

MAHSC

Manchester Academic Health Science Centre (MAHSC)

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The University of Manchester

NHS

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NEWSLETTER



Professor Christopher EM Griffiths, MAHSC Director

Directors Diary

As we welcome in 2011 there is a sense of optimism in the air. I am convinced that MAHSC is making real progress- I was able to report this to the Board of Governors in January. We are beginning to turn those intangible markers of success into tangibles. The key is for us to demonstrate that we are able to achieve more now that we have an AHSC than we could before. These deliverables will be discussed in detail by the Academic Section leads at our upcoming MAHSC Executive Management Team (EMT) Away day in February.

The EMT and its associated committees is in the process of restructuring so as to emphasise the importance of partnership working between the Academic Sections and the patient-centric nature of our mission.

I am also delighted to report that Earl Howe, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department of Health, has accepted our invitation to visit MAHSC on 7th April. We will be able to show the Minister how our AHSC is different to the other four by the ways in which we are tackling the essence of a health science system i.e.: taking innovative ideas into clinical practice and thereby improving patient care.

We say a fond goodbye to Professor Jonathan Cooke who is retiring from his position as Director of R&D at UHSM and from his dual MAHSC responsibilities representing his Trust at EMT and on the R&D Directors Group. Undoubtedly Jonathan has been a MAHSC stalwart from the beginning.

I am pleased also to report that Professor Ian Jacobs, currently Dean of the Faculty of Biomedical Sciences at University College London, has been appointed Dean of the Faculty of Medical Human Sciences and Vice-President of the University of Manchester. Professor Jacobs will also assume the role of Head of MAHSC as of 28 March 2011.

The promising results of a study with advanced kidney cancer patients at The Christie has been published in The Journal of Immunotherapy. The seven-year study, which was led by Professor Robert Hawkins, showed that Interleukin-2 can produce very high-rates of response with long-term remissions in carefully selected kidney cancer patients. The disease is hard to treat when it has spread to other organs, with survival rates less than 5%, but around 25% of the 72 trial patients who were treated with high doses of the drug Interleukin-2 are now in remission.

MAHSC Member Successes

A genetic medicine team at the National Institute for Health Research's Manchester Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) has had the results of a ground-breaking study into autoimmune disease published in the prestigious international journal 'Nature Genetics'. Autoimmunity is a disease in which the immune system attacks a person's own tissue. Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is a particular form of autoimmunity characterised by the production of an immune response against a patient's own DNA and RNA. Led by Professor Yanick Crow, the research team also included BRC researchers Sarah Daly, Jill Urquhart, Hannah Gornall and Graeme Black.

A North West trial of alternatives to ventilators for helping premature babies to breathe could reduce the risk of lung problems and other complications for around 7000 babies a year. Led by Dr Suresh Victor from the Newborn Intensive Care Unit at Saint Mary's Hospital in Manchester and clinical lecturer at The University of Manchester, the study also involves experts from The University of Manchester, and several neonatal units from the North West of England. They have been awarded funding of £240,000 by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to carry out the three-year trial.

Cancer Research UK (CR-UK) and its commercial arm Cancer Research Technology (CRT), have established a team of scientists with expertise in cancer stem cell research to identify new targets to detect, monitor and treat cancer. Four world class research groups have been selected to undertake this research, including Dr Rob Clarke's Breast Biology Group in the School of Cancer and Enabling Sciences. The consortium will collaborate on an initial two-year research project to unravel the role of cancer stem cells in the development, growth and spread of tumours in breast, prostate and head and neck cancers.

A clinical team based at Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI) has recently treated its first patient with a pancreatic islet cell transplant – a first for the North West of England. This potentially life-saving therapy is given to patients with type 1 diabetes, who through no fault of their own rely entirely on multiple daily insulin injections and needle-stick blood glucose monitoring.

People & Places

Congratulations to Paul Brocklehurst one of the University of Manchester SpRs honorary lecturers for receiving a NIHR clinician scientist award .

