TOPS Protocol Approved
Following review by the ethics committee the TOPS protocol has received favourable ethical opinion in the UK.

The TOPS protocol (V1.1 02-11-2009) and related documents were submitted to the UK Research Ethics Committee and reviewed on the 1st December 09. Bill Shaw and Nicola Harman attended the meeting and were given a favourable ethical opinion for the trial on 08-Jan-2010.

A subsequent amendment to the protocol (V2.0 10-03-2010) and supporting documents were reviewed on the 18th May and were approved on the 26th May 2010. Nicola (Trial Coordinator) and Dieter (Project Manager) will now continue to set up sites, preparing relevant approval documentation and arranging site initiation visits.

Administrative and Data Coordinating Centre for Trial Coordination

Teams have been set up at the University of Manchester and the University of Liverpool to coordinate trial set up, trial running and data collection.

The teams of researchers coordinating the TOPS trial are divided into the Administrative Centre based at the University of Manchester and the Data Coordinating Centre based at the Medicines for Children Research Network Clinical Trials Unit at the University of Liverpool.

The Administrative and Data Coordinating Centre will work closely with each other and with teams at each of the participating centres to facilitate the set up and running of the trial and coordinate data collection.

Your main contacts at the Administrative Centre and Data Coordinating Centre and their roles are shown below:

- **Dieter Weichart is your main contact at the Administrative Centre.** Dieter has a background in life sciences and international projects and will be working with teams to set up the trial and organise training.

- **Nicola Harman is your main contact at the Data Coordinating Centre.** Nicola has previously coordinated a multicentre paediatric trial and will be working with cleft teams to facilitate site set up and help coordinate the trial.

The TOPS Trial has now been registered with ClinicalTrials.gov. Reference NCT00993551.

The TOPS Trial is also part of the NIHR CCRN portfolio. Study ID: 8249
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TOPS Centres
TOPS trial sites have now been confirmed in the UK, Scandinavia and Brazil.

Welcome to all teams now collaborating in the TOPS trial.

The TOPS trial is an international collaboration of cleft teams based in the UK, Scandinavia and Brazil.

The map shows the location of trial sites. Currently there are 23 cleft teams who will be participating in the trial.

Calibration of Research Teams
Calibration sessions for speech and language therapists, surgeons and clinical

Calibration sessions have been completed for surgeons, geneticists and speech and language therapists involved in the TOPS trial.

Calibration sessions have been scheduled to provide a method of standardising trial procedures and to create networks of health professionals.

Surgeons, Geneticists and Speech Therapists have all attended calibration sessions

Surgical calibration sessions have been completed in Bauru, Brazil (20-27 July 09) and in London, UK October 09 and April 2010.

At the surgical calibration sessions surgeons have had the opportunity to observe Brian Sommerlad’s technique for palate repair and to perform the procedure themselves with the benefit of instruction and assistance from Brian.

A further session for surgical calibration is planned in Bauru, Brazil in August 2010.

A calibration session for clinical geneticists took place in Manchester on the 13th/14th October 2009.

The genetics calibration session was lead by Jill Clayton Smith with additional presentations from Sarah Smithson (Bristol, UK) and Antonio Richieri-Costa (Bauru, Brazil).

Over the two days discussions took place around the identification of syndromes as part of the protocol exclusion criteria together with the assessment of developmental delay using the DENVER II assessment tool.

Calibration sessions for Speech and Language Therapists took place in Magléås, Denmark 11th-14th April 2010.

The session was attended by speech and language therapists representing TOPS trial sites.

Presentations were given by Elisabeth Willadsen, Christina Persson and Anette Lohmander with the focus of the meeting on early speech development and the assessment of canonical babbling.

In addition to calibration sessions all teams will receive on site training in trial procedures as part of site initiation.

Members of the trial team based at the Administrative and Data Coordinating Centre will visit sites to provide this training and there will be plenty of time to ask questions and discuss the trial with the team.

If you have any news that you would like to include in the next newsletter please contact Nicola (n.harman@liv.ac.uk)
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TOPS Site Initiation Visits Begin in Manchester

The first site initiation for the trial took place in Manchester on the 16th April 2010

The first site initiation of the TOPS trial took place at the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital on the 16th April 2010. The training was attended by the research team and training provided on the protocol.

