



Synopsis

Compression Hosiery to Avoid the Post-Thrombotic Syndrome: a synopsis of the CHAPS RCT

Ankur Thapar,¹ Rebecca Lawton,¹ Imad Adamestam,² John Norrie,³
Sarrah Peerbux¹ and Alun H Davies,^{1*} on behalf of the CHAPS Trial Investigators

¹Department of Surgery and Cancer, Imperial College London, London, UK

²Usher Institute of Population Health Sciences and Informatics, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

³Centre for Public Health, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland

*Corresponding author a.h.davies@imperial.ac.uk

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Plain language summary

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Plain language summary

In the United Kingdom, each year, around 1 in 1000 people are diagnosed with a blood clot in their leg, known as deep vein thrombosis. Around 50% of people who are diagnosed with a blood clot will go on to experience leg pain, leg swelling and sometimes a leg ulcer (an open wound that is hard to heal). Together, these symptoms are known as post-thrombotic syndrome. This condition is caused by damage to the veins in the legs, leading to an increase in pressure. This pressure can cause damage to the valves in the veins, which usually help carry blood up the leg and back to the heart.

The post-thrombotic syndrome can have a significant effect on a person's quality of life, as well as their ability to work, their confidence and independence. In most patients, there is no effective treatment, and they may lose income through unemployment. If a patient develops a leg ulcer, they will require bandaging that needs to be regularly changed.

There is some evidence to say that compression stockings may help to prevent post-thrombotic syndrome, but, there is also some evidence to say that compression stockings have no effect and international guidelines are conflicted. In the United Kingdom, clinical guidelines suggest that if a patient has had a blood clot, doctors should not prescribe compression stockings. In the studies that showed that compression stockings have no effect, some researchers think this is because only half the patients who should have worn stockings wore them in the study. Compression stockings can be difficult to put on. They can be uncomfortable, tight to wear in hot weather and sometimes people forget to put them on.

The Compression Hosiery to Avoid Post-Thrombotic Syndrome trial aimed to confirm whether there is any benefit to wearing compression stockings in addition to the usual treatment for deep vein thrombosis, which is blood thinning medication. Unfortunately, the Compression Hosiery to Avoid Post-Thrombotic Syndrome trial had to close early due to poor patient recruitment during the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that the results of the study, presented in this report, describe the data that were gathered, but the authors cannot draw any certain conclusions.