Welcome to the May issue of our newsletter. I want to begin with something that is increasingly important, notably the need to better communicate the benefits and value of research to the public and in so doing, better engage our patients, our local communities, schools and the general public in our research. We want people to know about our research and to encourage some of them to become actively involved as study participants or to input into the design and conduct of our research. So please put the 10 July in your diaries. This is the date that UCLH hosts a research open day to showcase our world-class clinical research and infrastructure. There will be up to 25 stands in the main atrium of UCLH and applications for stands are now being accepted, with support offered for the creation of highly interactive stands. Click here for details.

In addition, on 20 May we will be showcasing research across all of UCLH as part of the NIHR “It’s OK to ask” campaign to improve patient and public engagement in research.

Perusing the same theme, I would like to congratulate Rosamund Yu and our team leading on the Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) agenda for the BRC. They have led an exciting project to provide training in PPI for academic clinical researchers based in UCLP organisations. We secured a grant of over £60,000 funding from Health Education England and managed to deliver 9 workshops to over 120 researchers within the space of a month. The feedback has been very positive, indeed enthusiastic! We will be running further sessions of this kind in the future.

In a previous newsletter, I commented on a key BRC agenda to foster greater representation from women in academic leadership roles. In this regard, the BRC board was delighted to hear of the tremendous progress made by various departments within UCL in achieving improvements in our Athena Swan status. Many now have silver status or are on that trajectory which is testimony to the momentum this key initiative has fostered and the much needed cultural change required to deliver it.

Warmest congratulations to the recipients of the most recently announced NIHR Senior Investigator Awards. These awards recognise the 200 nationally leading researchers in the health domain. The competition for these highly prestigious awards is fierce and completing the application form is almost as challenging! For the most recent round of awards, the BRC took a proactive role in coordinating the application process, to ensure that those applying had the best chance of success and supporting the individual applicants with their applications, where required. It may of course be coincidence but this managed process seems to have paid dividends with the best ever return of successful awards to UCL/UCLH-based senior staff, with a remarkable 9 out of the 16 new national awards going to UCL/UCLH. Click here to read more. The next application process will begin soon and the BRC board will once again coordinate the process, in collaboration with the Deans, and offer support in completing the application process. We will announce details when they are available. We have set a very high bar this time around, I do hope we can continue to replicate it.

Finally, I was honoured to escort HRH The Princess Royal around the new Cardiometabolic Phenotyping Unit as a prelude to the formal opening of the unit a couple of weeks ago. HRH had the opportunity to meet with staff and patients in the new unit which was part funded by the cardiometabolic programme of the BRC. Another addition to the wealth of BRC supported infrastructure across UCL and UCLH that underpins much of our experimental medicine and clinical research.

Kind regards

Bryan Williams MD FRCP FESC FAHA
Professor of Medicine, UCL
Director, NIHR University College London Hospitals BRC
Visit our new website: www.uclhospitals.brc.nihr.ac.uk Follow us on Twitter: http://twitter.com/@uclhresearch
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NEWS

Exhibit your research at the UCLH open day
Researchers are invited to exhibit interactive stands to actively engage with patients, schools and the local community at the UCLH research open day this summer. Read more here.

HRH The Princess Royal opens cardio research centre
A centre for groundbreaking research into cardiometabolic diseases was officially opened at UCL by HRH The Princess Royal. Read more here.

UCL doubles gender equality commitment awards
UCL has doubled its number of awards under the Athena SWAN scheme to improve the recruitment, promotion and retention of women in sciences. Read the full story here.

2014 NIHR Senior Investigators announced
Over half of the newly awarded NIHR Senior Investigators announced are researchers from UCL, including many members of the BRC faculty. More details here.

Researchers needed to work with underprivileged ‘A’ level pupils
The BRC is supporting a summer school of laboratory placements for promising ‘A’ level students from underprivileged backgrounds. The centre is now looking for researchers from UCLH/UCL and students to take part. For more details click here.

