



Spotlight

Your Department's Newsletter

Spotlight

Welcome to the third edition of *Spotlight*, the newsletter for staff and students within Oxford University's Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine. It is anticipated that there will be four newsletters published each year, one each quarter, which will carry news items and updates from the Department. An electronic version is also publicly available via the NDM Web site at the link below. If you have any comments or news items, please contact the Athena SWAN coordinator via e-mail on athena.swan@ndm.ox.ac.uk.

Working for NDM:

<http://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/working-for-ndm>



Fellows of the Academy of Medical Sciences



Congratulations to Professors Fiona Powrie and Richard Cornall, who were elected as Fellows of the Academy of Medical Sciences. The honour recognises outstanding contribution to the advancement of medical science, innovative application of scientific knowledge, or conspicuous service to healthcare. The new Fellows will be formally admitted to the Academy at a ceremony on Wednesday 2nd July 2014.

Careers Sessions

Due to the continued success of the Careers Service Sessions for NDM, monthly sessions will be on offer throughout 2014. Please see the website for the details on the Career Sessions available and how to book:

<http://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/careers-service-sessions-for-ndm>

'Ask HR' Drop in Clinics

To assist staff in obtaining information on existing HR policies and processes (e.g. regrading, working from home, KIT days, Paternity Leave), and to supplement the information available on the NDM/University websites, the Head of HR and members of the NDM Unit HR teams) will be available to answer your questions at informal drop in clinics. The first of these will take place in July. Watch out for more information, or ask your HR team.

Athena SWAN

Please see the Athena SWAN website for updates, networking sites, women in science podcasts and further information. In addition, a webpage has been developed to provide you with an overview of the role of the Athena SWAN Self-Assessment teams, and who the members are for each Unit:

<http://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/assa-teams>

Helen McShane's Women in Science talk will be available soon on the website, for those of you who couldn't make the day.

Celebrating Success



We are absolutely delighted to be able to congratulate Professor Helen McShane, from the Jenner Institute, on her election as a member of Oxford University Council. Helen will represent the divisions of Medical Sciences (MSD) and Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) until Michaelmas Term 2018.

Council is the University's executive governing body. It is responsible, under the Statutes, for "the advancement of the University's objects, for its administration, and for the management of its finances and property". The remit includes academic policy and the strategic direction of the University; this prestigious post will put an NDM Principal Investigator at the centre of University policy-making.

"It's a privilege to be elected to Council and I'm excited about serving the University in this important role", said Professor McShane.

NDM celebrates at the Green Impact Awards Ceremony



The first annual Green Impact Awards Ceremony was held on 18th June 2014, where The Jenner Institute received two bronze awards for their hard work on the Green Impact Initiative. Green Impact, which was launched by the University's Environmental Sustainability team and run in conjunction with the National Union of Students, supports departments via recognition for the sustainable initiatives already underway, as well as provision

of ideas and assistance for further improvements. Green Impact enables and showcases positive changes in environmental practice, such as energy saving ideas, recycling initiatives, reduction in waste produced, increase in use of electronic documentation, reduction in printing and taking account of environmental issues in long-term operational plans and strategies.

At the awards ceremony, Vice-Chancellor (Planning & Resources) Professor Andrew Hamilton presented prizes, an event which was kindly hosted by William James, Pro-Vice Chancellor and Chair of the Sustainability Steering Group and Daniel Tomlinson, Vice-President Charities & Community, OUSU.

Spotlight on:

Dr Sarah De Val, Group Head / PI and Supervisor



After giving birth to her first child the same day her first Cell paper was published, [Dr Sarah De Val's](#) personal and professional life will always be inextricably linked. Completing her undergraduate degree in Biology at Imperial University, Sarah went on to study her PhD in Genetics before commencing her postdoc at the University of California's Berkeley campus in 2002. One year later Sarah relocated to the University of California San Francisco, where she completed her postdoc under the supervision of Professor Brian Black.

Seven life-changing years later, Sarah returned to the UK to be closer to family. She now runs her own research group at the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research at the University of Oxford, where she works on gene regulation to control the growth of blood vessels into solid tumours.

Sarah currently employs three postdocs and four students. She took six months maternity leave with her second child, who is now two and a half, before returning to the lab.

"Being a working mother in a research career isn't easy, but it is achievable. To start with, my partner works part time running his own business, so without him I don't know how I would manage it. We also live very close to work, which makes life a lot easier," Dr De Val says. I think in a lot of cases science can be more flexible than other fields. I'm also very lucky to have really good staff members who are all willing and able to jump in and make things happen when I'm not there. My postdoc did a fabulous job of leading our research team while I was away on maternity leave, so I've been very fortunate."

"Maternity leave at the University is great and I think six months is just the right amount of time. I also really like the 'keep in touch' scheme, which allowed me to attend and claim expenses on three conferences while I was on leave. Attending conferences is really important for career progression, so this scheme really helped me to feel connected."

