



# National Cancer Research Institute NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2010

## New Director for NCRN

In July 2010 Professor Matt Seymour took up the post of Director of the National Cancer Research Network (NCRN) – a timely appointment to take forward the NCRN's Strategic Plan for 2010-2015.

Matt was the first Clinical Lead for the Yorkshire Cancer Research Network (2001–2006) and has been Professor of Gastrointestinal (GI) Cancer Medicine at St James's Institute of Oncology in Leeds, since 2004.

His career over the last 20 years has involved developing and leading clinical and translational research in colorectal and other GI tract cancers. In particular he has pioneered the large scale collection, with prospective consent, of tumour and blood samples from patients taking part in randomised controlled trials. Matt has worked closely with a number of NCRI-accredited Clinical Trials Units, and was a founding member of the NCRI Colorectal Clinical Studies Group as well as having chaired its Translational Sub-Group. Matt has also served on Cancer Research UK's Cancer Trials Awards and Advisory Committee (CTAAC) and Translational Research in Clinical Trials Committee (TRICC).

Matt's predecessor, Professor David Cameron, has been appointed Director of the Edinburgh Cancer Research Centre and Professor of Oncology and will continue to be involved in several NCRN and NCRI activities.



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## NCRI Rapid Review of Research in Survivorship After Cancer and End of Life Care

**The NCRI Rapid Review undertaken during 2009/10 has considered how best to develop and sustain research in survivorship after cancer and end of life care, building on earlier work supported by NCRI partners, and government initiatives in these areas. Following extensive discussions with researchers, consumers and research funders, an action plan has now been agreed.**

This brings together initiatives such as those of Marie Curie Cancer Care in end of life care research, Macmillan Cancer Support in survivorship research and NCRN's work to promote the uptake of trials in these topic areas within the cancer research networks. It also emphasises the further opportunities that exist to make best use of open funding schemes, identifies some specific areas of research need, and highlights the value of both research funders and researchers working in collaboration.

To promote investigator-led research through existing funding schemes the NCRI has developed the Grantsmanship Gateway. The gateway, which can be accessed at [www.ncri.org.uk/gateway](http://www.ncri.org.uk/gateway), provides guidance and links for early career researchers, in particular, on how to keep up to date with funding opportunities and expert advice and information on grant application development.

Professor Sir Kenneth Calman now chairs a UK Steering Group for research in survivorship after cancer and end of life care. In this role, he will champion research in these areas, raising its profile and leading the coordination and integration of the three strands of the action plan.

The report of the Rapid Review can be accessed at [www.ncri.org.uk/publications/reports/rapid\\_review\\_seolc2010.pdf](http://www.ncri.org.uk/publications/reports/rapid_review_seolc2010.pdf) Sir Kenneth can be contacted through the NCRI Secretariat, via [karen.groot@ncri.org.uk](mailto:karen.groot@ncri.org.uk)



## NCIN and UKACR Conference 2010

The National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN) exists to use information to improve quality and choice for cancer patients. This involves supporting NHS data collection and linkage and, with partners, preparing national analyses and providing data for research.



This year the NCIN held a joint conference with the UK Association of Cancer Registries, bringing together those who produce and analyse cancer data with researchers and clinicians who make use of it. Approximately 500 delegates attended over two days to hear presentations and take part in discussions ranging from the capture of information about patients in multidisciplinary team meetings, to the latest results of international comparisons of cancer survival. Highlights included:

- Dr Harry Burns (Chief Medical Officer for Scotland) discussing the evidence for biological mechanisms underlying socioeconomic inequalities in cancer incidence and outcomes;
- Ms Lucy Elliss-Brooks from NCIN presenting an early view of how cancer patients enter the healthcare system;
- Professor Sir Mike Richards, the National Cancer Director for England, setting out his challenges for the future.

