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Media Release

RUH researchers set their sights on study success

The maternity and paediatric research teams at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust are celebrating recruiting their 1,000th young participant to a major study which uses an infra-red camera to screen for congenital cataracts in newborn babies.

The latest participant to join the study is the son of Corsham couple Milan and Binod Gurung.

Mum Milan said: "It's really exciting that he's the 1,000th baby to take part in the research. It's the first time that I've been involved in a research study, but it's been really easy to take part and I'd be happy to do it again. It's a really important study and helpful for him and us as his parents."

Ros Knight, Paediatric Research Nurse, said: "We're delighted to have reached such a major milestone in our recruitment to this study. Cataracts don't only affect older people and are the most common cause of avoidable child blindness in the world.

"Improved cataract detection, resulting in earlier surgery, could reduce the risk of life-long visual impairment in babies born with a cataract."

Funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), the DiVO (Digital Imaging versus Ophthalmoscopy) study is a two-year UK clinical study which aims to find out if digital imaging is a more accurate method of detecting cataracts in newborn babies than the current technique using an ophthalmoscope (a medical eye torch).

Each baby taking part in the study will have both the normal ophthalmoscopy test and imaging with the Neocam device to compare the two methods. The process is quick and painless.

The study is particularly important for babies with darker skin tones as the current method for detecting cataracts is less accurate in eyes with more pigmentation. Earlier studies have shown that the new test may work better.

The RUH is one of a number of sites supporting the DlvO study. Parents may be asked to help with the study after the birth of a child, but taking part is optional.

Find out more about the DlvO study: <https://divostudy.org/>

Ends

Notes to Editor:

At the RUH we're proud to put people at the heart of what we do, striving to create an environment where everyone matters. Everyone means the people we care for, the people we work with and the people in our community.

We provide a wide range of services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

We also provide specialist services for rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME via the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases which we acquired in 2015.

In 2021, we acquired Sulis Hospital Bath, an independent hospital that provides care for both private and NHS patients. This has enabled us to provide more care for NHS patients, as well as continuing to provide private care to those who choose it. Any additional income earned through private care is reinvested in services for the benefit of the people we care for at both Sulis and the RUH.

Our new Dyson Cancer Centre brings together many of the RUH's cancer services under one roof to provide a cancer services hub for over 500,000 people in the South West. The centre includes the RUH's oncology, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services, a 22-bed inpatient ward, a dedicated pharmacy, research team and nuclear medicine and physics teams.

A key feature of the new centre is the Macmillan Wellbeing Hub. The three-storey hub provides a welcoming, non-clinical space designed around the needs of patients and their families. It also includes comfortable accommodation where relatives and loved ones can stay overnight.

We work closely with other health and care organisations as members of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board. We strive to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in our community by working together build one of the healthiest places to live and work.

We are rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk