



First-hand experience of a clinical research trial

One of our Public and Patient Forum members, Calvin Wood, is getting direct experience of helping in research by being part of a national clinical trial which is screening for atrial fibrillation (AF).

AF is a heart condition that causes an irregular and often abnormally fast heart rate, which can cause problems including dizziness, shortness of breath and tiredness. It has also been linked to stroke.

The study wants to find out if screening for AF is effective and cost effective in reducing stroke and other key outcomes compared to current practice.

It is being run by Cambridge University and Calvin was issued with a hand-held digital machine to record his heartbeat four times a day for three weeks. Each recording was transmitted back for analysis to the university. Calvin is part of the national randomised controlled trial of 200 GP practices involving 100,000 patients and will be followed up for five years.

Calvin has been able to provide feedback of his personal experience of a clinical trial to the Forum, which will help increase their knowledge of patient involvement in research studies.



Calvin Wood

Public and Patient Forum member



"This trial is important as early detection of AF can help prevent stroke. I am delighted to be involved."

Calvin Wood

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- A day in the life of research staff

Get Involved

www.clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk

Public and patient involvement is central to all activities at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre, including research.

There are various ways that patients and the public can get involved in research, such as:

- Providing feedback on research documents e.g. information sheets, questionnaires
- Setting priority areas for research and identifying specific research questions
- Supporting the education and training of research students.

If you are interested in becoming a public or patient representative for research at Clatterbridge please contact Emma Whitby for more information by emailing: emma.whitby1@nhs.net



News from the Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forum

The Forum continues to meet on a monthly basis.

We welcome guest speakers who outline their area of research and more recently we have been asked to comment on areas of patient experience and make recommendations for improvement.

We always welcome new members, so if you have an interest in cancer research and would like to hear of the latest pioneering work, contact Emma Whitby via email on emma.whitby1@nhs.net

Head and neck cancer research

In October, the group welcomed Dr Michelle Lawton to speak about her research involving patients with head and neck cancer (H&N).

Dr Lawton highlighted the rising rates of H&N cancer in the north of England. This type of cancer involves some very complex systems, making treatment and recovery difficult. Patients often have the burden of having to live with a tracheostomy and there are higher numbers of admissions to hospital, particularly through A&E.

The aims of the study she is undertaking are:

- To build a team of healthcare professionals and patients/carers
- To form an agreement about the research to be done, recognising there are many gaps in current knowledge
- To identify and understand the information that is currently available
- To understand how information can help answer questions

Dr Lawton believes that patient and public involvement is essential to help build this team and to find members with experience of research who can act as buddies for those new to the subject. All those involved with the study will have access to training, a buddy system and expenses. Meetings can take place face-to-face or online.

If you are a patient/carer and wish to be involved with this study, please contact Emma Whitby via email on emma.whitby1@nhs.net



Speech and language therapy

In July, Dr Heulwen Sheldrick visited the Forum to present her research in Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT).

Dr Sheldrick gave an overview of her role, highlighting that members of the profession require medical, scientific and linguistic training.

She sees patients with a tracheostomy, and those living with dementia. These patients may have difficulties in swallowing or recovering from surgery or treatment, or have oropharyngeal difficulties.

Dr Sheldrick was the first SaLT practitioner employed at CCC and she now has opportunities for research, although her duties as a clinician take priority. Her particular research interests centre on clinical decision-making and she has been doing some national work on laryngeal tumours with Prof Jo Patterson, Professor of Speech and Language Therapy at the University of Liverpool and Honorary Professor at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre.

Dr Sheldrick is also involved in two clinical trials: PATHOS, which is HPV related, and SIPS MART2, looking at behavioural changes for prehabilitation in head and neck cancer.



Dr Heulwen Sheldrick
Clinical Network Lead
and Specialist Speech
and Language Therapist

Spotlight on our research staff

Lead Haematology Research Nurse



Jane Tinsley

Lead Haematology Nurse

Jane Tinsley moved into research as a lymphoma trials nurse in 2009 after working on the haematology and bone marrow transplant wards in Royal Liverpool University Hospital for 12 years.

Jane took on the newly created role of Lead Haematology nurse in 2017 and manages the

haematology research team. The team has a portfolio of trials in lymphoma, leukaemia, myeloma and stem cell therapy.

Jane's days are busy and varied, managing a team, guiding the portfolio and coordinating new trials to ensure there are options for patients.

The team has recently taken over haematology trials at Clatterbridge Cancer Centre – Aintree and Jane has been working to develop the service, ensuring patients have equal access across both sites.

In the coming months, the team will be looking to open early phase studies in haematology as well as aiming to open CAR-T trials at Clatterbridge Cancer Centre – Liverpool.

Jane believes research is crucial for the NHS and all of us individually. The drugs trialed today could be established as routine care in future years, helping to save and improve lives. Jane has always been determined not to lose patient contact – something that became harder as her nursing career progressed. So, she does one follow-up clinic each week, seeing trials patients and screening and recruiting new patients, which she feels is a vital part of her role.

Consultant Radiologist



Dr Abhishek Mahajan

Consultant Radiologist

Dr Abhishek Mahajan recently joined The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre as a Consultant Radiologist in head and neck, thoracic and neurological cancers.

He is also conducting research in artificial intelligence and imaging-based cancer biomarkers.

Apart from clinical radiology research, he is actively involved in quality of life related research, non-medical innovations and studying the impact of social media in oncology.

He is the associate editor of *Frontiers In Oncology* (cancer imaging and imaging directed interventions), *Frontiers In Nuclear Medicine* (radiomics and artificial intelligence), and *Frontiers In Radiology* (neuroradiology).

Dr Mahajan studied at one of India's top five medical schools, the Kasturba Medical College, in Manipal. He was Cancer Imaging Fellow at Asia's leading cancer hospital and teaching Institute, the Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH) in Mumbai from 2009-2011. He joined the Tata Memorial Centre in 2011 as Professor of Radiology and Consultant Radiologist.

During this time he took a sabbatical year to complete a Masters in Translational Cancer Medicine at King's College London, where he worked at the Hodgkin's Molecular lab exploring the role of HPV status and Hypoxia in H&N cancer and at the Medical Image Processing lab (Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital Trust) exploring the role of sarcopenia and radiomics in oncology.

Dr Mahajan is a widely published and active contributor in the field of artificial intelligence, head and neck imaging, neuro-oncoradiology and thoracic oncological imaging. He has been the Principal Investigator for 21 trials, leading the set up the Imaging Bio-Bank Lab at the Tata Memorial Centre.

His research is focused on investigating emerging artificial intelligence, deep learning, radiogenomics, and molecular imaging techniques to evaluate various aspects of tumor biology.