



MAY 2009

New radiotherapy initiative takes shape

The new Clinical and Translational Radiotherapy Research Working Group (CTRRWG) is being set up to stimulate and support research in radiotherapy, with Professor Tim Maughan as interim Chair.

The working group comprises four workstreams, as listed below.

- 1. Science base** - to capture relevant new discoveries in disciplines such as radiobiology, DNA repair, physics and imaging.
- 2. Phase I/II trials** - to develop innovative trials that integrate systemic therapies with high quality radiotherapy techniques, supported with novel imaging and biomarker studies.
- 3. Phase III trials** - to develop trials in collaboration with tumour specific Clinical Studies Groups, and explore appropriate methodologies for evaluation of novel radiotherapy approaches.
- 4. New technology, physics, quality assurance** - to develop the case for, and then oversee, the delivery of enhanced infrastructure support for radiotherapy trials in the UK, including QA and evaluation of new technologies.

We are delighted to announce that, following an enthusiastic response to the advertisement, a Deputy Chair for the Working Group and co-chairs for the workstreams have been appointed. Together with ex officio members, they form the Executive Group, which will oversee the individual workstreams and cross-cutting activities such as training and workforce development, and a study on patterns of current radiotherapy care within the NHS. The Executive Group has already met to start planning their work and the first meetings of workstreams will take place during the summer.

Chair:	Prof Tim Maughan
Deputy Chair + Chair Designate:	Prof Tim Illidge
Ex officio:	Prof Gillies McKenna
Ex officio:	Prof Peter Hoskin
Workstream 1 co-chairs:	Prof Ian Stratford and Prof Thomas Brunner
Workstream 2 co-chairs:	Dr Kevin Harrington and Prof Ruth Plummer
Workstream 3 co-chairs:	Dr Chris Nutting and Prof Max Parmar (interim)
Workstream 4 co-chairs:	Dr Neil Burnet and Dr Ranald Mackay

There have been a very high number of applications to join the workstreams as members. Professional and consumer members will be appointed shortly. Further information will be provided on the NCRI website as plans unfold (<http://www.ncri.org.uk/default.asp?s=1&p=5&ss=14>)



To promote this new initiative, Professor Tim Maughan published an editorial in *Clinical Oncology* journal (April 2009 issue). You can download it from the NCRI website at http://www.ncri.org.uk/includes/Publications/general/TimClinOncEditorial_March2009.doc

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Team news

All members of the NCRI team are now located in Queens House, Lincolns Inn Fields. The NCRI Conference group, formerly based in Cancer Research UK, are now fully integrated into the NCRI Secretariat. Vacancies have been filled and the team will be up to strength by early June.

For contact details see the staff page on our website [<http://www.ncri.org.uk/default.asp?s=0&p=6>]. The Secretariat continues to benefit from being alongside the NCRI Informatics Unit and the Coordinating Team for the National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN).

Refocused role for onCore UK

onCore UK was established 4 years ago both to promote biobanking and as a national biobank, itself collecting and distributing samples. OnCore UK has been highly successful in the first of these roles, having among other things promulgated a 'guiding principles' document and been instrumental in setting up the NCRI Confederation of Cancer Biobanks (CCB).

Following a recent review, the Board of Trustees of onCore UK have decided that active biobanking will cease and the charity will transition to a role that is predominantly focused on advocacy, support, advice, coordination and representation of the wider cancer biobanking community in the UK, in partnership with NCRI.

onCoreUK will continue to be supported by the Department of Health, Cancer Research UK and the Medical Research Council. The full statement from the onCore UK trustees can be read at <http://www.oncoreuk.org/documents/>

Informatics - ONIX has gone live



The NCRI's Informatics Initiative has been testing version 1.0 of its cancer research information portal, ONIX, with a representative group of physicians, researchers and students.

ONIX (short for the NCRI 'ONcology Information eXchange') is a new tool that will allow cancer physicians and researchers to access multiple online sources of information in the UK and beyond, through one internet portal.

ONIX will be made publicly available in the summer of this year and the Informatics Unit has spent the last

few months working with the community to guide future developments for the ONIX system. So far the response has been overwhelmingly positive and the Informatics Initiative team are working to incorporate more resources and specifically requested functionality to ensure that ONIX is well-received upon its public release.

For more information on how to register for ONIX, please contact chantelle.absalom@ncri.org.uk



NCRI Cancer Conference registration opening



field of cancer, creating unique opportunities for interdisciplinary learning.

