

Exeter Clinical Research Facility**National Institute for Health Research****Annual Newsletter****Winter 2018/19****Welcome to the 8th issue of the NIHR Exeter Clinical Research Facility (CRF) newsletter**

The aim of this newsletter is to highlight the achievements of our facility, provide an overview of our current projects, and show how you can become involved or continue to be involved, in improving healthcare through research.

Exeter 10,000 Update

It is now 9 years since the Exeter 10,000 project began and we are pleased to report that over 11,000 people have participated, many of whom have also participated in another research project within the CRF. We are very grateful to everyone who gives their time to help us improve healthcare through research.

Our researchers, clinicians and academics are working in collaboration to help improve many different areas of healthcare, including diabetes, mental health, ageing, inflammatory bowel disease, stroke, and sports science. All of our research projects benefit from being able to access the thousands of urine, blood and DNA samples, and other data, that have been kindly provided by Exeter 10,000 volunteers. In 2019, we hope to invite those who previously took part in the Exeter 10,000 project to attend a follow-up visit. This will be an opportunity to update the measurements and information we have about you. If any of your contact details have changed, please let us know. Our contact details are shown below.

Thank you to everyone who has helped so far, please continue to recommend the project to your friends and relatives!

Anyone aged 18 and over can help. For more details, please call **01392 408181**, or email crf@exeter.ac.uk or

Please look out for our new website which we hope to launch in the Spring.

You will be redirected from our current website: <https://crf.exeter.ac.uk/web/>

Josephine Studham joins the Clinical Research Facility

Josephine Studham

This is my first year as Clinical Research Facility Manager of the Exeter CRF, having started in post in March 2018. I have inherited a great team and have enjoyed the last few months very much, settling in quickly and getting to know Devon. I have really enjoyed the outreach opportunities that have presented themselves. What is particularly great is at these events, that Exeter 10,000 is so well known and there is always at least one person already recruited to the cohort and an eager group of potential recruits! In 2019 we hope to make even more use of our mobile research unit which is equipped to support outreach clinics, so if you have an eager group of volunteers who would like to join Exeter 10,000 we would be happy to come out to you.

National Institute for Health BioResource

We have now become one of 13 local recruitment centres for the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) BioResource for Translational Research in Common and Rare Diseases. (<https://bioresource.nihr.ac.uk>)



The NIHR BioResource is a national resource of patients and members of the general population who have volunteered to be recalled for further research studies based on the information obtained when they first registered. This is a national version of our local Exeter 10,000 study and over 100,000 people have already been recruited. Local centres are aiming to add more recruits with and without health conditions.

If you would like to be part of the NIHR BioResource, please contact us on:

Call 01392 408181 or email crf@exeter.ac.uk

News from the Improving Clinical Care in Diabetes (ICCD) Study

The ICCD study aims to find out why diabetes, and its associated complications, progress quickly in some patients and much slower in others. In February 2018, the study opened to recruitment. Since then, we have recruited 260 participants from across the local area. We have been working closely with the research team at Claremont Medical Practice in Exmouth led by GP Dr Lisa Gibbons and Research Nurse, Lynsey Beall (pictured), who have helped us to pilot the study within the community. In 2019 we will be working with other local GP surgeries in Devon to enable more people to have the opportunity to participate in this research study.

**Can you help us?**

Exeter CRF works closely with members of the public and we are keen to hear from people who would like to join our two Patient and Public Involvement groups:

The Peninsula Research Bank (PRB) Steering Committee helps decide who can access our volunteers/samples/data, and ensures that our research focuses on questions that are important to patients and their families.

The Exeter Diabetes Patient and Public Involvement Group is looking for people with **Diabetes** who would like to help us review and advise on our diabetes specific research projects, to ensure that the patient perspective is represented at all stages of the research process.

If you are interested in joining either group, please contact us on:

01392 408182 or crf@exeter.ac.uk

Awards for our Researchers

Dr Sarah Flanagan wins top European award for her commitment to the study of diabetes.

