

**CAF/21/05 - Unravelling the role of fibroblasts in giant cell arteritis and establishing their contribution in the promotion of inflammation and disease relapse.**

Giant cell arteritis is a common inflammatory condition of old age that affects the large arteries of the body. Untreated, patients can suffer blindness or sudden death. Historically steroids have been the mainstay of treatment. While they can help avoid significant disease complications in the short term, they are associated with serious side effects. Furthermore, inflammation persists in many patients despite steroid treatment, reflected by the fact that often when we stop these drugs the disease commonly returns.

This study seeks to investigate the cells which are responsible for the persistent inflammation and relapsing symptoms. Firstly, I will use tissue which has been previously collected to begin to identify the precise cells which are implicated in the inflammation observed in giant cell arteritis. Second, I will collect fresh samples from relapsing patients and will apply state of the art laboratory technologies to evaluate the function and importance of these particular cells.