

The eyes have it—promising outlook for psychiatric test

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A pioneering test to help diagnose mental health disorders is a step closer to being used in hospitals and clinics.

A simple eye [test](#) developed by researchers at the University of Aberdeen is now beginning the next phase of development before it can be used clinically.

The test uses a specialised, ultrafast camera to measure [eye movement patterns](#) and initial early results suggest that it is effective in detecting several [mental health](#) disorders including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression.

This latest phase of the study will also consider whether the test is similarly effective in diagnosing people with personality problems and [obsessive compulsive disorder](#).

Dr Phillip Benson, Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Professor David St Clair, Chair of Mental Health at the University of Aberdeen and a consultant psychiatrist at NHS Grampian, developed the test and are looking for volunteers to continue the research here in Aberdeen.

Members of the public are invited to a public meeting to find out more about the research and will have the opportunity to participate in this latest phase of development of the innovative test.

Professor David St Clair, Chair of Mental Health at the University of

Aberdeen and a consultant psychiatrist at NHS Grampian will give a short talk describing the research behind the test and the stage it is now at.

A panel discussion will follow where the audience can ask questions about the research as well as broader questions about mental health in general. Other panel members will include Dr Moyra Guthrie NHS consultant psychiatrist and Rev Jim Simpson hospital chaplain.

Professor St Clair said: "The aim of the test is to help clinicians arrive at a correct diagnosis sooner. Patients can then in turn receive appropriate treatment sooner, helping them to resume a more normal life. We believe the test may also have the potential to identify individuals who are at risk of developing mental health problems before they arise.

"This test was designed and developed here in Aberdeen and which is the only centre in the world that is developing this technology for clinical and diagnostic use. We hope that as many people as possible come along to this open meeting to hear about what we are doing and what can be done to help with this new phase of the research.

"We are looking for individuals aged 18-60 years old who are willing to give up around 2 hours of their time. We need help from both patients with psychiatric disorders and also those with no serious [mental health problems](#).

"We are extremely grateful to volunteers who make this investment today which may help to make tomorrow better for a great many people."

Provided by University of Aberdeen

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