

Director's Diary



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

I am very pleased to announce that the MAHSC Executive Management Team is now essentially complete with the appointment of four Clinical Academic Section Leads: **Professor Graeme Black (Human Development & Genetics Lead); Professor Linda Gask (Mental Health Lead); Professor John Radford (Cancer Lead) and; Dr Simon Ray (Cardiovascular Lead)**. Along with their colleagues who head up the Enabling Sections, the Clinical Leads will be the real 'engine room' of MAHSC, developing the detailed strategy and implementation plans to realise our vision. So please join me in congratulating them on their new positions and, most importantly, please give them your full support as they begin these challenging roles (for more detail on each on the new appointments please see the press release on the MAHSC website). MAHSC's 'Education & Training' Section Lead is yet to be appointed but the process will align closely with the recently announced success of the Greater Manchester HIEC bid and its long term health themes in cancer, mental health, dementia and stroke plus staying healthy (see later in this newsletter).

Special Report: Introducing the Manchester Biomedical Research Centre

Established on 1 April 2008, the BRC is one of 12 prestige centres of medical research excellence across the UK, funded by the NIHR and designated as a Centre of Excellence in Genetics and Developmental Medicine. The BRC is a partnership between Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CMFT) and The University of Manchester and is located on the Central Manchester hospital site. Recent news highlights include:

- Prof. Neil Hanley, who was recruited to the BRC in June 2008 from Southampton, has won a prestigious Wellcome Trust Senior Fellowship in Clinical Science. The award, worth approximately £1.4m over five years, provides support for clinical investigators to further develop their research potential and to establish themselves as leading investigators in clinical academic medicine.
- Thanks to funding from the North West Development Agency, **the BRC has recently established a Minor Procedures Suite (MPS) at the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility (WTCRF)**. The suite is managed by the WTCRF and is supported by an R&I Division-funded Surgical Research Nurse, who is a member of the WTCRF clinical team but also specialises in the work of the Minor Procedures Suite. Visits to the WTCRF to see the facilities and discuss your studies can be arranged through the Study Manager: rsm@wtcrf.nhs.uk.
- At the recent Bionow Awards Dinner, held on November 12th at the Mere Golf & Country Club, the **DYSCERNE project, led by Prof. Jill Clayton-Smith was a finalist in the 'Innovation in Diagnostics Project of the Year' category**. The DYSCERNE project is a network of approximately 75 European centres involved in the diagnosis of children and adults with multiple genetic syndromes. A panel of 28 experts from these centres review cases and in conjunction with software company Certus, have developed a web-based interface via which information on clinical histories and images can be uploaded securely and shared with the expert panel.
- **Mo Chowdhury, who has just completed his MRes year at Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, was awarded the prestigious first prize in the poster prize session at the recent annual meeting of the International Society for Vascular Surgery** for his research on carotid plaque stability/activation. The aim of the research was to find methods to identify patients who do not show overt symptoms of the disease but who are nevertheless at risk of suffering transient ischaemic attacks, or "mini-strokes" as they are commonly called. Part of this work was supported by a Bioplex BRC grant.
- The BRC and Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust recently was part of an NWDA hosted visit from global UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) officers from Singapore, China, Japan, Estonia, Korea, and the United States, who represent the UK's business interests internationally and in particular, the biopharma, life sciences and medtech sectors. The visit showcased the North West's excellent biomedical cluster the region as an internationally significant investment location.

MAHSC Member Successes

- **Greater Manchester has been successful in its application to form a Health Innovation and Education Cluster (HIEC).** HIECs are a new kind of partnership formed between the NHS, higher education, industry, and other public and private sector organisations. The purpose of a HIEC is to provide high-quality care and services by getting the benefits of research and innovation as quickly as possible to patients, and by strengthening the co-ordination of education and training. In the North West, the HEICs will cover the following disease areas: Greater Manchester HIEC– long term conditions: cancer, mental health, dementia and stroke; and staying healthy; Lancashire and Cumbria HIEC– drug safety, children’s health, mental and physical health, cancer; Merseyside and Cheshire HIEC– stroke, mental health and end of life care. Over £11 million will be allocated to the 17 successful applicants nationwide. For more information on HIECs please follow the link below: <http://nds.coi.gov.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=409800&NewsAreaID=2>
For more information on the Greater Manchester HIEC (GM HIEC) please contact the acting Chief Operating Officer, Kay Day on 0161 306 0102 or email kay.day@manchester.ac.uk
- **The University of Manchester Intellectual Property Company (UMIP) was voted Technology Transfer Office of the Year at the Genesis Biotechnology Conference,** London, December 2009, despite strong competition from the other two shortlisted companies Cancer Research Technology Ltd and UCL Business plc. In financial terms, over the last 5 years, UMIP’s activities have generated over £35M for the University through the sale of shares in spin-outs, licensing income and through IP grants and contracts activity.
- **Manchester: Integrating Medicine & Innovative Technology (MIMIT™) has announced seven awards to exploit the synergistic potential of talent and expertise inherent in the research teams in Manchester, UK and Boston, USA in collaboration with the Centre for Integration of Medicine and Innovative Technology (CIMIT®) to transform healthcare.** The research will be funded through a prestigious Research Councils UK (RCUK) Science Bridges Award. MIMIT™ is the first international affiliate of CIMIT®, a consortium with eleven member institutions comprised of academic/teaching hospitals and universities in the metropolitan Boston area. MIMIT™ is a consortium supported by the MAHSC members.
- Clinicians and scientists at **UHSM (University Hospital South Manchester), the University of Manchester, and Phadia AB in Uppsala, Sweden** have developed a new and significantly more accurate blood test for peanut allergy, which predicts whether an allergic reaction to peanuts will develop with more than 95 per cent certainty. **UHSM's Professor Adnan Custovic led the research team** which examined the prevalence of peanut allergy in almost 1,000 eight year olds who belong to the Manchester Asthma and Allergy Study.
- **The UHSM Academy - the UK's first organisation to unite every aspect of health care education under one umbrella -was launched in South Manchester on Tuesday 12 January,** backed in an address by former Health Tsar Lord Ara Darzi. The UHSM Academy has been established to provide the whole spectrum of the medical education and training needed in a hospital, from specialised consultant training to basic fire safety courses, in one organisation.
- Clinical trials to test the effectiveness of two prescription drugs for the debilitating skin condition psoriasis have revealed significant differences that should help inform physicians treating patients with the condition. **Researchers at The University of Manchester led by world-renowned dermatologist Professor Chris Griffiths,** compared the drugs etanercept and ustekinumab – relatively new biological therapies that have proved effective in the management of moderate to severe psoriasis. The Manchester-led international study tested the two drugs on 903 patients with moderate to severe psoriasis over a 12-week period.

