



MAHSC NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2010

DIRECTOR'S DIARY



Professor Alan North FRS,
MAHSC Director and Dean of
The University of Manchester
Faculty of Human & Medical
Sciences

February saw the first MAHSC Executive Management Team (EMT) Away Day following the completion of the appointments of our Academic Section Leads in January. This was a chance for the team to come together and spend time discussing the development and priorities for our clinical and enabling themes in order to deliver our vision to **be a leading global centre for the delivery of innovative applied health research and education into healthcare**. We are now collating the output from the day and I look forward to updating you in due course.

We were also delighted to host colleagues from NIHR/NOCRI (NIHR Office for Clinical Research Infrastructure) here in Manchester this month. The meeting was held at the WT Clinical Research Facility (WTCRF) and included presentations on MAHSC, WTCRF, the Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), the Translational Research Centre (TRF), Greater Manchester Comprehensive Research Network (GMCLRN) & MAHSC Evaluation Section, MAHSC Cancer Section plus a presentation from one of our industry partners, ICON plc.

MAHSC MEMBER SUCCESSES

- **Manchester: Integrating Medicine and Innovative Technology (MIMIT™) celebrated two years of operation on the 25th of January** with a showcase of its projects nearing completion. The presentations illustrated the way in which the MIMIT model identifies unmet clinical needs and leads the development of solutions to address those needs. Projects covered a broad range of clinical areas, including development of aortic stents, real time pain assessment and EEG monitoring of preterm babies. MIMIT director Prof. Jackie Oldham was delighted to announce two awards for the best unmet clinical needs disclosures brought to MIMIT in 2009. The first was to Tim Blackburn, Central Manchester University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (CMFT), for his disclosure 'Facial Paralysis' where the solution would introduce a step change in management of paralysis due to Stroke, Bells palsy and other conditions and the second was to Paul Abeles, Consultant Clinical Psychologist also from CMFT for the disclosure 'Advanced Sleep, Activity and Rest Monitoring' to help those suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome/ME.
- To work out how our moods colour our thoughts, **UHSM researchers created a 'colour wheel' based on the charts used when choosing shades of paint**. They then asked hundreds of men and women, some of whom were depressed, which of the colours they were most drawn to, which was their favourite, and which best represented their mood. Healthy volunteers in a 'normal' mood usually chose yellow to reflect how they felt but people classed as anxious or depressed were drawn to grey, according to the study, published in the journal BMC Medical Research Methodology. The team believes the chart, which they have called the Manchester Colour Wheel, could be used to help diagnose depression.
- MAHSC hosts several biobanks including the MCRC Biobank, the BRC Biobank and the **UK DNA Biobanking Network (UDBN)**. We are working together to ensure full coordination and best practice between ourselves and with our partners.

An example is the collection for Motor Neurone Disease (MND) held by UDBN. Over 2,500 samples have been donated over the last six years to help drive forward MND genetic research and UDBN's role is to facilitate access to large numbers of high quality, well documented DNA samples and to maximise the use of the sample collections. UDBN has processed a total of more than 50,000 samples from various diseases to-date. Professor Bill Ollier (R&D Director at SRFT) and Dr Martin Yuille (MAHSC Deputy Academic Section Lead for Infrastructure & Technology) are playing a leading role.

- **A team of Manchester psychologists have developed an effective cutting edge treatment for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).** Staff from **Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust and the University of Manchester**, are using Meta-cognitive Therapy to help people with OCD by training them to change their relationship with their thoughts. Manchester is the first city in the UK to use the method. This approach of challenging beliefs about thoughts and changing the way people view them rather than treating thoughts has proved to be extremely powerful over a short space of time and Meta-cognitive therapy is now in use in Australia, Germany and Norway.
- An international clinical study looking at children with kidney disease associated with the presence of protein in the urine, has shown for the first time that the drug Losartan can significantly lower urine protein levels in children with a very low rate of side-effects. The study was **led by Dr Nick Webb, Consultant Paediatric Nephrologist at the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital and Deputy Director of the Greater Manchester, Lancashire and South Cumbria Medicines for Children Research Network (GMLC)**, and was carried out in 50 centres across 19 countries. The results have recently been published in the Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology and a further study is currently investigating whether treatment with Losartan helps prevent deterioration of kidney function in the longer term.
- Mr Luciano Nardo and colleagues from **Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and The University of Manchester** have recently set up the **Manchester Expert Research Group in Endometriosis and Endometrium (MERGE)**. The group is a multi-disciplinary collaboration between basic scientists and clinical colleagues including gynaecologists, colorectal surgeons, urologists, pain specialists, radiologists and pathologists based in the North West of England. The priority of the group is to become a world-leader in endometriosis research, with a focus on detailing the pathophysiology of the condition, improving the classification system and identifying novel diagnostic indicators to ultimately generate innovative treatment strategies for endometriosis. If you are interested in joining the group or would like more information please call 0161 701 6965 or email merge@cmft.nhs.uk.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

