endometrial cancer specifically in black and mixed-race women who might benefit from it most.

2. What are the possible benefits of the study?

By participating, you will make an important contribution to our research by helping us to further develop our swab tests for cancer prediction and early detection. We hope these tests will eventually be adopted in routine clinical practice in the future. Your contribution would certainly help future women to have this disease detected and treated earlier. The study is not intended to provide a diagnosis to individual patients, and participation is on a voluntary basis. As a research volunteer, you will not derive any immediate benefits from taking part. However, your participation will help us provide better ways of preventing and early detecting of women's cancers, and your contribution to this work is vital.

3. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be invited to take part in this study during your clinic visit. If you wish to hear more about the study this can be explained to you during this appointment. You will be given the opportunity to ask questions. If you wish to participate, you will be asked to sign a **consent form** and will be given a copy to keep for your records.

We will need to collect two samples from you. The first will be a self-collected vaginal sample using a simple swab device. We will ask you to do this in a private area during your clinic appointment. The steps for taking this swab are explained in Figure 1.

The second swab will be collected by doctor seeing you, during your pelvic examination. This will be a cervical smear (brush sample from the neck of the womb) carried out in the same way as smears done on the NHS national cervical screening programme. If this is your first smear, we will explain how the sample is obtained.

Following this examination, you will have your appointment as normal. We will keep a record of your scan findings, as well as findings from any further investigations you may need to have such as a biopsy or camera test (hysteroscopy). All data and samples collected will be fully anonymised; only members of your clinical team in the hospital where you are receiving treatment will have access to your personal details.