For her full career profile story, and many others, please see <http://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/career-profiles>

Unconscious Bias Training

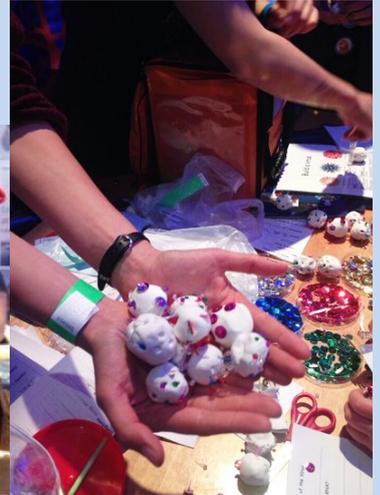
Don't forget to sign up to mandatory Unconscious Bias Training. Training is being offered across NDM locations on a weekly basis. <http://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/unconscious-bias-training>



Cheltenham Science Festival 2014

Following the success of last year's 'afternoon tea' talks at the Cheltenham Literature Festival, the Nuffield Department of Medicine signed up as a Festival Partner for [The Times Cheltenham Science Festival 2014](#).

Over the 6 days of the festival, 45 volunteers from 5 different units took turns in running the NDM stall in the Discover Zone. There were roughly 1000 visitors to the stall each day. The majority of visitors during the week were school groups, with mainly families attending on the weekend.



Each day the NDM stall had a different theme with a different group or unit running the stall. Over the course of the festival the different themes were: medical microbiology ([Daniel Wilson](#)) virology ([Ellie Barnes](#) and [Paul Klenerman](#)), population genetics ([People of the British Isles](#)), genetics ([Julian Knight](#)), cancer ([Ludwig Cancer Research](#)), and structured-based drug design ([Structural Genomics Consortium](#)).

The NDM stall featured interactive exhibits, puzzles, games and demonstrations designed to inform and delight a wide variety of different age groups. Some of the activities on offer included making viruses out of air dough, newspaper and sequins, bacteria 'top trumps', DNA bracelets, making DNA structures out of sweets, a cancer card game, a Jenga-style game to explain drug discovery and a taste test to find out whether or not you were a 'super taster'.

As usual the NDM syringe pens were enormously popular with volunteers handing out thousands of them over the 6 days. Additionally, visitors to the NDM stall on the weekend also got the chance to take home the new NDM magnetic quote set, which contains words spelling out several famous scientific quotes.

As well as the stall in the Discover Zone, NDM also sponsored a main festival event, which took place on the Saturday between 2 and 3pm. This ticketed event 'Your genome and your health' took place in the Cheltenham Town Hall and was a discussion about genetic medicine and the ethical, legal and personal issues it can raise. The panel featured [Professor Peter Donnelly](#) and [Centre for Personalised Medicine](#) researchers. The discussion around this topic was extremely thought-provoking.

Cheltenham Science Festival was a lot of fun for all involved. If you missed out on taking part this time but would like to volunteer at our next outreach event, NDM Strategic will be taking part in [Open Doors](#) in September. As part of this event there will be a mini-science fair on 13th September, which is open to the general public. Email public@ndm.ox.ac.uk to register your interest.

A taster of the latest news from our units



Tropical Medicine

Dr Philip Bejon will take over the role of Director of KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme from 1st September 2014. His appointment follows the decision by outgoing Director Professor Kevin Marsh to leave the programme and work with a range of African and UK-partnered institutions to strengthen scientific capacity in Africa. Dr Bejon is a clinical epidemiologist and has been working with the programme the KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme since 2002, specialising in vaccine development. To read more and view other news from the unit please see: <http://www.tropicalmedicine.ox.ac.uk/news>.



Experimental Medicine

A team of scientists from the Translational Gastroenterology Unit will be running an exhibit at the Royal Society Summer exhibition between the 1st and 6th July 2014. Their exhibit 'Immune-bacterial interactions' will explore the science behind the interactions between gut microbes and our immune system and how changes in their relationship can lead to illnesses such as inflammatory bowel disease. To read more and view other news from the unit please see: www.expmedndm.ox.ac.uk/news-seminars.



Old Road Campus Research Building

The Group led by Professor Chas Bountra, Chief Scientist of SGC Oxford, has been awarded the Royal Society of Chemistry's Rita and John Cornforth Award 2014 for "... world leading collaborative research across the disciplines of structural biology, medicinal chemistry, chemical biology and enzymology towards understanding and exploiting the potential of epigenetics as a target family for future drug discovery". To read more and view other news from the unit please see: www.jenner.ac.uk, www.ludwig.ox.ac.uk, www.thesgc.org/scientists/groups/oxford.



NDM Research Building

31st May was the World Health Organization (WHO) world "no tobacco" day. Tobacco kills millions of people each year through smoking or exposure to second hand smoke. Dr Ling-Pei Ho is a HEFCE Clinical Senior Lecturer at the MRC Human Immunology Unit and a Consultant in Respiratory Medicine. To mark "no tobacco" day, NDM asked her about the link between respiratory diseases and smoking, and her own research on idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF). To read more and view other news from the unit please see <http://www.ndmrb.ox.ac.uk/home>.



Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics

After many years of trying, Paul Miller and Radu Aricescu of the Structural Biology Division (STRUBI) at the WTCHG have solved the first X-ray crystal structure of a neurotransmitter receptor that plays a vital role in neurological disorders such as epilepsy, insomnia and anxiety, and mediates the action of antidepressants, general anaesthetics and alcohol. This is one of the longest sought-after molecular structures in neuroscience, facilitating the interpretation of decades of pharmacological research" says Aricescu. To read more and view other news from the unit please see www.well.ox.ac.uk/latest-news.