

Researchers awarded £5.3m in new partnership

Researchers at Clatterbridge have been given more funding to find new treatments for cancer

Residents in Cheshire and Merseyside are set to benefit after Clatterbridge researchers were awarded £5.3m in partnership with other Liverpool health trusts to investigate new treatments.

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has awarded the funding to the Liverpool Clinical Research Facility (CRF), allowing it to expand across new sites as Clatterbridge researchers work with counterparts at the Royal Liverpool and Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospitals.

Prof Christian Ottensmeier, Clatterbridge's Director of Clinical Research, said: "By bringing together experts from different Trusts through the CRF we can improve the clinical research trials we carry out, enabling us to offer more new treatments to more patients."



Biobank get new lease of life

Following a presentation to the PPI Forum by Dr Maria Maguire, one of our members – Brian Clark – volunteered to become a member of the Biobank Governance Board.

In his latest report he highlights developments in the biobank.

Brian writes: "The CCC Biobank was successful in renewing its ethics for the next five years. The new ethics also allows us to extend the nature of samples

bio banked to include tissue and other sample types, which will be a great advantage to our researchers as this will help in the research into mechanisms of cancer and discovery of new biomarkers.

"We have also appointed a new Biobank and Clinical Trials Laboratory Manager, Jamie Young. This will allow us to develop our research collaborations and biobanking infrastructure.

"We are delighted to announce that the Biobank

will fully re-open in the coming weeks after a hiatus due to COVID-19."



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SPECIAL INTEREST:

- Patient Research
- Cancer Alliance
- Biobank
- Palliative Care



News from the Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forum

The Forum continues to meet on a monthly basis. Each month sees a guest speaker who outlines their area of research followed by a Q&A session. We have had some very exciting sessions with many more booked in for 2022.

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: mary.jordan3@nhs.net

Understanding ethical approvals in research



Dr Maria Maguire

The Forum members requested some understanding of the Ethical Approvals process and Dr Maria Maguire presented on this very comprehensive process by referring to a current research study.

She highlighted the forms which have to be filled in and explained the role of the Research Ethics Committee (REC), which comprises clinicians, scientists and members of the public.

Different RECs have varying interests and levels of expertise eg paediatrics, psychosocial.

She went through the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) form, a lengthy document, which is presented to the REC for approval.

Dr. Maguire and the Chief Investigator of the study attend a meeting of the REC to discuss the application.

The sponsor is legally responsible for the study and so the Liverpool Clinical Trials Unit manages trials on CCC's behalf.



Dr Seamus Coyle
Consultant in
Palliative Medicine

Focus on Improving compassion in palliative care

The Forum was delighted to welcome Dr Seamus Coyle, a Clatterbridge consultant in Palliative Medicine, who presented one of his research projects and discussed the need for greater compassion in palliative care.

Seamus is passionate to provide the very best care for this group of patients and for their family and friends. He stressed the need to listen to patients' wishes, particularly where they wish to be.

He said doctors find it culturally difficult to have palliative care discussions and research into the topic is an 'ethical minefield'.

Currently, Cancer Research UK (CRUK) does not fund palliative care research, however Seamus hopes that the results of his research and the subsequent publications will encourage future funding in this field.

Many patients nearing the end of their life do not wish to be in hospital, preferring to go home and spend quality time with family and friends instead.

Seamus hopes that all clinicians will support and facilitate these wishes.

Focus on Cheshire & Merseyside Cancer Alliance

In March, the Forum welcomed Jon Hayes to speak about the work of Cheshire & Merseyside Cancer Alliance and the research the organisation is currently supporting. Jon, Managing Director of the Cancer Alliance, explained that its role is to act as an umbrella organisation with partners across Cheshire and Merseyside whose aim is to improve cancer care by delivering the vision of the NHS Long Term Plan. This includes identifying, diagnosing and treating patients in order to achieve the best outcomes for them.

The Cancer Alliance comprises nine areas (see the map, right), 14 hospital trusts, 55 Primary Care Networks, 375 GP practices – and is responsible for 2.6m residents in the region, as well as those on the Isle of Man.

