SCM Pharma have recently moved into one of our laboratories at the Sciences Complex as part of their collaboration with us to provide formulation support for one of SCM’s four lead candidates. Launched formally in October 2010 the move follows a two year collaboration between SCM Pharma and Mitovie Pharma to formulate a single use product intended for use in accidental overdose.

Dianne Sharp, Managing Director at SCM Pharma, said: “This is a huge milestone for our business. With our track record of consistently supplying products for clinical trials and niche markets, we can now support clients from start to finish, which means lower tech transfer costs, quicker time to market and our personable service throughout the process”.

Michael Hawthorne, CEO at Mitovie Pharma said: “Like SCM Pharma, we generally deal with more complex and challenging products. This is why we have been working closely with their team to help fast-track the development of one of our key products”. SCM will also provide developmental services for liquid formulations, including emulsions and suspensions for parenteral, oral and topical administration using either proprietary or customers’ novel delivery systems. Stability and analytical testing support services will also be provided along with Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) formulation.

This high-end facility is a real asset to the region and thus was heavily supported and part-funded, by the regional development agency One North-East, through Single Programme investment (£2.4 million) and also through the European Union’s European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Competitiveness Programme 2007-13 (£982,000).

The ERDF programme provides support of over £250 million investment in innovation, enterprise and business support across the region.

We were pleased to launch our new Health Sciences internal seminar series this month with a joint presentation by Dr Noel Carter, senior lecturer in molecular biology in the department of Pharmacy, Health and Well-being and Professor David Talbot, consultant transplant surgeon at the Newcastle Freeman Hospital. The presentation was entitled: ‘Expanding the donor pool - past and future perspectives”.

Dr Carter and Professor Talbot reported on the latest research enabling organs to be transplanted from non heart beating organ donors successfully.

The research seminar series, designed for members of staff to showcase their research to staff and postgraduate students, will be held bi-monthly. The next seminar title will be announced soon.... Watch this space...!
Dr Noel Carter’s first love is an interest in the science of molecular biology and its application. After first studying Genetics at Leeds University (1989-1992) Noel completed his PhD at Newcastle University (1992-1996) in the medical school laboratories to work on the European and Japanese project to sequence the Bacillus subtilis genome. This was followed by two years of post-doctoral research on B. subtilis. After this, Noel had a change of direction, working for three years in the laboratory of Prof John Kirby in the department of surgery at Newcastle University on the role of the glycosaminoglycans (GAGs) in regulating the immune response in human endothelium.

Noel came to the University of Sunderland in December 2001 and began to collaborate with Dr Anne Cunningham on GAG biology. This led to research collaboration with Prof David Talbot at the Newcastle Freeman Hospital, focusing on improving the retrieval and outcome of transplant organs from donors by cardiac death which overlaps with Noel’s interest in GAGs. More recently Noel has become involved in a number of projects using proteomics to study immune diseases and is currently sequencing the genome of a novel micro-organism, bringing his career full circle.

Dr Adam Todd gained his MPharm degree from the University of Sunderland in 2004 and after one year as a pre-reg became a qualified pharmacist. Adam stayed at Sunderland to complete his PhD under the supervision of Prof Roz Anderson and Prof Paul Groundwater when he designed and synthesized novel agents for the treatment of psoriasis. This involved the use of molecular techniques, such as structure based focussing, to rationally design compounds that bind to, and inhibit, biological targets. In 2009 Adam was appointed as a senior lecturer in Pharmacy Practice and soon became interested in the area of cancer research – in particular the support required around caring for patients with cancer. Adam also holds an honorary contract with Northumbria Foundation Trust and works as an oncology pharmacist where the experience in actual clinical practice helps to direct his research and also informs his teaching.

In 2011, Adam began a HEIF funded project, in collaboration with Prof Roz Anderson, Mr Andrew Husband and Dr Noel Carter, looking to establish the link between patient-based and genetic risk factors for chemotherapy induced nausea and vomiting. It is hoped that the results of this research will, in the future, enable health professionals to predict which patients undergoing chemotherapy are at a higher risk of nausea and vomiting, so that a personalised approach to their care can be taken.
The ‘dummy’ REF

A ‘dummy’ REF exercise will take place across the University later this month, with a census date of 29th February 2012. It will take the same form as a REF assessment, with documentation comparable to that required for the full REF exercise next year. Documentation from the Health Sciences Beacon will be submitted to Unit of Assessment 3 (Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy) and comprises:

- A document outlining the strategy for research in Health Sciences at the University of Sunderland, that also summarises the range of research carried out, and provides detail on how it is implemented and supported;
- Details of the staff to be submitted, along with their 4 publications (or the required number of publications, if fewer are eligible to be submitted);
- A 100-150 word statement of the context for each publication that assists evaluation of its relevance and importance, including an explanation of the role of the submitted staff member in the research and its publication;
- A completed impact template and at least two case studies, based on research carried out at University of Sunderland between January 1993 and July 2013 of at least 2* quality, evidencing the ‘real world’ impact of the research;

The submission will be considered and evaluated by external assessors during March and April 2012, with feedback in the form of a report provided in May/June 2012. It is intended that this exercise will help to shape and inform the submission summary that is required by HEFCE in November 2012 and provide valuable critique of the quality of the submission with sufficient time to address any areas for improvement.

Thank you to all staff who have submitted their publications to Clare Mills; please keep sending your publication information to Clare, along with the PDF if available, as soon as you can.

Roz Anderson and Ann Crosland, February 2012.

‘Hello’ and ‘Goodbye’

We say ‘goodbye’ to Dr Yongxue Huang who took up a new position with Asta Tech (China) in November 2011. Dr Huang recently worked with Professor Roz Anderson, and for eight years with Dr Adrian Moore, on a collaborative project with Institute de Recherches Servier investigating compounds that inhibit the progress of neurodegenerative disorders.

We say ‘hello’ to Dr Alex Bedernjak who started his research career at the Institut Universitaire de Technologies d’Orleans, France (2002-2004) after which he took up his PhD position with Prof Roz Anderson (2005-2010) researching organic synthesis. After working on various projects in the department of Pharmacy, Health and Well-being Dr Badernjak took over Dr Huang’s research position in November 2011.

Research Design Service Presentation

We were pleased to welcome the North East Research Design Service (NERDS) to the Sciences Complex on Thursday January 26th. Dr Helen Hancock, Health Research Methodologist and Mrs Rebecca Maier, Clinical Trials Unit and R and D Manager, outlined for us how the services they offer can further improve our funding applications to NIHR and other health science funding bodies. Dr Hancock and Mrs Maier pointed out that funding bodies have an expectation that we will access such services in the research design process. For those who were unable to attend leaflets are available. Please contact Lyn at <lyn.brierley-jones@sunderland.ac.uk> or on 3492 for this and other RDS information.
**Conference Watch: Recent Presentations from Beacon Staff**


**Erratum**

In our September 2011 issue we wrote that our Health Sciences Beacon was originally structured around ‘the workstreams of drug discovery, led by Professor Roz Anderson, and therapy application led by Professor Ann Crosland’. This should have read that our Health Sciences Beacon was originally structured around ‘the workstreams of drug discovery and therapy application, led by Professor Roz Anderson, and health improvement and well-being, led by Professor Ann Crosland.’ We apologise for this error.