

TCS/25/20 - Combining Enteral Nutrition with Biologics to Optimise Induction and Maintenance Therapy for Children with Active Crohn's Disease-The BIOPIC-Kids Study

Crohn's Disease (CD) is an incurable gut condition which causes diarrhoea, rectal bleeding, abdominal pain and undernutrition. Scotland has one of the highest percentages of people with CD worldwide, and the highest in the UK. Exclusive enteral nutrition (EEN), which involves drinking specialised supplements as the only source of nutrition for six-to-eight weeks, is an effective treatment in around 80% of children with active CD. However, EEN is a monotonous, difficult treatment to adhere to due to its restrictive nature. Another group of drug treatments for active CD are called biologics. The utility of biologics can be limited by 35% of patients not responding to them or by their effectiveness wearing-off over time (around 20% of patients annually). Low quality data, in adults, suggest that EEN or partial enteral nutrition (PEN), where only a part of a patient's diet is replaced with specialised drinks, may have an improved impact on disease management when used alongside biologics. We will investigate, in children with active CD initiating treatment with biologics, if adjunct therapy with EEN and PEN for 6 weeks in total will improve short- and long-term disease management compared to a group of children receiving biologics alone. We will measure disease markers in stool and blood together with changes in patients' quality-of-life during the study. If our hypothesis is proven, this combination therapy may improve patient disease management, reduce exposure to potentially more toxic drug treatments, improve quality-of-life and decrease healthcare costs. We will confirm all this in future large-scale studies.