Different corticosteroid induction regimens in children and young people with juvenile idiopathic arthritis: the SIRJIA mixed-methods feasibility study

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About juvenile idiopathic arthritis

Juvenile idiopathic arthritis refers to a group of conditions that cause inflammation and damage of the joints, starting in children and young people aged < 16 years. Treatments include anti-inflammatory medicines, disease-modifying/biologic medicines and corticosteroids. Young people often require corticosteroids at the start of their treatment, or in a flare with worsening inflammation, to get their juvenile idiopathic arthritis under control. A short course of corticosteroids can help and can be given by injection into the joint, through a drip into a vein, by injection into the muscle or in the form of tablets or liquid to be taken orally. Although they have been used for decades, there is no research to show the best way(s) of giving corticosteroids.

Study aims

The study aimed to (1) agree on what corticosteroid treatments to compare in a treatment trial and the best way to measure changes in juvenile idiopathic arthritis to evaluate a quick-acting treatment and (2) find out if there are enough young people with active juvenile idiopathic arthritis in the UK to be included in such a study.

Methods

Published research on corticosteroids in juvenile idiopathic arthritis was reviewed. Health-care professionals were asked how they choose which corticosteroids to use and which method of administration to use. Interviews were carried out with children and young people and their families to (1) consider the design of a study comparing corticosteroid routes, (2) identify outcomes important to them and (3) determine whether or not they would be willing to take part in a future study. A 3-month feasibility study was carried out to collect details of children and young people with active juvenile idiopathic arthritis before and after corticosteroid treatment to measure improvements in juvenile idiopathic arthritis activity, and to see whether or not a larger study would be possible.

Findings

This study showed that corticosteroids are used in different ways across the UK. The views of children, young people and their families must be taken into account when designing a future study. This study calculated the number of young people who would be needed to take part in the future, showing that it would be possible to do a larger study that compared different corticosteroid treatments, which would help everyone to understand the best way to use corticosteroids.
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This report

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