The day included presentations by Bill Shaw and Nicola Harman on the participant pathway through the trial together with information on the trial design.

In particular teams received information on the consent forms and information sheets, randomisation and data collection forms.

Good Clinical Practice—Reminder

Good Clinical Practice—an international ethical and scientific design standard

Good Clinical Practice is an international ethical and scientific quality standard for the design, conduct and record of research involving humans and is an expected standard for clinical trials completed in the UK and Europe.

A quick reminder that we would like all trial team members to complete their Good Clinical Practice training before starting the trial. Evidence of Good Clinical Practice training is required by the National Institute of Health who are funding the trial and for many sites this will also be a requirement of local research and development approval (UK).

Many of you will have already completed your Good Clinical Practice and we hope that you found this enjoyable and valuable. Please ensure that a copy of your certificate or training log is sent to Nicola or Dieter if you haven’t already done so.

For those of you yet to complete your Good Clinical Practice training there are a number of ways to complete the training shown opposite.

If you have any questions regarding Good Clinical Practice training please contact Dieter or Nicola.

First meeting of the Data and Safety Monitoring Board

The first meeting of the Data and Safety Monitoring Board took place on the 21st October 2009 to discuss the trial protocol.

The first meeting of the Data and Safety Monitoring Board took place on the 21st October 2009. At this meeting the draft trial protocol was reviewed together with the Data and Safety Monitoring Board Charter.

The outcomes of the meeting were positive and the trial team were congratulated on a well designed trial protocol.

The independent members of the Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) are:

- David Jones, Professor of Medical Statistics, University of Leicester, DSMB Chair and Statistician
- Peter Brocklehurst, Professor of Perinatal Epidemiology, University of Oxford, DSMB Clinician
- Kathy Chapman, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, University of Utah, DSMB Clinician
- Timothy Goodacre, Consultant Plastic & Cleft Surgeon, John Radcliffe Hospital, DSMB Clinician
- Michael Cunningham, Chief of the Division of Craniofacial Medicine, University of Washington, DSMB Clinician

Recruitment is expected to begin in Manchester in early June 2010

Whilst the main purpose of the training was to train on the trial protocol and data collection procedures it was a good opportunity for team discussion and to discuss the practicalities of the trial.

A Frequently Asked Questions list will be developed from all site visits as a resource available to all teams.

Site visits for the majority of UK sites have been completed or scheduled. Site initiation visits for international sites will be scheduled from September/October 2010.

Ways to complete Good Clinical Practice training

- Attending a course run by your institution (please ask us for a Good Clinical Practice attendance log form if certificates are unavailable).
- Completing the National Institute of Health online Good Clinical Practice training free of charge (for international sites). http://php.niht raining.com/users/login.php
- In the UK only—completing the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Clinical research Network (CRN) online Good Clinical Practice training free of charge. http://www.ukcrn.org.uk/index/training/courses/governance.html

ClinicalTrials.gov - NCT00993551

http://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT00993551
TOPS Trial Steering Committee

The independent members will represent a number of aspects of the trial including:
- Surgery
  Jeffrey Marsh, Kids Plastic Surgery Missouri, USA.
- Speech and Language
  Triona Sweeney, St James Hospital, Dublin.
- Statistics
  John Norrie, University of Glasgow, UK.

In addition, Rosanna Preston, Chief Executive of the Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA) will be an independent member and Lisa Steele has agreed to act as the independent lay representative of the trial.

Main Contact Details

If you have any queries regarding the TOPS trial or would just like to get in touch please contact a member of the TOPS trial team at the Administrative or Data Coordinating Centre using the contact details below.

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Hello I’m Rafferty, you’ll find me on the birthday cards for children taking part in the TOPS trial.

The TOPS Trial Steering Committee will provide independent oversight for the trial.

The Trial Steering committee will be made up of members of the trial teams at Administrative and Data Coordinating Centre together with six independent members.

The first meeting of the Trial Steering Committee is expected to take place in October 2010 by teleconference.

TOPS Trial Steering Committee Members identified and formally invited to join.