



**NCRI**

National  
Cancer  
Research  
Institute

# National Cancer Research Institute NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER 2009

## Biomedical Informatics without Borders: From Collaboration to Implementation



NCRI  
INFORMATICS  
INITIATIVE

This was the title for the third joint conference of the US National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the

UK NCRI Informatics Initiative which took place recently. It proved an apt description of proceedings with participants from many countries, and reports on progress in developing a wide range of data management tools, now available to biomedical scientists.

Delegates agreed this is an exciting time with many international collaborations established and practical benefits starting to come through from early ground work on both sides of the Atlantic. Ken Buetow closed the conference by inviting everyone to a reciprocal event in a year's time to be hosted by the NCI.

Further information on NCRI's Informatics Initiative is available at <http://www.cancerinformatics.org.uk/>

### Inside this issue:

Biomedical Informatics without borders

NCRI Video

Consumer Liaison Group gets the "thumbs-up"

New NCRI Board members

New chair for NCRI Board Sub-Group

Launch of the CTRRWG

Early / Late Phase Clinical Trials Forum

NCRN / NCRI workshop

ECMC Workshop

NCIN annual conference

Developing consensus on early phase PET research

The conference opened with presentations from Professor Ken Buetow who heads the US NCI caBIG initiative and Professor Sir Kenneth Calman, Chair of NCRI. The 'two Kens' presented a powerful vision of what we seek to achieve through the sharing, re-use and linkage of data.



During the rest of the 2-day meeting, delegates heard presentations on, among other topics, the ONIX platform being developed by NCRI, a variety of technical developments within caBIG, GRID infrastructure within Europe, BioGrid Australia, and patient perspectives. Other activities included workshops, posters and demonstrations.

### New NCRI Video

Keeping track of what NCRI is and does can be a challenge, so to help communicate our key aims and achievements we have created a short video.

NCRI partners, research scientists, patients and carers have all contributed and help to convey the richness and diversity of NCRI's activities.

Although the Secretariat is relatively small, our influence stretches widely, both within cancer research in the UK and beyond. We are not always in the public eye but we work hard behind the scenes to ensure that research is well-coordinated and focussed on improving the lives of patients and preventing cancer.

The video will first be shown on screens at the NCRI Cancer Conference in October. To request a free copy after the event, please email us at [info@ncri.org.uk](mailto:info@ncri.org.uk) or visit our website ([www.ncri.org.uk](http://www.ncri.org.uk)).

## NCRI Consumer Liaison Group gets the “thumbs-up”

**An international review panel has complemented the NCRI Consumer Liaison Group (CLG) on its work and has spoken of the successes of the past and the challenges of the future. In the words of Professor Max Parmar of the Medical Research Council, who was chair of the review, it “showed both quality and quantity (of involvement), and was of a very high standard”.**

The Consumer Liaison Group was set up in 2000 and became aligned with NCRI and NCRN when they were created in 2001. During this time it has established itself as an important influence on the work of NCRN, NCRI and individual partners. Consumers (patients and carers) sit on all national boards and committees and are active in local networks in many parts of the country. This is the second successful review for the group and creates a platform for further work in the future.

Building on the feedback from the review, the CLG plans to enhance its current level of communication via the NCRN and NCRI websites. It also plans to support further work to map

and evaluate the impact of consumer involvement in cancer research.

To this end we are currently working with a team of researchers from the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences to develop a proposal to submit to the MRC Methodology Research Programme. Work is also under way to develop guidance for Chairs on supporting effective patient and public involvement in the NCRI Clinical Studies Group.

At the review meeting, the CLG was represented by five consumer members and NCRN secretariat staff. My thanks go to everyone who contributed to the review, and the past members of CLG who laid the foundations for future progress.

**David Ardron** (Chair, NCRI Consumer Liaison Group)

Further information about the CLG is available at: [http://ncrdev.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=68&Itemid=115](http://ncrdev.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=68&Itemid=115)

## New NCRI Board members with an industry perspective



**Dr Allison Jeynes-Ellis**, a research and development specialist in oncology, has recently joined the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) as Medical & Innovation Director. Allison trained in hospital medicine before spending 17 years in the pharmaceutical industry in a variety of senior roles at Bristol Myers Squibb and Wyeth UK; she has also worked as an independent consultant for large and small pharmaceutical companies and within the biotech

sector across a wide range of therapy areas. Allison will represent ABPI on both the NCRI Board and Board Sub-Group on Clinical & Translational Research.