- In a follow up to December's newsletter item on the **North West NHS Innovation Awards 2009** we congratulate the following individuals:
 - **Professor Paul Brenchley, Dr Sandip Mitra and Professor Rein Ulijn** (CMFT) who won the award for Medical Devices, Equipment, Diagnostics or Therapeutics for the 'Renephra' project. 'Renephra' is the innovative concept of transdermal fluid and toxin removal—a novel treatment to address the medical need for better treatments for patients with kidney failure. The same project was also awarded the Emerging Technology Project of the Year, organised by Bionow (The Northwest Regional Development Agency's (NWDA) Biomedical Cluster Support Group)
 - **Professor Simon Carley**, Consultant in Emergency Medicine (CMFT), was the finalist in Training or Educational Materials for his project called St. Emlyn's Virtual Classroom and Hospital. An online learning system has been developed for Junior Doctors in Emergency Medicine.
- **Congratulations to Professor Christopher Griffiths** who has been elected President of the group of Europe's leading dermatologists - the European Dermatology Forum.
- **Phase one of a new, unique development facility for early stage medical companies has been set up** at Manchester Science Park's (msp) Corridor site on Oxford Road. **The MedTECH Centre**, will provide the optimum location for new and growing companies that specialise in developing medical technologies and want improved access to the NHS and general healthcare market. The centre represents a virtual joint venture between TrusTECH, Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and msp. The pilot scheme, supported by the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA), will run at msp until 2012 when it will transfer to the Manchester Science and Innovation Centre in the renovated former Royal Eye Hospital on Oxford Road. The MedTECH Centre has recently appointed a new manager, **Jim Bristow**, who can be contacted on 0161 820 8440 or email jim.bristow@medtechcentre.co.uk
- Internationally renowned children's kidney researcher **Professor Adrian Woolf has been appointed to the Chair of Paediatric Science at the NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre** (BRC). Professor Woolf moves to Manchester from the University College London Institute of Child Health, where he set up and headed the academic Nephro-Urology Unit in 1998. He will work between The University of Manchester and the new Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. Professor Woolf's main role will be to head an academic programme of basic and applied research, and he will also work with the Nephrology, Urology and Genetics clinical teams looking after children born with renal tract problems.
- The Manchester Breakthrough Breast Cancer Research Unit will be officially launched on 4 March 2010. It has been established with a grant from Breakthrough Breast Cancer and is situated within the Paterson Institute for Cancer Research on The Christie campus and is hosted by The University of Manchester. The major focus of the Unit is to determine how the tumour, particularly tumour stem cells, interacts with its host and how understanding this may lead to the development of novel treatments for breast cancer. In addition, scientists in the Unit study how breast tumour cells become resistant to standard therapies and how resistance might be circumvented for patient benefit.

- **Cancer specialists at The Christie** are to join other leading research hospitals around the world to test the first in a new class of experimental cancer drugs designed to treat men with advanced prostate cancer that has spread to the bones. The Phase III clinical trial, sponsored by Norwegian cancer company Algenta, is designed to assess whether treatment with radium-223 can prolong the survival of, and improve the quality of life of, men whose prostate cancer is no longer responding to hormone therapy and has spread to the bones.
- Laboratory research is underway in the new **CR-UK Drug Discovery Centre at the Paterson Institute for Cancer Research**. Drug discovery biologists and chemists have been recruited and the laboratory is now almost fully equipped. The Centre has been utilising its location to good effect by building relationships with researchers and clinicians for joint projects as well as accessing key technologies available at The University of Manchester.
- Pengfei Paul Lu, from the University of California San Francisco, has taken up a position as **Group Leader in the Manchester Breakthrough Research Unit and is part of the Faculty of Life Sciences in The University of Manchester**. He has a background in developmental biology and will be studying the function of potential tumour suppressor genes in both the epithelium and stroma of the breast.
- **The Christie NHS Foundation Trust** hosted international trade managers and advisors from British Embassies and Business Councils in the USA, China, Abu Dhabi and many other countries who were keen to tour key R&D departments, such as the Wade radiotherapy centre and the Derek Crowther early phase clinical trials unit, and to be shown the strengths of oncology at The Christie.
- **Nowgen, a leading centre for genetics in healthcare, has appointed Dr Angela Davies as Professional Training Manager**. In her new role, Dr Davies will take responsibility for managing Nowgen's professional training programme in the area of genetic medicine and related technologies. Commenting on her appointment, Dr Davies said: "Genetic medicine is an exciting area of healthcare. As part of the Manchester Biomedical Research Centre, Nowgen's training programme will help ensure that the introduction of new genetic technologies in medicine will be supported by a relevant and effective training programme."

EVENTS

- **The MCRC Conference: Harnessing Apoptosis** took place in January 2010 and was a great success. Eminent international scientists gave a wide range of talks and facilitated discussions highlighting how new knowledge in basic apoptotic mechanisms is transforming translational studies and clinical trials in cancer. It also showcased the high quality cancer research that is undertaken at the MCRC.

FUNDING

- **Congratulations to Professor Christopher Griffiths** who has led a team that has been awarded a £2 million five year NIHR Programme Grant for Applied Research to investigate the relationship between cardiovascular disease and psoriasis. The multidisciplinary team comprises expertise from across the **University's Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences at the University, Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and Salford PCT**.

For more news 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/Pages/News.aspx>

<http://www.mhsc.nhs.uk>

<http://www.srht.nhs.uk/news-media/>

<http://www.salford-pct.nhs.uk/PressNMedia.aspx?section=0>

<http://www.cmft.nhs.uk/trust/media-centre.aspx>

TELL MAHSC/ASK MAHSC

Are you a MAHSC member with a good news story about your organisation, your team or an individual? Let us know and we will try to feature on this newsletter. Please email mahsc@manchester.ac.uk with subject line 'MAHSC newsletter'. Have a look on the MAHSC website for further information www.mahsc.ac.uk.

MAHSC 'HQ' is hosted by the University's Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences (FMHS) on the 4th Floor of the Simon Building. We can be contacted on 0161 306 0639 or via email at mahsc@manchester.ac.uk