

# The UPSTREAM Study

SEPTEMBER 2019



## PROGRESS UPDATE

A few months have passed since your final study follow-up, and we wanted to **share some results (findings) with you**, as well as some exciting news about **what is happening next**.

Below is a **quick recap about the UPSTREAM study**, followed by the **results and useful updates** on pages 2 and 3.



### A quick recap about UPSTREAM

UPSTREAM was a study of men who had urinary symptoms, such as difficulty passing urine, or frequent and urgent need to pass urine. When assessing men with these symptoms there are two main approaches; the most commonly used is a physical examination and a “flow rate” test. However, sometimes these tests don’t clearly reveal the cause of the symptoms, so some hospitals do an additional test called a “urodynamics” test. This can determine whether enlargement of the prostate is the cause of the problem or whether the symptoms are caused by problems with the bladder. **The aim of the UPSTREAM study was to compare the two approaches one with urodynamics and one without to see if using a urodynamic test improves outcomes.**

Prior to UPSTREAM, we didn’t know whether tests including urodynamics were better than tests without urodynamics. So, **UPSTREAM is a research project which helped work out what the results of treatment are for men who underwent tests with or without urodynamics.**



### The key aims of the UPSTREAM study were to:

**Compare the two approaches to treating men with urinary problems, one using a urodynamic test and one without to see if including a urodynamic test improves the symptoms men experience after 18 months.**

**Establish whether including a urodynamic test reduces the number of patients who have surgery.**

### How could this study help?

We wanted to see if the additional information provided by the urodynamics assessment helps urologists make more accurate diagnoses of the cause of urinary problems and more accurate decisions about whether surgery is likely to be helpful for a man’s urinary symptoms.



## PROGRESS

After four years of hard work, the UPSTREAM study has successfully completed its tests and treatments, collected the information and analysed the results.

It has been a tremendous project, and completely impossible without the kind support of 820 men like yourself who took part, and helped us so much by participating and responding to a lot of requests.



## WHAT ARE THE MAIN RESULTS?

There have been some really important findings (results). The main question the study answered is whether we should do urodynamic tests on all men. We decided this by looking at symptoms and surgery rates, and found that **urodynamic testing does not bring an overall advantage for either**. Thus, **the headline result is not to use urodynamics in all cases**, and this has recently been reported in high-profile presentations at major international meetings.

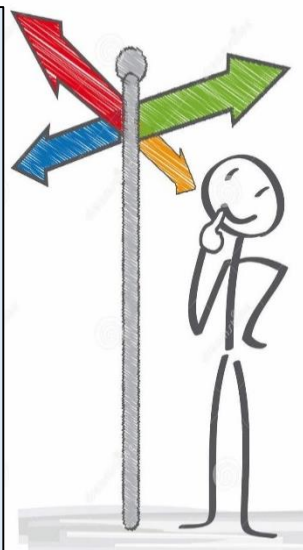
However, **the study also identified that rather a lot of men do not improve with treatment, and sometimes even get worse**. We will soon be studying this group of men in particular, as improvement after treatment is something people naturally hope for; the UPSTREAM study is really going to help us pin down which men are at risk of problems, so that we can plan treatment accordingly. These men may well be more appropriate for more detailed tests, such as urodynamics. So, the next stage of the study is to identify whether urodynamics should be used selectively, and ensure that all men going for treatment can have a good chance of improving.

The **study also identified where the health service can improve quality of assessment**, and this will be a huge help to men in the future, since clear guidance for how to interpret the symptoms can now be issued. This is so important, that several major professional organisations (including the International Continence Society, American Urological Association, British Association of Urological Surgeons and the European Society of Functional Urology) are currently developing a joint guidance document based specifically around the UPSTREAM findings (results).

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

To make the most of the success and beneficial findings of the study, **the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is keen to see how things develop for the men who took part (“you”) over the next few years. So, they have provided funds to examine how men have got on five years after joining the study.**

We will, therefore, be contacting you in the near future to ask whether you would be willing to answer **a one-off questionnaire booklet** about your urinary symptoms, their effect on your everyday life, and your general state of health (similar to those you previously completed) at the five year stage. We will also collect relevant information from your health records (e.g. information about relevant inpatient stays and outpatient attendances), which you previously agreed we could do.





We have really seen valuable research findings which will go a long way to helping men in the future who develop waterworks symptoms thanks to your contribution to the UPSTREAM study.

So, **please accept our sincere appreciation for your help.**

If you have any queries about the UPSTREAM trial, you can contact the central Study Office via email:

[upstream-trial@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:upstream-trial@bristol.ac.uk), or telephone: **0117 331 3907**.

## How do we use your data? (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018. We are committed to handling the information (data) used in the UPSTREAM study securely and confidentially. North Bristol NHS Trust is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom (UK). The Bristol Randomised Trials Collaboration (BRTC), as part of the Bristol Trials Centre (BTC), University of Bristol (UK), are responsible for managing the study. North Bristol NHS Trust and the University of Bristol act as joint data controllers for this study. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. You can find out more about how we use your information:

- at [www.hra.nhs.uk/information-about-patients/](http://www.hra.nhs.uk/information-about-patients/)
- at the University of Bristol website, [www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/data-protection/policy/research-participant-fair-processing-notice/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/data-protection/policy/research-participant-fair-processing-notice/)
- at North Bristol NHS Trust website, [www.nbt.nhs.uk/research-innovation/our-research/patient-information-health-care-research](http://www.nbt.nhs.uk/research-innovation/our-research/patient-information-health-care-research)
- by sending an email request to [upstream-trial@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:upstream-trial@bristol.ac.uk), or by ringing us on **0117 331 3907**.

## Staying informed

Another way to keep up to date with the UPSTREAM study is via our website\*:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/population-health-sciences/projects/upstream/>

*\*currently under review but due to be updated soon.*



**Contact details changed?  
Want to speak to us?**

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