Sarah, Sir Henry Dale Research Fellow at the University of Exeter Medical School, has received the G.B. Morgagni Silver Young Investigator Award, a prize which celebrates exceptional research in the field of metabolic diseases. Dr Flanagan said: "It is fantastic that our research has been recognised internationally and this really reflects the great work which is being done by the genetics team in Exeter and the impact that the research is having on patient care around the world."



OBE for Professor Sian Ellard in Queen's Birthday Honours

Sian, Professor of Genomic Medicine at the University of Exeter Medical School and the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust's Consultant Clinical Scientist, received an OBE in the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to patient care. Sian has pioneered the use of diagnostic genetic testing in mainstream NHS clinical practice regionally and nationally.

Rising Star Award for Dr Elisa De Franco

Elisa, Research Fellow at the University of Exeter Medical School, received the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) Rising Star award in 2018 for her work in investigating the development and function of human beta cells and finding new genes that cause neonatal diabetes.



Research Highlights

• CRF researchers, led by Dr Angus Jones and Professor Andrew Hattersley, have been awarded a £2m grant as part of the **NIHR Global Health Research Programme**. We are collaborating with partners in Uganda and Cameroon to improve the diagnosis and treatment of diabetes in sub-Saharan Africa, where the condition is a major cause of death and disease. The group will also strengthen the research capacity of the region by hosting researchers in Exeter, sharing knowledge and expertise across the three centres and developing links between research laboratories.

• **KARE trial featured on BBC Spotlight.** Ketamine for reduction of Alcoholic Relapse (the KARE trial) was featured on **BBC Spotlight** on 1st October 2018. Professor Celia Morgan explained that ketamine has shown promise in protecting against alcoholic relapse in preliminary studies. The aim of this study is to build on these findings in a full-scale randomised controlled trial. We are currently three quarters of the way through recruitment for this study, and are keen to reach our final target.



If you or anyone you know is worried about their alcohol use and would like to take part in KARE, please call us on **01392 724070** or email **kare@exeter.ac.uk**

Study Volunteers Needed!

MIA Study: An Exploration of Psychological Mechanisms Influencing Anhedonia

It has been suggested that the loss of pleasure or interest in normally enjoyable activities (known as anhedonia) is often neglected in current treatments for depression. If this could be addressed, depression recovery and relapse rates may improve. However, for this to happen we need a better understanding of what causes anhedonia.

The research team would like volunteers to undertake three online surveys. If you would like more details on the study, or would like to volunteer to help, please contact the research team on **adept@exeter.ac.uk**

PROTECT

Over 50? Help us research the effects of ageing on the brain

The PROTECT Study aims to understand what happens to the brain as we age, and identify ways to protect the brain from conditions such as dementia.

This study is delivered entirely online so you can help in your own time from home.

To take part you must:

- Be 50 years or older
- Live in the UK
- Have access to a computer

For more information please visit our website

www.protect-exeter.org.uk

or contact the PROTECT study team on **01392 725010** or email **support.protect@exeter.ac.uk**

Be a GameChanger:

Play your part in Dementia Research

GameChanger is a research project led by the University of Oxford and supported by Alzheimer's Society. This research aims to understand more about how 'typical' thinking varies throughout our lives.

By understanding more about how the healthy brain works, we hope to be able to spot and treat Alzheimer's more quickly in the disease process. The team is looking for **volunteers without dementia** who would be willing to download a simple app and play fun, thinking tasks on their smartphone for five minutes a day, every day, for a month.

For more details or to sign up, visit:

www.joingamechanger.org



The **DARE** Study continues as planned to follow up participants already taking part. Fair processing information which clarifies what we do with your data can be found at <https://www.diabetesgenes.org/current-research/dare/>

Please contact us if you have recently moved house, changed your telephone number, or have received this by post but would be happy to provide us with an email address to reduce our costs: **01392 408181** or **crf@exeter.ac.uk**

Emailing this newsletter instead of posting helps to make our research funding go a little further!