

# UK Respiratory Research Collaborative

Newsletter No. 3  
February 2007

## Growing together in 2007

Having got off to a flying start in 2006, 2007 will undoubtedly be the year in which plans develop and mature for the UKRRSC. We have thought carefully about the message we wish to convey of a collective working together to develop and promote world class respiratory research and with this in mind, we have decided upon on a new "user friendly" name for our group. We shall therefore be known as the UK Respiratory Research Collaborative.

At its first meeting of the year, the Chairman was delighted to welcome two new organisations to the collaborative. GORDS (The Group of Occupational Respiratory Disease Specialists), and the British Sleep Society will further enhance our collective identity.

The Communications Sub-Group has been busy working up press releases to publicise the PhD studentships recently awarded by Asthma UK, BLF, BTS and MRC, as well as a release to highlight the progress already made by UKRRSC which dovetail into the initiatives detailed in the Cooksey Review.

At the Committee meeting in January those present heard from Jane Cope of the National Cancer Research Institute, who detailed the high mortality statistics endemic in lung cancer patients. She highlighted the fact that the small sums of money spent on lung cancer research in the UK were a reflection of these mortality statistics. However, it was heartening to hear that by working with charity, industry and government partners, there was real optimism that these obstacles could be overcome.

You will recall from the last newsletter that Dr Graham Burns, Consultant Physician in Newcastle and Chair of the BTS Workforce Committee, had predicted a "respiratory research dessert" if current research trends were to continue. His paper highlighted that there were fewer than 10% of UK respiratory consultants on academic and research contracts, in comparison with the figures for those working in dermatology (over 50%) and medical oncology (over 30%). Additionally, from figures published by the UK Clinical Research Collaborative (May 2006), data on the proportion of spend on health research by specific health category, showed that despite the great burden of lung disease in the UK, Respiratory disease was 13th in a list of 20 - two places behind the ear. It is hoped that the initiatives that the UKRRSC are embarking on will help to reverse these alarming trends.

In 2006 the UK Respiratory Research Collaborative held useful groundwork discussions with UKCRC and MRC. We are now moving on and forming disease specific groups, with the aim of identifying specific research questions. To this end we have focused on four sub-groups which will be:

- **Asthma incorporating Child Health** led by Professor Warren Lenney
- **COPD** led by Dame Helena Shovelton
- **Lung Fibrosis** led by Dr Kim Harrison
- **Lung Cancer** led by Professor Holgate

We encourage all participant groups to become involved and support these individuals with this essential exercise.

Dr Matthew Hallsworth, Communications Programme Manager at the UKCRC, who was in attendance at the last Committee meeting, has given some excellent advice and tips on how we might access the NIHR Comprehensive Research Network and we are now in the process of meeting with key individuals who can help us achieve some progress with our efforts. A separate article overleaf highlights some of the information Dr Hallsworth shared with us.

Reflecting on the activity planned and achieved to date by the UK Respiratory Research Collaborative, it is with great optimism that we move forward and progress.



## UKCRN - Establishing the comprehensive research network

The NIHR Comprehensive Research Network (CRN) will provide a world-class health service infrastructure to support research in the NHS. It will work closely with the existing Topic Specific and Primary Care Research Networks to support research in all areas of disease and clinical need. It will comprise a number of Comprehensive Local Research Networks (CLRNs) which will provide the infrastructure for clinical research through the allocation and management of support costs. They will also provide a research management function to deliver proper governance for the research they support.

The UKCRN Coordinating Centre is overseeing the creation of the CRN and will manage its operation on behalf of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and in close consultation with the Department of Health. In preparation for this, the Coordinating Centre has been working closely with the Department of Health and local NHS representatives from across England to identify the appropriate steps and structures that will underpin CRN.

The first stage in implementing CRN has been the identification of the Comprehensive Local Research Networks' geographical areas across England. In planning for the CLRNs the UKCRN Coordinating Centre has considered the importance of mapping research onto the clinical activities of NHS organisations. Other considerations have been the R&D activity within each area, any existing clinical and academic collaborations, the potential to identify clinical leadership and the natural health economy across primary, secondary and tertiary NHS services.

Implementation of the CRN is planned to take place incrementally over a two-year period, beginning in April 2007. The likelihood is that CLRNs will be rolled out in a staged way during this implementation period, taking into account any current activity and potential for growth. Work is also ongoing to identify relevant studies which would form the basis of the national CRN portfolio. Only studies in the portfolio would have access to Network infrastructure and service support costs. The UKCRN Coordinating Centre has had a series of informal discussions with national funding bodies to discuss how best they can engage with and contribute to the activities of the CRN.

Further details on the development of the Comprehensive Research Network and links to the Department of Health's Implementation Plan are available on the UKCRN website at: <http://www.ukcrn.org.uk/index/networks/comprehensive.html>

## Committee email Contacts

<b>Professor Stephen Holgate (Chair)</b>	<b>sth@soton.ac.uk</b>
<b>Professor Jon Ayres (GORDS)</b>	<b>j.g.ayres@abdn.ac.uk</b>
<b>Professor Peter Barnes</b>	<b>p.j.barnes@ic.ac.uk</b>
<b>Professor Andy Bush</b>	<b>a.bush@rbh.nthames.nhs.uk</b>
<b>Professor Peter Calverley</b>	<b>pmacal@liverpool.ac.uk</b>
<b>Debbie Campbell (ARNS)</b>	<b>d.campbell@rbh.nthames.nhs.ukk</b>
<b>Professor Chris Corrigan (BSACI)</b>	<b>chris.corrigan@kcl.ac.uk</b>
<b>Professor Stuart Elborn (CF Trust)</b>	<b>stuart.elborn@bch.n-i.nhs.uk</b>
<b>Dr Rachel Garrod (ACPRC) (Deputy Chair)</b>	<b>r.garrod@hscs.sgul.ac.uk</b>
<b>Dr Meliisa Hack (British Sleep Society)</b>	<b>melissa.hack@gwent.wales.nhs.uk</b>
<b>Dr Kim Harrison (BALR)</b>	<b>nkarrison@doctors.org.uk</b>
<b>Professor Chris Haslett</b>	<b>c.haslett@ed.ac.uk</b>
<b>Professor Warren Lenney (BPRS)</b>	<b>wlenney@lycos.com</b>
<b>Dr Dave Lynes (Respiratory Education UK)</b>	<b>dave.lynes@respiratoryeduc.com</b>
<b>Clare Newall (ARTP)</b>	<b>clare.newall@parexel.com</b>
<b>Professor Martyn Partridge</b>	<b>m.partridge@imperial.ac.uk</b>
<b>Professor David Price (GPIAG)</b>	<b>d.price@abdn.ac.uk</b>
<b>Professor John Price (Asthma UK Ltd)</b>	<b>john.price@kcl.ac.uk</b>
<b>Professor Aziz Sheikh (BTS)</b>	<b>aziz.sheikh@ed.ac.uk</b>
<b>Dame Helena Shovelton (BLF)</b>	<b>helena.shovelton@blf-uk.org</b>
<b>Samantha Walker (Education for Health)</b>	<b>s.walker@educationforhealth.org.uk</b>

Any changes should be sent to [angela.hurlstone@brit-thoracic.org.uk](mailto:angela.hurlstone@brit-thoracic.org.uk)

## Diary Dates

Dates for meetings in 2007 are:

- Monday 23rd April 2007
- Friday 22nd June
- Friday 21st September

all at 9.30am at BTS HQ, 17 Doughty Street, London, WC1N 2PL