Presentations from the conference are now available from the NCIN website [www.ncin.org.uk/conference](http://www.ncin.org.uk/conference)

**Please save the date for next year's joint conference, to be held on 15 - 17 June 2011 at the Hilton London Metropole.**

To access data from the National Cancer Data Repository for research purposes, email: [michael.chapman@ncin.org.uk](mailto:michael.chapman@ncin.org.uk)

**The NCIN co-ordinating team have moved to:**

National Cancer Intelligence Network  
18th Floor, Portland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5RS  
Tel: 020 8282 6258



### PET imaging: working with regulators and patients

**The NCRI PET Research Network recently hosted two workshops addressing important research issues as they apply to Positron Emission Tomography (PET) in the UK.**

In July 2010, the late phase workstream headed by Professor Ken Miles explored patients' perception of PET in the context of clinical oncology trials. Fourteen patient representatives participated in the focus group, which investigated attitudes to PET scanning, the type of information required, and the information format that would be most helpful for patients. The clear consensus was that the radiation component of scans is not a barrier to trial participation. However, a need was identified for more detailed explanations about radiation doses used in scans to improve informed consent, which the PET Research Network will take forward.

In September 2010, the early phase workstream led by Professor Fiona Gilbert joined with the Medical Research Council Neurosciences and Mental Health Board to convene Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) representatives and the PET community in a one-day meeting. Processes and available resources were highlighted to help researchers to navigate the current regulatory requirements. The development of a small 'superuser' group was also proposed, which would liaise more closely with the MHRA and facilitate communication with the PET research community. Supporting regulatory resources will be made available on the initiative's website [www.ncri-pet.org.uk](http://www.ncri-pet.org.uk)

### Facilitating Access to Biosamples: The NCRI Cancer Biosample Directories

**Researchers pursuing new drug targets or biomarkers for stratified medicine, or wishing to study native human disease biology, often mention that their work is impeded by lack of access to well-characterised biosamples. The recently launched NCRI Cancer Biosample Directories aim to make information about existing biosample collections more readily available.**

These directories have been developed as a joint initiative between the NCRI Informatics Initiative, onCore UK, Cancer Research UK, the NCRI

## Children in Clinical trials

**Clinical trials and other studies led by members of the Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group (CCLG) take place in a network of 21 treatment centres across the British Isles.** A combination of basic research and clinical trials has made a huge difference to the number of children surviving cancer – today, three quarters of children with cancer are successfully treated. Members of the CCLG have contributed substantially to this success, and continue to do so, as around 60% of children with cancer in the UK are currently on a clinical trial, a much higher rate than can be achieved with adult cancer patients.

**A new NCRI Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Clinical Studies Group (CCL CSG) has been formed, following the restructuring of the CCLG and is now established with seven subgroups:**

- CNS (Central Nervous System)
- Leukaemia
- Novel Agents
- Germ Cell
- Neuroblastoma
- Hepatobiliary
- Renal

Its inaugural meeting was held in April. Chaired by Dr Chris Mitchell, membership of CCL CSG includes the Chairs of the subgroups and, as with other CSGs, covers a number of disciplines and has a good

geographical spread. The remit of the CCL CSG now includes overview of all areas of paediatric cancer, including those which are incorporated into the remits of other CSGs. There is a current portfolio of open trials and trials in follow-up, with new trials in the planning stage. The open trials potentially encompass over 80% of all childhood malignancy. For further information please contact the CSG Secretariat at [ncricsg@cancer.org.uk](mailto:ncricsg@cancer.org.uk).

**A third component of infrastructure is provided by the Cancer Research UK Children's Cancer Trials Team (CCTT) which is part of the Cancer Research UK Clinical Trials Unit at the University of Birmingham.** The new team, led by Dr Pam Kearns, was also launched in April and coordinates a number of clinical trials in the network, bringing cutting edge science from the lab to the bedside, and making innovative new treatments available to children with cancer. The CCTT is committed to using its expertise in designing trials for rare cancers where it can be hard to recruit enough participants, as a majority of paediatric cancers fall into this category. It also aims to run and lead more international trials. If you would like to find out more about paediatric trials please contact CRCTU at [GeneralEnquiries@trials.bham.ac.uk](mailto:GeneralEnquiries@trials.bham.ac.uk).

## 4th Phase of the National Prevention Research Initiative gets underway

**The National Prevention Research Initiative (NPRI) aims to support cross-disciplinary research which develops, tests or evaluates interventions that can potentially have a major impact on population health.** Supported by 16 research funding organisations including 9 NCRI Partners, approximately £10 million is being made available to support research focused on improving health and preventing diseases or conditions such as cancer, heart and circulatory diseases, diabetes, obesity, stroke and dementia in this 4th phase of the initiative.