**Mr Glyn Edwards** MBE, Chief Executive Officer of Antisoma Research Ltd and Executive Director of Antisoma plc, has also recently joined the Board in a personal capacity, to increase industry input to NCRI discussions. Antisoma is a biotechnology company specialising in the development of novel drugs for the treatment of cancer. Glyn has been in his present post since 1998, prior to which he was Director of

Business Development at Therapeutic Antibodies and previously held a variety of business development roles in the biotech and healthcare industries.

## New chair for the NCRI Board Sub-Group on Clinical & Translational Research

**The NCRI is pleased to introduce Dr Declan Mulkeen, Director of Research Management at the Medical Research Council (MRC), as the new chair of the Board Sub-Group (BSG) on Clinical & Translational Research.**

Declan currently represents the MRC on the NCRI Board and succeeds Prof. Herbie Newell who recently stepped down from the chair, having completed his period of office at Cancer Research UK to return full time to his academic position in Newcastle. BSG members and the NCRI Secretariat extend their warmest thanks to Herbie for all his enthusiasm and energy in chairing the BSG over the last 2 years.

The BSG continues to provide an effective forum for discussion

and coordination of NCRI associated clinical and translational networks and initiatives including cancer biobanking and the NCRI Informatics Initiative. With new initiatives, such as the National Cancer Intelligence Network and the Clinical & Translational Radiotherapy Research Working Group, now also within the remit of the BSG it is an exciting time for the group and we wish Declan all the best in his role as its chair.

For more information on the BSG and a list of members please visit <http://www.ncri.org.uk/default.asp?s=0&p=5>.



## Launch of the CTRRWG



**The NCRI Clinical & Translational Radiotherapy Research Working Group (CTRRWG) was formally launched on 7 July 2009 at an event in London. The meeting was well attended by members of the newly established group, which included experts from across the radiotherapy field, industrial representatives as well as consumers.**

Sir Kenneth Calman, NCRI Chair, opened the meeting and Professor Tim Maughan, CTRRWG Chair, then laid out his vision for the group and the many opportunities for research in this area. The core of the meeting was break-out

sessions for each of the work-streams to discuss and agree their objectives and deliverables for the coming 3 years.

Later in the afternoon there were talks on cross-cutting themes covering workforce development, imaging and biomarkers, trials infrastructure and methodology issues and infrastructure. The day closed with a drinks reception where the delegates had the chance to network.

The high attendance and interactive discussion illustrated the strong interest in radiotherapy research and highlighted many opportunities as well as challenges. Enthusiasm and energy was clearly evident throughout the day and it was a great way to get the initiative going.

**Further information on the CTRRWG is available on the NCRI website at <http://www.ncri.org.uk/default.asp?s=1&p=5&ss=14>**

## Early / Late Phase Clinical Trials Forum

The Early and Late Phase Trials Forums have now been running for three years. The most recent Late Phase Trial Forum held on 24 June focussed on multimodality late phase trials and working with industry. During the afternoon session there were three parallel workshops on 'Circulating Tumour Cells and DNA', 'Radiotherapy' and 'Roadmaps to Biomarker Research'.

The next Early Phase Forum will take place on 13th January 2010 and will be held at the Wellcome Trust Conference Collection, London. The theme for this meeting will address 'Challenges in Early Phase Trials'.

**For more information on the Early / Late Phase Clinical Trials Forum please go to <http://www.ncri.org.uk/ctf/>**

## ECMC Workshop at 2009 NCRI Cancer Conference

**This year the ECMC Secretariat will be hosting a parallel session showcasing the successes of the ECMC Network (Wednesday 7 October, 10.10-12.10hrs).**

Seven Centres of clinical and translational excellence from across the UK will highlight their achievements in early phase clinical trials and translational research. The workshop will

present cutting edge research in areas of chemoprevention and radioimmunotherapy. It will also focus on novel agents including PARP / P13K inhibitors as well as vaccines and the use of biomarker driven assessment of these novel agents.



## NCRN/NCRI workshop at the NHS Network Development Programme

**NCRN and NCRI jointly hosted a successful workshop at the NHS Network Development Programme (NDP) meeting in June. This aimed to highlight the importance of clinical research within the NHS cancer networks and to encourage greater collaboration between the parallel cancer research and service networks.**

NDP is an opportunity for the English cancer networks to meet and share best practice. Three events are organised by the National Cancer Action Team each year and key staff from each cancer network attend, making this the ideal opportunity to engage with the service networks. NCRN and NCRI were invited to hold a workshop session to raise awareness of the importance of joint working between the service and research networks. The workshop on "Delivering Cancer Services ...where does research fit in?" attracted over forty participants.

