

Clinical trial seeks to improve patient treatment for Crohn's disease

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Robarts Clinical Trials at The University of Western Ontario in London, Canada, has been awarded a 4.7 million dollar grant to conduct a randomized controlled trial evaluating treatment options for Crohn's disease. The outcome is expected to lead to a more streamlined treatment path and better disease management for patients. Abbott, the global health care company, has provided a grant to complete research for the REACT (Randomized Evaluation of an Algorithm for Crohn's Treatment) study.

Crohn's disease is a chronic inflammatory disorder that is characterized by symptoms of diarrhea, abdominal pain and gastrointestinal bleeding. It typically effects younger people and can result in serious complications such as bowel obstruction. Although conventional anti-inflammatory treatments such as prednisone improve symptoms, they are associated with important side effects and are only partially effective. Many patients require surgery to treat the disease.

The REACT study will be carried out at 40 gastroenterology practices in Canada and Belgium. The sites will be randomly assigned to treat patients with [Crohn's disease](#) to either a conventional management strategy featuring gradual escalation of drug therapy or a newer paradigm that features early use of combined [immunosuppression](#) with a [tumor necrosis factor](#) alpha blocking drug and an anti-metabolite.

"This trial builds on the results of recent studies that suggest use of combined therapy early in the course of treatment yields superior long-

term results," says Dr. Brian Feagan, the lead investigator for the study. "We are excited about this project since it is the first large-scale, community-based evaluation of this approach. We expect that patients treated with combination therapy will be more likely to enter remission and rates of hospitalization and health-care utilization will be reduced." Dr. Feagan is the Director of Robarts Clinical Trials and a professor in the Department of Medicine at Western's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

Provided by University of Western Ontario

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