Vitamin B3 may be key for treating Friedreich's ataxia
An essential vitamin commonly known for processing fat and proteins in the body may hold the key to slowing the progression of Friedreich’s ataxia, according to findings published in The Lancet. Read the full story here.

Clinical Trials Day
On 20 May there will be various events happening in and around UCL to celebrate International Clinical Trials Day. Read more here.

Breakthrough suggests statins could help progressive MS patients
BRC supported researchers at UCL and UCLH have found that a high dose of the drug simvastatin significantly reduces brain shrinkage in people with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis. Read more here.

UCLH Research Gateway launches
UCLH/UCL’s Joint Research Office has launched an easy to use search engine to enable patients and the public to find out what clinical research is happening at UCLH. For more details click here.

UCL research projects move to Stevenage Catalyst
Three BRC-funded projects are to take up laboratory space at the Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst in the latest move to fast track the development of new treatments. Read more.

Researchers discover gene mutations in rare cancer
An international team of researchers have identified mutations in two genes linked to a rare cancer of the inner lining of blood vessels. Click here to read the full story.
NIHR Invention for Innovation (i4i) programme
Applications for the 3rd call are being sought in the area of regenerative medicine or biological therapeutics for cancer. The i4i programme seeks to identify those medical technologies with the greatest potential clinical benefit, along with how they might be integrated into clinical decision and treatment pathways and how they might be implemented on a large scale. Click here for more information. **Deadline: 21 May**

Applications invited for NIHR/HEE fellowships
Healthcare scientists are invited to apply to round five of the NIHR/Health Education England healthcare science research fellowship programme. The programme has been designed to support the development of healthcare science research capacity and capability and comprises three schemes that serve as ‘career steps’ for healthcare scientists with aspirations for academic leadership. **Deadline: 28 May**

**SELECTED EVENTS**

**International clinical trials day – 20 May**
A series of activities for patients and the public will be held across UCLH and UCL to celebrate International Clinical Trials Day. [Read more here.](#)

**UCLH research open day – 10 July**
UCLH will open its doors to members of the public, patients, schools and the local community to demonstrate its research focus as a centre of world class research. [Read more here.](#)

**Stratified medicine symposium – 10 July**
The stratified medicine symposium seeks to highlight recent developments in biomarker discovery and provide opportunities for speakers and the audience to discuss future approaches and collaborations. [Read more here.](#)

For more event listings see the [School of Life and Medical Sciences webpage](#) and the [UCL Enterprise webpage](#).

**OUR BRC PROGRAMMES**

**Neuroscience**
Programme Director: Professor Nicholas Wood, Galton Professor of Genetics and Vice Dean Research UCL Faculty of Brain Sciences at the UCL Institute of Neurology.

Programme Operations Manager: Dr Daniel Herron d.herron@ucl.ac.uk

Our Neuroscience programme brings together the BRC’s work in neurodiagnostics, neuroimaging, neurotherapeutics, neurodegeneration and neonatal neuroprotection.

**Infection, Immunity and Inflammation (III)**
Programme Director: Dr Emma Morris, Reader in Immunology and Immunotherapy

Interim Programme Operations Manager: Dr Vasia Dekou v.dekou@ucl.ac.uk

The III programme brings together activities from the BRC themes I&I, cell and gene therapy, cardiovascular, respiratory, anaesthetics and critical care (RACE), gastrointestinal/hepatology, body imaging and oral health.

**Cancer**
Programme Director: Professor David Linch, Professor of Clinical Haematology

Programme Operations Manager: Dr Steve Heggie s.heggie@ucl.ac.uk

The Cancer Programme brings together the BRC’s work in cancer and cancer-related activities in cell and gene therapy; respiratory, anaesthetics and critical care (RACE); oral health; imaging; women’s health; and neurodiagnostics.
The Cardiometabolic Programme brings together the BRC’s work in cell and gene therapy; body imaging; oral health; respiratory, anaesthetics and critical care (RACE); neurotherapeutics; and cardiovascular areas.