We are pleased to announce that registration for the 2009 NCRI Cancer Conference in Birmingham opens on Monday 1 June 2009.

Register before Friday 31 July 2009 to secure your place at the Conference and benefit from Earlybird discounts.

The NCRI Cancer Conference brings together experts from across the



For more information, please visit the website at www.ncri.org.uk/ncriconference/

Registration for the Late Phase Trials Forum (LPTF) now open



On 24th June the Wellcome Collection Conference Centre, London will play host to the third NCRI Late Phase Trials Forum (LPTF) of the ECMC Network.

This year's meeting will focus on multi-modality late phase trials with talks from Tim Maughan (Cardiff University), John

Primrose (University of Southampton) and Cindy Billingham (University of Birmingham). They will be joined by Professor James Carmichael of AstraZeneca who will discuss his perspective on academia working with industry.

In the afternoon delegates will have the opportunity to attend one of three workshops on 1) circulating tumour cells and DNA, 2) radiotherapy and 3) biomarker roadmaps. To further encourage networking, delegates

are invited to a drinks reception at the Wellcome Collection Conference Centre following the meeting.

The LPTF attracts a wide range of attendees including clinical and non-clinical researchers, research nurses, data managers and representatives from industry.

The meeting is free to attend but pre-registration is required. To find out more about the LPTF and to register please visit www.ncri.org.uk/ctf

NCIN Annual Conference

National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham - 25 June 2009

The National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN) Annual Conference 2009 will celebrate the first anniversary of the NCIN.



In addition to showcasing work undertaken by the NCIN and its partners, the conference will provide a unique opportunity

for sharing experience, requirements and solutions in the field of cancer information. The conference will have a particular focus on improving clinical outcomes for patients.

Themes will include:

- UK and international comparisons of cancer incidence and mortality
- Exploiting linkage of primary, secondary and follow up data
- Survivorship
- Transforming data collection and management to inform outcomes
- Outcomes data for patients and the public

The conference is free to attend; to see the provisional programme and to register please visit the NCIN website at www.ncin.org.uk

Consumer Research Panels (CRPs) - Working together across Local Research Networks

CRPs involve groups of consumers meeting and working collaboratively with local cancer researchers with the aim of improving the relevance, quality or conduct of a research study.

CRPs bring together people affected by cancer who provide an accessible resource for researchers and a forum through which to develop consumer-driven projects. Many consumer members of CRPs are also actively involved with the **NCRI Consumer Liaison Group** and **NCRI Clinical Studies Groups** helping to forge stronger links between consumer involvement in research taking place at national and local levels.

Two such panels, based in the **local cancer research networks** of **Surrey, West Sussex and Hampshire (SWSH)** and **South West London** have recently started working more closely together to plan and deliver joint learning and development opportunities with their consumer members. By working together the two Groups plan to exchange best practice on their involvement in local research projects, build upon their current

meeting and leadership skills as well as identifying and further enhancing their impact on research projects they are engaged in.

“ We feel that by working together in this way we can really get a better understanding of each other's experiences of involvement, the discussions have been really empowering for all concerned. ”

- Kim Tye (SW London) and Julia Simister (SWSH), Research Network Managers

The two Groups aim to run a joint training session in June as well as sharing work and exploring the possibility of holding regular meetings together in the future.

Further details on these and other CRPs are available from the NCRN website at: www.ncrn.org.uk following the links to **Patient and Public Involvement and Consumer Research Panels** or you can contact the **NCRN Consumer Liaison Lead, Karen Inns, at k.inns@ncrn.org.uk**

ICRP meeting

5-6 May



This year's International Cancer Research Partners' meeting was hosted by the Avon Foundation for Women in New York.

Following the successful ICRP meeting in London in 2008 (pictured below), two new partners are joining from continental Europe and took part in this year's meeting, namely the Netherlands Cancer Society and the Institut National du Cancer in France. Including the partners in NCRI, the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance, and individual US members of ICRP, the total number of government and charity funders of cancer research in the international partnership is approaching 50. Others are being actively recruited.

This year's audience heard presentations on a variety of topics including the additional funding for the US National Cancer Institute arising from President Obama's 'stimulus package', a survey of peer review practice amongst partners, the Health Research Alliance (which fosters collaboration among not-for-profit, non-governmental research funders in the US), and a patient-centred clinical trials service known as breastcancertrials.org. Lively discussion and active networking ensued.