First launched in 2004 the NPRI has in its first three phases provided >£20m to support prevention research. For more information on Phases 1-3 of the NPRI please visit [www.npri.org.uk](http://www.npri.org.uk)

The deadline for receipt of outline proposals for this 4th phase is 3 November 2010 with decisions on the final full applications expected in mid November 2011.

For more information on Phase 4 of the NPRI please visit: [www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Calls/NPRI4/MRC004760](http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Calls/NPRI4/MRC004760)



Biomarkers and Imaging Clinical Studies Group, with support from the National Cancer Research Network. This resource replaces previous attempts to generate biosample “portals” relevant to cancer researchers.

The two new directories contain information about

- general cancer biosample resources or
- resources specifically associated with cancer clinical trials

They can be viewed at

[www.ncri-onix.org.uk/portal/#S103a](http://www.ncri-onix.org.uk/portal/#S103a)

Each directory entry contains summary information describing the biosample resource, including where it is stored and the arrangements for access.

Custodians of biosample resources/collections/banks who wish to list their samples on the directories can do so by filling an online questionnaire, which takes no more than 10-15 minutes.

For more information and to access the online questionnaire please visit

[www.oncoreuk.org/pages/researchers\\_data.html](http://www.oncoreuk.org/pages/researchers_data.html) or email [info@oncoreuk.org](mailto:info@oncoreuk.org)

The 2011 NCRI Cancer Conference will take place at the BT Convention Centre in Liverpool on 6-9 November

### Confirmed plenary speakers are:

- Harold zur Hausen (German Cancer Research Centre, Heidelberg, Germany)
- Sir Mike Richards (National Cancer Director, England, UK)
- Maria Blasco (Spanish National Cancer Research Centre, Madrid, Spain)
- Hans Clevers (Hubrecht Institute, Netherlands)
- Mike Stratton (Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Hinxton, UK)
- Jeff Settleman (Massachusetts General Hospital, Charlestown, USA)
- Michael Hall (University of Basel, Switzerland)
- John Potter (Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Washington, USA)
- Eva Grunfeld (University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada)



### The Conference will include symposia on:

- Stratified medicine (hosted by Alan Ashworth, Institute of Cancer Research)
- Metabolism and cancer (hosted by Eyal Gottlieb, Beatson Institute for Cancer Research, Glasgow)
- The diagnostic and therapeutic potential of the tumour microenvironment (hosted by Thorsten Hagemann, Barts and The London)
- Epigenetics and cancer (hosted by Peter Adams, Beatson Institute for Cancer Research, Glasgow)
- Epithelial mesenchymal transition (hosted by Nick Hastie, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh)
- Living with and beyond cancer (hosted by Peter Selby, St James's University Hospital)
- Cancer prevention and screening (hosted by Robert Steele, University of Dundee)
- Appropriate models of disease (hosted by David Tuveson, University of Cambridge)

### Membership changes to NCRI Board

We are delighted to welcome Professor Dame Janet Husband who has joined the Board as an independent member and will take over as Chair of NCRI with effect from April 2011. A full profile will appear in the next newsletter.

Our thanks go to Mrs Pamela Goldberg (Breast Cancer Campaign) and Dr Rosemary Gillespie (Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation) who have finished their terms on the Board.

### NCRI Secretariat moves

During November and early December, the NCRI and Clinical Studies Group (CSG) secretariats will move from their current separate locations in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, to the Angel Building in Islington, London, the new headquarters of their host organisation, Cancer Research UK. This move will enable the two groups to be housed alongside each other for the first time.

#### NCRI Secretariat

Tel: 020 3469 8460

Fax: 020 3014 7658

#### CSG Secretariat

Tel: 020 3469 8582

Fax: 020 3014 7658

The new contact details can be used with immediate effect:

**Angel Building**  
**407 St John Street**  
**London EC1V 4AD**



Angel Building

If you have any comments or news stories for inclusion in future editions of the NCRI newsletter, please contact:

[info@ncri.org.uk](mailto:info@ncri.org.uk)