

Participating in research

Karin and Carson Ralton

Hi I'm Karin Ralton.

I'm 55 years of age and I've been coming here since the Anne Rowling Clinic started, and I came here because I'm a patient and I have been a patient ever since.

And my name's Carson Ralton. I'm Karin's husband and I have been coming here with Karin since the start...as a designated driver.

[Laughter!]

We've taken part in two studies. One... the first study that we took part in was to do with our eyesight and we went through various tests which to be honest I'm not sure exactly what they were, but we put ourselves in the hands of the expert and let him look at our eyes and do the various tests that he had to do.

And although I don't have MS I was asked to do it as a comparison to people who do have MS. So I was happy to take part in that.

Well I did the same research and the other research we did as a couple was the microbiome research. And that involved doing like an iPad. It asked you questions about what you ate and when you ate and how much you ate of various items of food.

And then we were given a pack to take away my husband and I and it had to be somebody that lived in the house with you because it was a comparison of how your gut was affected if you had MS and how if you didn't have MS.

And you had to do a sample of your poo! A couple of samples and they give you a pack. It was all very professionally done.

Well for me and probably for Carson for me it probably won't affect me in my lifetime but it will affect future generations and that could be anybody in the world you know who potentially could have MS. So if they find something that can alleviate it or even stop it. That's all very well and good if you take part in it.

I mean I've watched KarinI've watched her symptoms deteriorate over the years. They're...quite stable just now thankfully. But...um..Over the years they

have deteriorated and it does make, you know, life difficult at times and the last thing that we as a couple would want is for this disease to continue the way it is and not have the medicines or the ability to improve people's lives in the future.

And.. you know hopefully one day research will be able to do that you know. So yeh!

It was all done very professionally and you know there was no pressure to do it. If you don't want to do it that's fine. But as a couple that's what we were quite happy to do.

But it was all done very well and everybody is very approachable and answer any questions you have about it and you know you can withdraw from it if you want to. There's no pressure.

And you're always given plenty of information which you read at the time. I'm not scientifically minded myself, so it was kind of in one ear and out the other. But you know the knowledge is that you've maybe helped somewhere along the line and that's good enough for us.

And we had a laugh when we did that.

We did!

[Laughter]

We did!

Organising our poo time!

[Laughter!]

Don't be afraid.

Yeh don't be afraid.

There's nothing to be afraid of.

And you know if you're able to do it and you can find the confidence to do it then... I would certainly.....recommend it....recommend that you take part in these tests.

It's like all things you know it's like we wouldn't have antibiotics if people hadn't taken part in research. So it's the same sort of thing you know, it's going to help everybody in the long run.

I'm sure anybody with MS would like to know that sometime further down the line whether it's in their lifetime or afterwards that things can only get better you know.

It's not a nice disease. It's a debilitating disease and if we can find ways to improve people's lives then I think we've got to take these opportunities.

Yes.