For further information visit www.cancerportfolio.org



NCRI Cancer Research Database - data available to download

Since 2002 NCRI has collected data on the research funded by our Partners. Using the Common Scientific Outline (CSO) NCRI is able to categorise the research portfolio by type of research, from basic biology (CS01) to cancer control, survival and outcomes (CS06). Now that 6 years of data are available, we have decided to make statistical data available on our website.

The diagram in Figure 1 allows the profile of spend to be seen at a glance. In the UK, spend on basic biology research (CS01) accounts for the largest share of the portfolio, at 40%, with spend on treatment next at 24%.

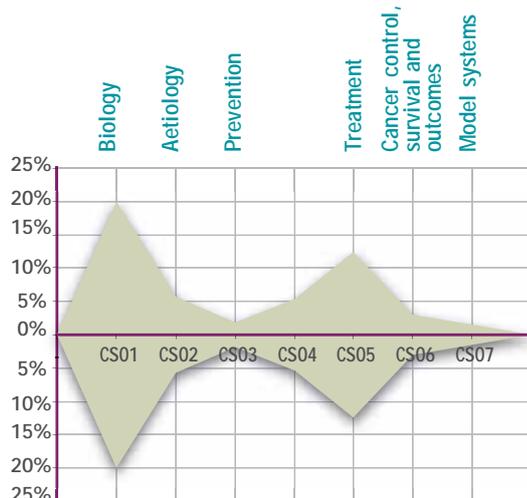


Figure 1: Profile of 2007 NCRI Cancer Research Portfolio

The NCRI portfolio is also categorised by disease site. Not all research can be attributed to a particular disease site, a large portion of basic biology research (CS01) is applicable to cancer generally, and some awards, for example treatment of pain in cancer patients, may have relevance to all cancer sites. In 2007 over 40% of the annualised research spend by our Partners was on site specific research, see figure 2.

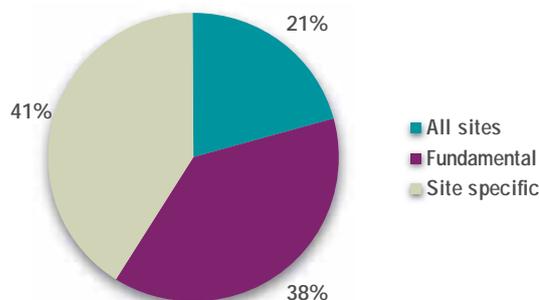


Figure 2: Site specific, all sites and fundamental research

We have put together a data package which allows anyone with any interest in the NCRI portfolio to carry out analysis on it. The data package, together with a further explanation of the CSO, can be downloaded at www.ncri.org.uk/includes/Publications/general/Data_package_07.xls. If you have any questions about the data package or the NCRI cancer research database please contact us at info@ncri.org.uk.

If you are interested in knowing more about the individual awards that make up the portfolio, please see the International Cancer Research Portfolio at www.cancerportfolio.org

Promoting research in Positron Emission Tomography (PET)

The NCRI PET Research Steering Committee have hosted a workshop to help shape the initiative in more detail.

It was attended by a wide range of participants – oncologists, PET experts, representatives from relevant industries (pharma, PET scanning, diagnostic), national trials networks, research funders and commissioners of NHS PET services. Some of the main messages from the workshop may be summarised as:

- Both industry and academia would welcome a directory of resources and capabilities for PET research in the UK.
- Application of PET to early phase trials is limited by the availability and validity of radiotracers other than fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG). NCRI can potentially play a role in

creating a distribution network for tracers such as fluorothymidine, facilitating collaborative working with both academic and commercial suppliers.

- Imagers and clinicians need more dialogue to understand unmet clinical needs that might be addressed using PET.
- Researchers and the commissioners of PET services have a common interest in wanting to see an evidence base for the use of PET.
- The Independent Sector PET providers wish to be involved in research and are supportive of a study to determine the appropriate research use(s) of mobile scanners

- There is support from both academia and pharma for a trials network to facilitate and standardise protocols for, in the first instance, use of FDG-PET.

The outputs and contacts established at the workshop have now fed into the work-plans for the initiative developed by Prof. Fiona Gilbert, Prof Ken Miles & Dr Paul Marsden – the 3 NCRI PET Research Network Leads. Support staff for each of the Leads are now in place and implementation of the work-plans is beginning.

For more information, please email Dr Sabine Regel at sabine.regel@kcl.ac.uk