



MEDIA RELEASE

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AN ARMY LIFE COULD BE GOOD FOR THE HEART AND LEGS

The largest private provider of MRI scanning in Europe, Alliance Medical, is running a major new research project with University College London and the British Army, looking at how exercise affects health.

Generously funded by the British Heart Foundation and dependent on the enthusiasm of staff at Army Training Regiment Lichfield, the research focuses on new recruits to the Army, and aims to measure the effect of exercise training on heart muscle, known medically as the myocardium.

Up to 600 new recruits will be scanned both before and after an intensive training programme. Growth of the myocardium will be detected by state of the art MRI equipment provided by Alliance Medical, specially adapted for measuring heart function and size.

Called a Cardiac Optimised Magnetic Resonance Imaging Scanner, the equipment is transported to the Army barracks at Lichfield, West Midlands.

This unique study will also look at the impact of training on bone by assessing cortical bone thickness before and after training.

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Dr John Payne, a cardiology research fellow at UCL, who is leading the research said:
"Understanding how our hearts grow is particularly interesting to doctors. Many patients lose heart muscle after a heart attack resulting in a weakened heart and sometimes heart failure".

"By measuring the recruits' hearts before and after training we are able to calculate how much growth has occurred. The genes that cause this growth can then be identified allowing us to better understand the processes that encourage or discourage heart growth. Such knowledge is invaluable in the future prevention and treatment of heart disease."

Dr Andy Dun, Medical Director for Alliance Medical, said: "It is clear that Magnetic Resonance Imaging is rapidly emerging as an invaluable addition to the diagnostic tools available to Cardiologists. We are delighted to be at the forefront of these developments and wholeheartedly support this research."

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305 words

NOTES TO EDITORS

Photographs are available upon request

- Alliance Medical currently provides MRI scans in 17 British hospitals and has a fleet of 26 mobile scanner units operating in 84 clinical locations. The company has unrivalled expertise and experience in the provision of MRI scans.

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