The Centre for Suicide Prevention at The University of Manchester has won a major research contract to investigate suicide and homicide by people with mental illness. The new work will extend research currently conducted by the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness (Inquiry). The Inquiry was first established at The University of Manchester in 1996 but the new contract for this work was won in open competition. As part of the contract from the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA), the Inquiry will monitor suicides and other specified causes of death within mental health services. Themed reviews will provide recommendations to improve patient care and will cover a range of topics, such as risk assessment, care delivery and management of self-injury.



Biomass Boiler

Weather experts tell us it was the coldest December on record. Yet, despite the sub zero temperatures and the pressures to keep patients warm, energy efficient Wythenshawe Hospital has lived up to its title of Britain's Greenest Hospital.

The hospital, run by UHSM (the University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust) maintained its energy savings of 26 per cent from its original target throughout December thanks to an investment in biomass technology, ground source heating and high efficiency equipment. Some of the success is due to the installation of a £1.6 million biomass boiler, which is a first for a North West NHS hospital, and a similar, but smaller boiler in the hospital's cardiac centre, a ground source heat pump in the Cystic Fibrosis Unit and energy efficient lighting, insulation and heat exchangers across the site. Since these systems were first introduced in 2007/8, and the wood burning 4MW boiler system was first fired up last January, the Trust has achieved efficiencies of 26 per cent on its original target, exceeding the original target of a 20 per cent cut by 2012.



Left to right: Ms Helen McAteer, Professor Linda Davies, Ms Alison Littlewood (IMPACT Programme Manager), Professor Carolyn Chew-Graham, Professor Christopher Griffiths, Pat Bowker (Salford Representative for Psoriasis Association),

A £2m study has been launched at The University of

Manchester aiming to improve the care of people with psoriasis. The five-year IMPACT Programme (Identification and Management of Psoriasis Associated Comorbidity) has received a National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) grant to fund research into the physical and psychological needs of psoriasis patients. Psoriasis is an incurable skin condition that affects at least 2% of the population and is characterised by red, flaky patches of skin. Co-investigator Dr Lis Cordingley, who is based in the University's School of Community-Based Medicine, said: "The award recognises the wide ranging impact that psoriasis and associated comorbidities has upon the lives of people with this condition". World-renowned dermatologist and MAHSC Director Professor Chris Griffiths, based in the University's School of Translational Medicine, is leading the research.

Mental health services in Manchester have been identified as amongst some of the best in the country for promoting recovery as part of a national initiative endorsed by the Department of Health. Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust and Manchester City Council's Directorate for Adults, have been chosen as one of just six demonstration sites nationally by the NHS Confederation, the National Mental Health Development Unit and the Centre for Mental Health as part of the Supporting Recovery through Organisational Change project. Being named as a demonstrator site means services in Manchester will serve as a beacon, supporting and advising other organisations who are looking to embed a culture of recovery. The accolade is given in recognition of 'excellent progress made in successfully embedding a recovery orientation at an organisational level.' The Trust and Manchester City Council are the only organisations in the North West to be named as a demonstration site. Nadine Schofield, Head of Service Transformation at the Trust, led the bid along with local authority mental health Commissioner James Williams.



Nadine Schofield



Nurse operating the machine

The recent surge in Swine Flu (H1N1) cases has already led to a number of deaths in the North West, but in a first for the region, medical teams at UHSM (University Hospital of South Manchester) have been using specialist life support techniques to save the lives of eight patients. The ECMO (extra corporeal membrane oxygenation) specialist life-support technique uses a complex machine which takes blood from the heart, removes carbon dioxide and then pumps oxygen into it before pushing it back around the body. It is only needed by a tiny percentage of swine flu patients who suffer major complications, and it allows their lungs to rest completely. The treatment takes between five days and three weeks, and even if it is successful, patients still face a long recovery in intensive care. Over Christmas and the New Year, a team of doctors, nurses and heart and lung machine technicians worked around the clock to keep the swine flu patients alive. The unit is part of a small network of 20 beds at five hospitals across the country, and was opened just a month ago.



