

## **Lay Summary**

**BRAIN UK Ref: 13/011**

### **DNA polymorphisms in mental illness (DPIM)**

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We are interested to understand whether there is a genetic basis for susceptibility to Wernicke Korsakoff's Syndrome (WKS). This syndrome has a number of symptoms including short-term memory loss and in extreme cases psychosis. WKS is thought to be the result of a dietary deficiency of vitamin B1 which is also known as thiamine. WKS can be brought on by malnutrition but in the Western world it is often associated with chronic alcohol misuse. It is currently unclear why some people who chronically misuse alcohol develop WKS whilst others do not. If WKS is identified early enough then it is entirely treatable with intravenous administration of large doses of thiamine. The purpose of our study is to investigate genetic effects that may influence an individual's susceptibility to the syndrome. This knowledge may have the potential to inform clinical practice in terms of identifying alcohol misusers at greatest risk of developing WKS prior to the onset of symptoms.