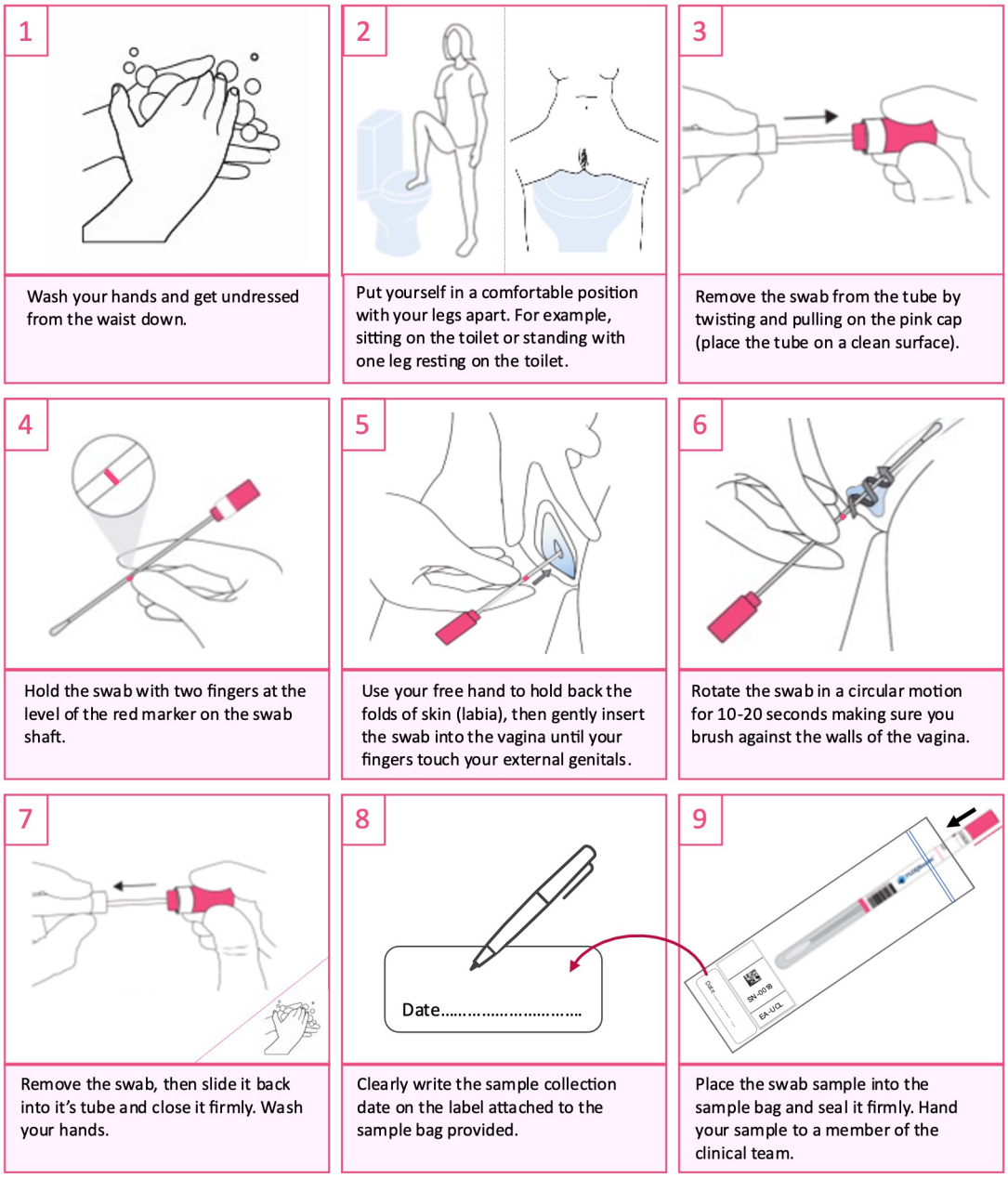

Figure 1: How to take a vaginal swab

4. What will happen to the samples I provide?

Cells extracted from your samples will be analysed as part of our research for markers that might be associated with endometrial cancer. The results from this will be compared with any other results (e.g., biopsy results) that you may have.

The research involves national and international partners, several leading Universities as well as commercial companies. To ensure your anonymity, only coded data with no personal identifiers are used (for example we will not use your name, date of birth, address or NHS number).

We would like your permission to store your samples for up to 25 years. It is possible that new tests or scientific techniques may be developed that have commercial applications. You would not benefit financially in such circumstances. You may ask for your samples to be withdrawn from the study at any point.

5. What will happen to the results of the study?

Once the study is complete, results will be published in scientific journals. If the results are significant, they may be reported in the media. Preliminary results will likely be available within 2 years.

As the test is currently experimental, we will not be able to act on the results, and therefore we will not be able to share your results with you. You will have all the normal care provided by your clinical team and this will be in accordance with local and national recommendations.

We hope that our test can be used in the future as a screening test for endometrial cancer. If our test proves to be accurate, we can be confident that it works in black women, thanks to this study.

6. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes, your participation will be strictly confidential. Only the members of the clinical team looking after you will have access to your personal details. All the samples and tissue you give will be coded and all information collected about you during the course of the research will be treated in the strictest confidence. Personal information will never be made available to anyone outside your hospital and no personal information will be published.

7. Will you be contacting me in the future?

No, we will not contact you once the study is completed unless you wish to be emailed a copy of any research publication.

8. Contacts for Queries

The study is led by Professor Martin Widschwendter, Department of Women's Cancer, Institute for Women's Health, UCL. The study is being led at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust by Miss Jackie Ross and at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust by Mr Osama Naji.

For questions relating to the study please contact:

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9. References

1. https://eveappeal.org.uk/resource/screening-four-cancers-forecee/

2. Herzog et al. A Simple Cervicovaginal Epigenetic Test for Screening and Rapid Triage of Women with Suspected Endometrial Cancer: Validation in Several Cohort and Case/Control Sets J Clin Oncol. 2022 Nov 20; 40(33): 3828–3838.

3. Limb M. Black women in England are at greater risk of late cancer diagnosis than white women. *BMJ* 2023; 380 :p211 doi:10.1136/bmj.p211

4. Doll et al. Estimated Performance of Transvaginal Ultrasonography for Evaluation of Postmenopausal Bleeding in a Simulated Cohort of Black and White Women in the US. JAMA Oncol. 2021 Aug 1;7(8):1158-1165