

Clinical Research Fellows' Newsletter Summer 2019

Welcome to the inaugural quarterly newsletter of the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre at The Royal Marsden and The Institute of Cancer Research, London

This edition includes:

1. News
2. Events
3. Career Development

1. News

Research achievements from the NIHR BRC at The Royal Marsden and the ICR

- **Break through immunotherapy drug trial at The Royal Marsden** which is leading one of the world's first immunotherapy trials for colorectal cancer that has been removed by surgery. This trial is supported by Merck and the BRC. The study is a collaboration with Royal Surrey County Hospital and the University of Oxford.
- **Cancer-killing virus boosts immunotherapy in hard-to-treat cancer** . Study co-leader Professor Kevin Harrington, said: "We showed that infecting cancer cells with a modified vaccinia virus could kill tumours directly, but most importantly made tumours much easier for the immune system to spot."
- **Female patients more likely to survive but experience worse side effects from chemotherapy**. Data from the study was presented in a poster session at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting in Chicago, where Dr Avani Athauda, Clinical Research Fellow at The Royal Marsden was awarded a Conquer Cancer Foundation of ASCO Merit Award.



For a list of all abstracts which were presented at ASCO click [here](#) .

- **Liquid biopsy could identify cancer patients at risk of metastatic disease,** offering an opportunity to tailor treatment. Results from the study were presented by Dr Shelize Khakoo, Clinical Research Fellow at the EACR-ESMO joint conference on liquid biopsies (15-17 May 2019). They were awarded the poster prize by the scientific committee.
- **Breast cancer drug effective in 80 percent of men with BRCA-mutant prostate cancer.** The phase II study, TOPARP-B, was led by researchers at ICR and RM and, involved several other UK institutions.
- **Retroperitoneal sarcoma: The search for the best treatment.** The Sarcoma Unit at RM played a major role in a new international trial, which investigated whether the addition of radiotherapy prior to surgery, would have any benefits over surgery alone. Results from the STRASS trial, which was funded by the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer were published at ASCO 2019.
- **Female patients more likely to survive but experience worse side effects from chemotherapy.** Oncologists from The Royal Marsden who led the research, in collaboration with the MRC Clinical Trials Unit at UCL , believe the findings may help to tailor the management of patients and also identify those more at risk from specific side effects.
- **New blood test predicts breast cancer's return at start of treatment.** Dr Ben O'Leary discusses a new blood test for women with advanced breast cancer which can predict how well patients will respond to a new drug right at the start of treatment. Click [here](#) to watch the video.

Infrastructure

- **The Royal Marsden Digital Services Transformation.** Over the next three years, The Royal Marsden Digital Transformation Programme will use technology to transform cancer care, staff experience, and the way in which patients and families experience our services. There are six programmes of work including Digital

Research and Informatics and Digital Diagnostics can be found [here](#)

- **Research outputs database.** The library has set up a database to collect and showcase research produced by The Royal Marsden staff. It can be viewed [here](#). The database will be updated monthly by the Library, with publications and conference posters/presentations from 2019 onwards. If you have presented at a conference or published this year, please get in touch with the [Library](#) so they can include your work. They can also support your research by running literature searches, as well as advising on open access and reference management.
- NIHR have launched their new and improved, web-based NIHR **interactive Costing Tool (iCT)**. This supersedes the Excel-based version of the industry costing templates.
- **CQC inspections to give more exposure to clinical research taking place in NHS trusts.** Care Quality Commission (CQC) has incorporated clinical research into its [Well Led Framework for NHS Trusts](#), recognising clinical research activity as a key component of best patient care.
- **HRA developing a set of expectations for public involvement.** The Health Research Agency is developing a set of expectations for public involvement in applications for Approvals to help applicants benefit from the contribution patients and the public can make to their research. The expectations will be published shortly. For more information click [here](#)
- **NIHR Clinical Research Network reports a record-breaking year for research**
Over 870,000 participants took part in studies supported by NIHR's Clinical Research Network in 2018/19 - the highest number on record and an increase of 140,000 since last year. The number of studies has increased and commercial research is thriving.



- **Priorities for local NHS research and innovation revealed.** Results of a landmark consultation identifying priorities for local NHS research and innovation in different regional areas in England, has been published (April, 2019). The [National Survey of Local Innovation and Research Needs of the NHS](#) was commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I), NIHR and the Academic Health Science Network (AHSN).

2. Events

Internal

- BRC Event: Patient and public event - what does the future hold for Melanoma and Urological Cancers? **02 July 2019, 16:00 to 19:45** at The Royal Marsden Education and Conference Centre
- CAR-T Study Day, **4 July 2019**, The Royal Marsden Education and Conference Centre. This study day aims to explore this novel approach and discuss the challenges inherent in service provision, treatment delivery and the care and management of patient completing CAR-T.
- **Magnetic Resonance Image Guided Radiotherapy (MRIgRT), 21 October 2019 to 22 October 2019**, ICR, Sutton. An opportunity to broaden your understanding of the capabilities and potential of MRI -guidance in radiotherapy planning and treatment verification.
- To mark International Clinical Trials Day (ICTD) 2019, The Royal Marsden celebrated on Monday 20th May. Staff, patients, carers and the public were invited to find out more about clinical trials and events were held at both the Chelsea and Sutton sites.
- Innovation and Ideas at the BRC's first Digital Dragons' Den held on 2 May 2019. The event was in partnership with DigitalHealth.London's Accelerator, which aims to speed up the adoption of technology in London's NHS.