ECMO Team

People & Places continued

Research carried out by Professor Vaskar Saha, who is Cancer Research UK Professor of Paediatric Oncology at The University of Manchester, has shown that a new treatment increases survival to almost 70 per cent for children whose acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) returns. The results of a trial published online in The Lancet on 4th December were so promising that now all children with relapsed ALL are being offered the trial drug Mitoxantrone. The trial was funded by Cancer Research UK (CRUK) and Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research. Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has sponsored the study since early 2010, providing oversight of all the clinical trial processes including the conduct, management and safety of the study. Patients from Royal Manchester Children's Hospital have also participated in the trial, and it is supported by the National Institute for Health Research's Manchester Biomedical Research Centre (MBRC).

Professor Gareth Evans, Professor of Medical Genetics at The University of Manchester, has been appointed as the Director of the Manchester Breast Centre. He is also a Consultant in Medical Genetics at Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The Manchester Cancer Research Centre, through The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, has joined forces with Europe's leading oncology organisations in the global fight against cancer. The project, EurocanPlatform, has received €12 million from the European Union to streamline cross border research. It will find more effective ways to ensure the prevention, early discovery and treatment of different forms of cancer. EurocanPlatform is a network of Europe's 28 most research-intensive institutions in the field of cancer, of which the majority are clinical (patient focused), the remainder being engaged in basic research. The collaborative platform allows individual research groups and organisations to conduct studies they would not otherwise have the resources for; with the costs of expensive equipment, tumour material and competence shared.

The GMCLRN held their biannual performance awards in January and cancer won 3 of the 4 awards, which was a great achievement: Highest Recruitment into National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Portfolio by Local Priority Group (LPG); Highest Number of NIHR Portfolio Commercial Studies by LPG; and Highest Number of Studies entered into Coordinated System for gaining NHS Permission (CSP) by LPG.

The British Association for Cancer Research (BACR) are holding a meeting that focuses on cancer epigenetics on 19 May 2011 in London. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss epigenetics of cancer initiation, environmental influences on susceptibility, novel epigenetic technologies, epigenome profiling and the wide range of epigenetic therapeutic targets. Scientific sessions will be presented by leading European and UK speakers including Zdenko Herceg, Bryan Turner, Eamonn Maher, Steve Clifford and Nick La Thangue with the keynote lecture given by Stephan Beck from University College London. For further information please refer to the website: <http://www.bacr.org.uk>

Events

The Centre of Excellence in Biopharmaceuticals (COEBP) was officially launched on 23rd November 2010, following its initial establishment earlier in the year. The opening showcase event was held in the Michael Smith Building at the University of Manchester, which hosts the Centre. Prof Alan Dickson (Centre Director) gave the welcome address, where he outlined the Centre's aims and strategy for the future. Dr Linda



Dr Linda Magee & Professor Alan Dickinson

Magee, MAHSC Chief Operating Officer, had the honour of cutting the ribbon to declare the Centre officially open. The launch event coincided with the 7th Annual bioprocess UK Conference held in Manchester on 24th/25th November and many key sector members from the biopharmaceutical industry and scientists from research institutes attended the COEBP opening. Many of those who attended took the opportunity to tour the Centre's unique robotic facilities and the associated analytical capabilities. The launch event was a huge success, with more than 70 people present and the occasion provided an excellent networking opportunity for all who attended.



The NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre are hosting a one day event "Application of New technologies" at the Nowgen Centre on Thursday, 17th March 2011. Scientists, Researchers, Clinical Academics, Lab Managers, Information Managers, Divisional Research Managers, Lecturers, Pathologists, Procurement Managers, Technical Support, Investigators, Students, Post-Doctoral Fellows are all encouraged to attend. You should attend if you are involved in biomedical research or clinical practice and need to evaluate new technologies. Register your free place at mbrc@cmft.nhs.uk. For further information please call 0161 901 2679 or 0161 276 6614 or email: penny.johnson@cmft.nhs.uk zoe.talks@cmft.nhs.uk

Business

Greater Manchester

NIHR Comprehensive Local Research Network

The Phase 2 report for the NIHR CRN North West Exemplar Programme has shown that proactive and collaborative working by North West NIHR Local Research Networks, NHS organisations and pharmaceutical

companies has helped improve the UK's clinical research competitiveness. The North West Exemplar Programme was initiated to demonstrate that the NHS could compete with the rest of Europe in the set-up and delivery of high quality, commercially-sponsored clinical research studies. Professor Martin Gibson, Director, NIHR Greater Manchester Comprehensive Local Research Network and MAHSC Academic Section Lead for Evaluation, said: "The Exemplar Programme shows that the North West of England is a great place to carry out commercial clinical trials. As a region, we collaborate across all areas and organisations to make sure clinical trials are set-up quickly so that patients get access to new treatments as quickly as possible. We welcome the Phase II report and are building on the hard work we've put in to make sure the North West remains a premier place to carry out commercial research."

Researchers and doctors from Manchester institutes have joined forces with pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) to launch an innovative joined-up approach to tackling chronic inflammatory disease. The creation of the Manchester Centre for Nuclear Hormone Research in Disease is the first time academics, the NHS and industry have collaborated in a three-way approach to finding new therapies for inflammatory conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD), and rheumatoid arthritis. The centre will be jointly managed by Professors David Ray and Andrew Loudon from The University of Manchester and the National Institute for Health Research Manchester Biomedical Research Centre (MBRC), and Dr Roberto Solari of GSK. It will focus research efforts on understanding the role of nuclear hormone receptors in inflammatory diseases and seeking to identify compounds that could help lead to new treatments. Leading the research teams will be Visiting Professor Stuart Farrow, the newly appointed Chair in Experimental Therapeutics at The University of Manchester and the MBRC. Professor Farrow will also continue his current role at GSK, where he has been developing new medicines for lung diseases such as asthma and COPD since 2000. An external advisory board with industrial and academic representatives will also provide guidance on research strategy. Initial work will focus on several specific projects which together address the broader aim of understanding the biology of chronic inflammation, what causes it to persist and the best options to develop new therapies. The new programme will initially run for three years, and the team is also applying for additional industrial and Medical Research Council funding to extend the scope of the collaboration.

Training

nowgen

A Centre for Genetics in Healthcare



ing a project called the **Schools Genomics Programme** which aims to change the way that genetics is taught in UK secondary schools. It is designed to equip young people to assess the real potential of genomics and how best to make informed decisions about future healthcare. As part of this project, Nowgen recently made three TV programmes with Teachers' TV and each

programme included interviews with clinical experts, and patients and families who have experienced conditions in which genetics plays a role. In one programme, Dr Ralph Levinson, from the Institute of Education, chaired a discussion with Professors Steve Jones from University College London, Jane Worthington from the School of Translational Medicine at the University of Manchester, Dian Donnai from Central Manchester and Manchester Children's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and John Harris of The University of Manchester's Institute of Science, Ethics and Innovation about whether an increased knowledge of genomes will help scientists to understand human personality and behaviour. Professor Dian Donnai, Executive Director of Nowgen, presented these programmes at the launch event for the Teachers TV programmes that took place at the Wellcome Trust in December, attended by teachers and organisations involved in the development of the overall project. The Wellcome Trust has funded the project. The completed programmes are available to download from the Teachers' TV website: <http://www.teachers.tv/series/genetics-and-medicine>

For more information on these stories and more from the MAHSC members see the following websites:

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/news/>
<http://www.christie.nhs.uk/press/default.aspx>
<http://www.uhsm.nhs.uk/News/Pages/news.aspx>
<http://www.mhsc.nhs.uk/>
<http://www.srht.nhs.uk/media-centre/latest-news/>
<http://www.salford-pct.nhs.uk/News.aspx?section=5>
<http://www.cmft.nhs.uk/trust/latest-news.aspx>

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