People and Places

- **Professor Alistair Burns at The University of Manchester has been appointed as the new National Clinical Director for Dementia,** the Department of Health has announced. Professor Burns will promote better care of people with dementia within the NHS and social care communities and provide leadership for the implementation of the National Dementia Strategy. He is currently the University’s Professor of Old Age Psychiatry within MAHSC. Professor Burns developed the South Manchester Memory Clinic, which provides specialist assessment and diagnosis for people with memory problems. He is also an instrumental part of the Old Age Psychiatry General Hospital liaison service and helped establish a Dementia Drug Treatment clinic.
- **Caroline Shaw Chief Executive of The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, has been awarded Crains Manchester Businesswoman of the Year** (Business Services category). Caroline had already won the ‘Business Services’ category at the event but the top award is testament to the progress and achievements that have been made under her leadership at The Christie.

- Congratulations to **Professor Jackie Oldham, Director of Manchester: Integrating Medicine & Innovative Technology (MIMIT™)** and **Keith Chantler, Director of Academic Affairs and Innovation at Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust** who have been invited onto the £20million NHS Innovation Challenge Committee Prize Expert Panel.
- **A final-year postgraduate medical student at UHSM has been awarded the European Respiratory Society Young Scientist prize for his abstract at the Society's annual congress in Vienna.** Dr Khaled Al-shair, who is based at the Respiratory Research Group in the University of Manchester's School of Translational Medicine, was one of only 40 young scientists to be presented the award from more than 3,500 candidates.

Events

- **The MAHSC Research & Development Team Building Away Day** was held on the 9th December and providing an opportunity for the R&D departments in each of the member partners to interact and get to know each other the better. The Event was a resounding success and the delegates feedback was extremely positive: **"Informative Presentations", "great facilitators and facilities", excellent opportunity to network"** and the **"right balance of information and fun"**. A focused away day is planned for March 2010.
- **Launch of the BRC Biobank to Industry – 4th February 2010, Nowgen Centre, Manchester**
Manchester has attracted significant investment during the past few years to develop expertise and infrastructure for biobanking including the UK Biobank, The MCRC/AZ Biobank and the National DNA Biobanking Network (CIGMR). The Manchester Biomedical Research Centre's Biobank is a new addition to that infrastructure. For further information about the event and the BRC Biobank please contact Dr Jay Brown, Biobank Manager: Jay.Brown@cmft.nhs.uk.

Funding

- **University of Manchester researchers looking at potential new therapies for pre-eclampsia and fetal growth restriction have been awarded a grant of £2.4 million.** The five-year programme grant from the Medical Research Council has been given to Professor Colin Sibley, Head of the Research and Innovation Division at **Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**, Dr Sue Greenwood and Dr Mark Wareing in Manchester's Maternal and Fetal Health Research Centre based at St Mary's Hospital, together with collaborators in Cambridge, Harwell and Alberta.
- **BRC researchers lead £500,000 eye disease research project.** A team led by Manchester experts has been awarded funding of £500,000 by the Fight for Sight charity for a new research programme to develop UK wide, high quality care services for patients with inherited retinal diseases. The five-year programme will be led by Professor Graeme Black, Director of the Manchester Biomedical Research Centre, supported by Professor Tony Moore of Moorfields Eye Hospital and Miss Susie Downes of Oxford Eye Hospital.
- **Manchester Mental Health & Social Care Trust Consultant in Old Age Psychiatry Dr Nitin Purandare** has been awarded a NIHR RfPB Grant for £200K for a study entitled "Recognition of and consultation for memory problems among South Asian elders: a literature review and face to face interviews to study explanatory models".

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 606 3039 or via email at mahsc@manchester.ac.uk