External

- NIHR Regional Events - see <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news-and-events/events/> and [calendar](#)
- London Pharmacy Oncology Education evening. At this meeting "Highlights from ASCO 2019" will be presented. It is hosted by the RM Partners Medicines Optimisation Group. This event will be held on 26th June 2019, at The Royal Marsden Education & Conference Centre, Stewart's Grove, Chelsea.

- 2019 UKCRF Network Annual Conference, 27-28 June 2019, Nottingham. The theme will be [Curing the “incurable”. Interdisciplinary approaches to research](#)
 - **NCRI Excellence Awards applications.** To celebrate their 15th anniversary, the National Cancer Research Institute have launched the NCRI Excellence Awards, honouring research teams and other individuals who have made a significant contribution to cancer research. Applications are now open and will close on 4 August. [Read more](#)
 - [Workshop for ISCF integrated diagnostics funding.](#) UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) propose to launch a new funding call for academic, industry and NHS consortia aiming to integrate diagnostic technologies and embed them into an NHS pathway. Cancer Research UK and the Knowledge Transfer Network are hosting a cancer consortia-building workshop on 18 July 2019 in King’s Cross, London.
 - [2nd Crick International Cancer Conference](#), London 15- 17 Sep 2019.
 - [2019 BOPA/ISOPP Symposium](#), 10-13 October 2019, London. XVIII International Symposium on Oncology Pharmacy Practice.
 - [2019 NCRI Cancer Conference](#), 3-5 November 2019, Glasgow.
 - [Head and Neck Cancer International Conference](#), Brighton, 6-7 Nov 2019.
 - [Academy of Medical Sciences Clinical Academics in Training Annual Conference \(CATAC\)](#). A cross-specialty event designed to bring clinical academic trainees together to present their work, meet one another and network with senior researchers. Will be held in the **autumn 2019** – sign up to their newsletter to receive updates.
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3. Career Development Support and Resources

- Applications are now open for the [BRC Post-Doctoral Support Funding Scheme](#) . Our post-doctoral support scheme aims to support individuals while they prepare competitive applications to external funding bodies for Advanced Fellowships (Clinician Scientist Fellowships or equivalent). Completed application forms should be submitted to cancerbrc@rmh.nhs.uk by 02 September 2019, 9am.
- Academy of Medical Sciences Mentoring Masterclass, London, 27 June 2019. The Academy’s Mentoring programme is open to certain cohorts of post-doctoral researchers funded by HCRW, MRC and NIHR. You can check whether you have eligibility [here](#).
- [NIHR Biomedical Research Centre and the NIHR Research Funding Schemes](#) 16 July 2019, 9am to 1.30pm. An opportunity to learn about two NIHR funding streams (RfPB and PGfAR) that are focused on funding projects that aim to improve health outcomes, primarily for NHS patients. If you have a project idea that you would like to discuss with the funding teams, there will be a limited number of time slots available running in parallel to the lunch and networking session. To apply for a time slot, please send a summary of your proposed work to [Dr David Lowery](#). To find out more and sign up, please click [here](#).
- Latest ESMO Perspectives magazine article ‘Are we ready to use Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in oncology?’

- [So you want to apply for an NIHR Fellowship? An RDS SE introduction](#) - NIHR RDS South East publication
 - [SUSTAIN](#) is a programme which enables female researchers to thrive in their independent research careers. It provides an innovative programme of training and support to develop participants' leadership and career potential. SUSTAIN is not currently open for applications, but will open again in autumn 2019.
 - [Presentation for clinical academics](#) Presentation from Prof Johann de Bono, BRC Lead for Novel Cancer Therapeutics, on the subject of getting grants.
 - [Health Research Agency](#) has a growing programme of eLearning modules designed to support the research community.
 - [New report: P.I. Transitions to Independence in Academia](#) The data in this report by S.E. Acton et al (March 2019) summarises the responses gathered from 365 principal investigators of academic laboratories, who started their independent positions in the UK within the last 6 years up to 2018.
 - [The Association of Medical Research Charities](#) has a member directory where you can search for grants by research area, grant type, charity name etc.
 - NIHR Support for Training and Career Development. The NIHR Academy supports over 4,000 Members with training programmes, career support and advice, access to leadership development opportunities, networking events, mentoring and guidance on research funding. If you are looking to apply for an award, have a look at the information for prospective applicants to NIHR Academy schemes
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If you have any thoughts or feedback about this newsletter please email: Digby Ingle,
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Likewise, email any thoughts or feedback on the [BRC Training Hub](#)