Jon outlined the research programmes that the Cancer Alliance is currently supporting. These include:

Targeted Lung Health Checks – the aim being for this test to become the 4th national screening programme

NHS-Galleri Trial – a clinical research trial working with Kings College London to develop a blood test to detect cancer cells at a very early stage



Pinpoint – a blood test using artificial intelligence to predict how likely a patient is to have cancer

Cytosponge – an less invasive alternative to endoscopy

Colon capsule endoscopy – a video in a capsule as an alternative to a more invasive endoscopy

Transnasal endoscopy – an alternative to gastroscopy Head and Neck nomogram and voice analysis. This involves a GP taking a voice recording which assists in the diagnosis of cancer

Lynch syndrome testing – testing for a genetic condition with links to cancer.

For more information about the Cancer Alliance see:
cmcanceralliance.nhs.uk

Heightening research awareness among patients

In addition to hosting speakers to share their research, the Forum actively engages in its own research.

Recently, members helped to develop a survey to ascertain patients' awareness of research at CCC.

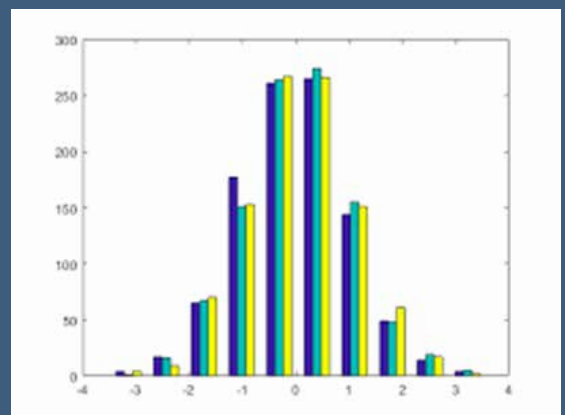
The aims of the survey were to raise the awareness of research at CCC and increase participation in clinical trials.

A total of 90 patients were surveyed in outpatients departments in Wirral, Liverpool and in radiotherapy.

75% of those surveyed were aware that CCC undertakes research but only 5% had participated in a study. This was to be expected where the survey was conducted outside of research clinics.

Most patients received information from clinicians, however, they expressed a wish to have more information in a written format.

Not all research studies examine the efficacy of drugs. Observational studies are integral to the work of the Research department and all patients should have the opportunity to participate in it.



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Spotlight on our Research Staff

A day in the life of a... Research Officer



Masuma Begum joined The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre in May 2019 as a Data Manager. She quickly became a very popular member of the research team.

Her role involved dealing with patient information, however she really wanted to be more involved with patients so, in 2021, she seized the opportunity to take on the role of Research Officer.

This involves recruiting patients for non-interventional and translational studies.

The Research Officer also takes samples of blood and saliva and orders stool and tumor samples.

In order to recruit patients, a Research Officer screens clinic lists to find suitable candidates and invites them to participate in studies.

Masuma says: "I enjoy interacting and seeing the difference that my work can make to improving the patient experience.

"Patients also enjoy being involved in our studies, and making a positive contribution to future treatments."

Masuma sees her role expanding even further to encompass new studies and wider partnerships and collaboration with universities.

A day in the life of a... Research Nurse



Dr Lynda Appleton has worked as a nurse and midwife throughout her NHS career, gaining her PhD in 2018.

She is a co-applicant, Principal Investigator and Chief Investigator on a range of studies

and has submitted many successful grant applications, conference papers and publications.

She is experienced in a variety of research methods, specifically qualitative approaches using depth interviews/diaries with patients, families and the public to understand roles, relationships and how disease, illness and treatment impacts on daily life and decision making over time.

Study findings have informed staff training, written patient information and the development of Trust-wide strategies.

Her role includes facilitating and supporting the development of research knowledge and skills amongst nurses and allied health professionals, providing support, guidance and supervision to students and staff (internal and external).

She is a visiting Research Fellow and Honorary Lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University and University of Liverpool respectively and has taught on MSc programmes.

Dr Appleton is a reviewer for a number of journals, including the European Journal of Oncology Nursing, European Journal of Cancer Care, Psycho-Oncology and Journal of Advanced Nursing.

She supports patient and public involvement in research, inviting patients and informal carers to partner with professionals, as members of the research team.

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 Mary Jordan for more information by emailing: mary.jordan3@nhs.net