Welcome to the first edition of Research Beacon News, our quarterly newsletter keeping you up to date with events within the Health Sciences and Well-being Research Beacon.

The Beacon’s aim is to conduct world leading research that leads to better physical and mental health and well-being for all.

An interdisciplinary community, the Beacon brings together expertise from within its two workstreams, Drug Development and Application and Health and Well-being, to produce relevant research with real world impact.

Meet two of our researchers

Dr Jonathan Ling was appointed as Senior Lecturer in Public Health in the department of Pharmacy, Health and Well-being in July 2009. His post is funded by the ESRC via FUSE - the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health. Jonathan has a PhD in cognitive psychology and has published widely on the impact of recreational drugs on cognitive performance. In 2010 he received a training bursary from the ESRC to undertake research methods training in qualitative data analysis. He is currently working on a range of funded projects, including an investigation into alcohol use in older people funded by AgeUK and an examination of the key worker role in cancer services funded by the North of England Cancer Network. Work in progress includes writing papers with Professor Ann Crosland and Karen Smith from PHW on alcohol use in older people and working professionals and developing a bid to fund a meta-analysis of the impact of hangover on cognitive performance with Dr Etta Drews from Psychology. Dr Jonathan Harburn was appointed as Senior Lecturer in Medicinal Organic Chemistry in 2004. Jonathan gained his PhD from the University of Loughborough and specializes in the design and synthesis of novel drugs, including the synthesis of nanoparticles for medical devices. Jonathan has worked collaboratively with colleagues in the USA and the UK investigating treatments of tuberculosis and cancer. Currently Jonathan is working with Dr Mark Gray and Dr Noel Carter at Sunderland on a Beacon-funded project concerning increasing detection sensitivity of biomolecules related to disease through the rational design of MALDI matrices.
Out and about
...down under

England’s cricket team aren’t the only ones to achieve success in Australia. Our own Jane Roberts has just returned from a 6 week research trip that has taken her to Melbourne. Funded by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (WCMT) Jane has had the opportunity to investigate a pilot mental health scheme.

Dr. Jane Roberts

Jane Roberts originally trained as a GP and is currently conducting PhD research into improving young people’s mental health. Jane’s recent research trip to Australia enabled her to examine programmes in Australia that offer early intervention for mental health problems in young people. As well as learning new ways of working in primary care settings, Jane was also able to present her early findings to colleagues at the Department of General Practice in Melbourne.

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, has an inclusive approach seeking applications from people from diverse backgrounds who want to foster their personal development. Check out their website at http://wcmt.org.uk.

New staff members

Yu Gong joined the Beacon in November 2010 as a full-time Research Fellow. Yu obtained her first degree from Sichuan University and her PhD in medicinal Chemistry from the University of Sunderland. Yu is an experienced researcher into tissue culture, pre-formulation, psoriasis and inflammation. Yu’s role enables her to spend half of her time supporting other members of the Beacon in writing for publication and grant applications. Yu is also currently working on anti-skin cancer and anti-bacteria agents with Professor Roz Anderson and Dr Mark Ashton.

Lyn Brierley-Jones also joined the Beacon in November 2010 as a full-time Research Fellow. Lyn’s PhD is in the History of Medicine and she has developed expertise in qualitative research methods. Lyn’s role enables her to spend half her time supporting the writing and grant applications of other members of the Beacon. Currently as a member of FUSE she is evaluating the Leadership in Public Health programme funded by the North East School of Public Health.

Inigo Rodriguez has also recently joined us from the pharmaceutical industry where he specialised in the characterisation of proteins and the development of protein therapeutics. After gaining his first degree at the University of the Basque Country Inigo gained his PhD from Leeds University designing bio-physical tools. Currently he is working with Dr Amal Elkordy on the development of novel formulation vehicles.

Successful External Research Grant Applications

- Crosland, A. Steven, A. Brierley-Jones, L. Leadership for Health Improvement Projects Evaluation. £25,097 funder NHS North East School for Public Health
- Crosland, A. Wallace, A. (on behalf of Building Public Health Futures) A Needs Assessment of Public Health Educators and an Exploration of the role of Post-graduate Education in Public Health Careers, £71,250 funder NHS North East
- Rushmer, R. Hunter, D. Crosland, A. Smith K, Illett R, Tannahill, C. Knowledge Mobilisation amongst NHS Managers £295,000 funder NIHR Service Delivery and Organisation Programme (Sunderland element of the total grant is £66,909)

Dates for your Diary

- April 11-12th, 2011, “Knowledge Exchange in Public Health”, FUSE conference at Ramside Hall Hotel, Durham
- Beacon Workshops throughout 2011-“Writing for Publication” and “Successful Grant Applications”


Ennaceur, A. (2010) Tolerance, sensitization and dependence to diazepam in Balb/c mice exposed to a novel open space anxiety test, Behavioural Brain Research, 209, 154-164


Ennaceur, A. (2010) One-trial object recognition in rats and mice: methodological and theoretical issues, Behavioural Brain Research, 215, 244-254


Other Publications

Cunningham A. C. (2010) Update on Transplantation Tolerance, Current Anaesthesia and Critical Care, 21, 229-232


Beacon Contacts:

Lyn Brierley-Jones, Research Development, <Lyn.Brierley-Jones@sunderland.ac.uk> Pasteur, Room 171, Tel: 3492

Yu Gong, Research Development, <Yu.Gong@sunderland.ac.uk> Pasteur, Room 171, Tel: 3484

Clare Mills, Beacon Administrator <Clare.Mills@sunderland.ac.uk> Faculty Office, Tel: 2527

Next Issue: “All about FUSE” and “How to Apply for Beacon Funding”, April 2011

Deadline for contributions, comments and suggestions: Please contact Lyn, Yu or Clare by Thursday, March 31st 2011.