What are the risks of taking part?
There are no risks of taking part in the study, although skin scrapings and blood tests can be slightly uncomfortable.

Will my information be kept confidential?
All the information about you will be kept confidential and will be anonymised (no one will know that it is you). We will only use your name if we need to contact your doctor about your health and we will ask your permission before we do so.

Is the study over a long period of time?
No. You will be asked to have an examination of your skin on two occasions, six weeks apart.

What happens if I decide to withdraw from the study?
You are free to withdraw from the study at anytime, without giving any reason. We will not be able to withdraw any data collected, but this will be anonymised.

Who will care for me during the study?
Throughout the study, your own doctor will remain fully responsible for all your medical care, as usual.

Who does the study involve?
The study involves researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Brighton and Sussex Medical School and the NHS. It is funded by the British Skin Foundation and Public Health England. The study has been approved by Camberwell St Giles NRES Committee Ref: 12/LO/0001.
Scabies and skin disease
Scabies is a skin condition caused by a tiny mite which burrows into the skin. Scabies has nothing to do with a lack of cleanliness but it can often cause outbreaks in residential care/nursing homes as it can be passed from one person to another through skin contact. Scabies is easily treatable but it can be very distressing because it can be very itchy. In older people the diagnosis of scabies may be difficult because the signs of scabies may be unusual and not easily recognised.

What is the study about?
The purpose of this study is to find out the signs of scabies in people in a residential care/nursing home for the elderly to help to diagnose scabies more easily in future. The information from the study will also help us to design future studies to find out what is the best treatment for scabies for people who are living and working in residential care/nursing homes.

What does the study involve?
This study will involve the residents and staff of residential care/nursing homes for the elderly where there might be an outbreak of scabies. Specialist skin doctors (dermatologists) will be members of the study team and will examine the skin of residents and staff members of the home who agree to take part.

We would like as many of the residents and staff to take part as possible because people can have scabies and not realise it. Knowing who has scabies can help to manage the outbreak more successfully.

What does the examination involve?
The skin examination involves the doctor asking you about your general health, past medical history and the medicines you take. They will then ask you about any skin problems you may have or have had in the past and any treatments for skin conditions.

The doctor will then examine your skin, hair, mouth and nails. The examination will take place in a completely private room with a chaperone present. Ideally, we would prefer you to undress to your underwear for a full examination, but if you do not want to undress you do not have to.

If there is evidence of scabies then the doctor will ask to perform some simple tests which can prove whether a person has scabies.

Burrow ink test
The burrow ink test is a simple test where ink is applied to the skin and then wiped away. The ink will show up any burrows where the mite is suspected.

Skin flakes
The doctor would like to take a small scraping of skin. This is a painless procedure designed to get some flakes of skin which may contain the mite which causes scabies. The flakes of skin will be examined under a microscope.

Taking a blood sample
We would also like to take a small sample of your blood. Together with some of your skin scrapings this will help researchers to better diagnose, treat and prevent scabies in the future. To do this we will need to store your samples under the Brighton and Sussex Medical School Human Tissue Authority Research Licence no: 12561.

If you do not wish to have your blood taken or your samples stored you do not have to, it is entirely optional. We would still like you to take part in the study and will discard any skin flakes after they have been examined.

Medical photography
The doctor may ask for your permission to take a photograph of your skin. These photographs may be used in any publications about the research or in teaching materials to help to educate health professionals. This is entirely optional and if you do not wish to have your photograph taken you do not have to. We would still like you to take part in the study.

What happens after the examination?
The doctor will tell you what they have found. With your permission, they will also write a letter to your own doctor to let them know too.

Follow-up in the study
The doctors will repeat the examination of your skin six weeks later and may wish to take a skin scraping, ink test, blood test and photographs as before. The doctor will tell you what they have found and with your permission, write a letter to your own doctor to let them know too.

Do I have to take part in this study?
No, it's up to you and is entirely voluntary.