Dr Karen Poole (NCRN Assistant Director) set the context for the workshop and introduced the organisations involved. Mrs Gina Dutton (Pan Birmingham Cancer Research Network Manager) gave some brief examples of effective working between service and research networks and finally Mrs Christine Allmark (User Research Lead, Leeds Psychosocial Oncology & Clinical Practice Research Group) provided her perspective as both a patient and a researcher. These presentations were followed by an opportunity for questions and a valuable discussion took place in both sessions.

In addition to the workshops, an exhibition stand displayed NCRN and NCRI materials throughout the event and gave delegates the opportunity to ask questions in a more informal setting. This stand will become a regular feature at future NDP meetings and it is hoped that additional workshops can be held to continue to extend awareness of the importance of research among NHS staff.

## NCIN Annual Conference



The 2009 National Cancer Intelligence Network (NCIN) Annual Conference provided an opportunity to look back on progress during NCIN's first year to look

ahead to the next year and to showcase the work that the network has enabled.

Nearly 400 delegates attended the conference in Birmingham to hear 28 speakers cover topics ranging from international comparisons and outcomes data for patients through to data collection and management. Together with 42 poster presentations this meant a packed and informative schedule.

Highlights of the conference included Professor Mike Richards' overview of how NCIN is changing what we know about cancer; a description of research into Patterns of Cancer Care in New South Wales by Professor Bruce Armstrong of the University of Sydney; and Lynn Faulds-Wood closing the day with a rousing patient's perspective on the NCIN

NCIN's latest analytical report on cancer and ethnicity, prepared jointly with Cancer Research UK, was launched at the event and Professor David Forman (pictured) presented the key findings. The limelight, however, was stolen by Dr Tony Moran whose parallel session presentation of results on cancer outcomes from the elderly from the North West Cancer Intelligence Service made national headlines and Radio 4's Today programme. The slides from the day and many of the posters presented are available from the NCIN website (<http://www.ncin.org.uk/about/conference/2009.shtml>).

Next year's conference will be a joint event with the UK Association of Cancer Registries and will be held on 17 & 18 June 2010 in Birmingham.



For more information about NCIN please go to [www.ncin.org.uk](http://www.ncin.org.uk)

## Developing consensus on early phase PET research needs

Professor Fiona Gilbert, one of the NCRI PET Research Network Leads, hosted a workshop in July at the Wellcome Trust to develop consensus on the needs for early phase PET research. There was a high level of interest in the meeting, with many of the Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres (ECMCs) represented as well as participants from both the pharmaceutical and diagnostic industries.

The morning session comprised a series of presentations covering a review of current facilities in the UK, issues relating to improving access to existing and new radiotracers, the needs and aspirations of ECMCs just starting out in PET research, and industry perspectives on the role of PET in drug development. The afternoon session saw three breakout sessions to discuss and agree research requirements for the UK. The sessions covered:

- Research goals for the academic community - How can the community work together? What are the barriers to collaboration?
- New radiotracers - How can they be developed and distributed, how can the PET Research Network help?
- Regulatory issues - What are the barriers, potential solutions and how can the PET Research Network help?

The breakout sessions produced a clear consensus that FLT was the tracer most in demand for early phase research. The PET Research Network is now developing approaches to make this more readily available which, if successful, could provide a model for other tracers in the future.

The breakout sessions produced a clear consensus that FLT was the tracer most in demand for early phase research. The PET Research Network is now developing approaches

to make this more readily available which, if successful, could provide a model for other tracers in the future.

If you're interested in PET and are attending this year's NCRI Cancer Conference, do come along to the parallel session on PET imaging (Monday 5 October, 15.40-17.55hrs) hosted by Dr Paul Marsden, Guy's, King's & St Thomas' School of Medicine, London and NCRI PET Research Network Lead.

More information on NCRI's Positron Emission Tomography (PET) initiative is available at <http://www.ncri.org.uk/default.asp?s=1&p=6&ss=1>

**Register at this year's Conference**  
**4 - 7 October 2009**  
The International Convention Centre, Birmingham, UK  
The registration desks are situated in the Upper Foyer and are open during the following times.

<b>Sunday 4 October</b>	12:00 - 18:00 hrs
<b>Monday 5 October</b>	08:00 - 19:00 hrs
<b>Tuesday 6 October</b>	08:00 - 19:00 hrs
<b>Wednesday 7 October</b>	08:00 - 13:00 hrs

[www.ncri.org.uk](http://www.ncri.org.uk)

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)