New Global Health and Biodiversity theme

With the increasing rate of resistance to drugs, and the prevalence of new strains of infectious diseases spreading amongst humans and animal populations, our new Global Health and Biodiversity initiative looks to explore the links between infectious diseases, and the environments where they flourish.

Despite being largely eradicated in the developed world, such diseases as Malaria, Polio, and Rabies are still rife in particular eco-systems.

With the help of our new Global Health and Biodiversity fund, we aim to continue our reputation for world renowned research in the area of detection, as well as understanding how the changing environment, and increased resistance to common control measures can be researched.

Donations will help to buy Biodiversity monitoring equipment or rabies diagnostics kits for an operational laboratory. To give to the new theme contact us on the details inside or complete the form below.

How to contact us
Development & Alumni Office
2-3 The Square
University of Glasgow
Glasgow G12 8QO
Tel: +44 (0)141 330 4951
Fax: +44 (0)141 330 4647
Email: campaign@gla.ac.uk

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Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit
Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and return to:

Development & Alumni Office, 3 The Square, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, G12 8QQ

Please contact us on the details inside or please visit the West of Scotland Neuro-oncology Group website: www.occcentre.org.uk/research/Neuro-Oncology.html

Our Brain Tumour Research Fund supporters include Charlene McLean who has raised over £30,000 for the fund (pictured above) and Hyman's Robertson staff (pictured top) who arranged a 'mini-marathon' of events in one day in memory of their friend, Gordon Shannon, who sadly died last year.

To find out more or to support the Fund please contact us at the address overleaf or complete the donation form on the back page. You can also visit the West of Scotland Neuro-oncology Group website: www.occcentre.org.uk/research/Neuro-Oncology.html

Donors have always been able to give to the Brain Tumour Research Fund within the Medical Fund but since the beginning of 2012 the Fund has expanded the number of donors and raised almost £50,000.

The Fund helps to support smaller research projects quickly and efficiently, without having to go through the lengthy process of applying for external funding. A lot of the research carried out is externally funded by large organisations such as Cancer Research UK and the Medical Research Council but the Brain Tumour Research Fund helps support smaller research projects that would not necessarily get funding from these larger organisations.

These smaller projects often produce valuable findings which can be used to support larger grant applications. This greatly increases the chances of getting large scale funding to take the projects forward and means a small donation can eventually lead to an important research project that has a real chance of improving outcomes for patients.

The fund also enables doctors, nurses, radiographers and other medical staff who treat brain tumour patients to get involved in research, not just full time scientists. This makes a real difference to the overall quality of the research programme because these staff members have a deep understanding of the patient experience and can make sure that new research projects are asking relevant and important questions.

Some of the on-going and proposed research projects include:

- Laboratory research investigating whether new drugs can be combined with radiotherapy to improve brain tumour cure rates without damaging the normal brain.

- Clinical research using sophisticated forms of MRI scanning to predict where brain tumours are most likely to recur after radiotherapy, with a view to intensifying treatment to these areas.

- Neuropathology research using the Glasgow Brain Tumour Tissue Bank to identify whether the levels of certain molecules in brain tumours can be used to predict how well the tumour will respond to treatment. If a particular molecule is shown to predict a poor outcome, this research will link up with the laboratory studies to identify ways of targeting these molecules.

- Psychological studies investigating how best to support patients and their families before, during and after treatment.
Research round-up

The University of Glasgow has more than 2,000 active researchers and an impressive 75% of academic staff contribute to subjects where the majority of research is rated world-leading or internationally excellent.

Some of the recent research includes a study into hypertension and the next stage of the world’s first clinical trial of a stem cell stroke and testing new approaches to treating arthritis. Summaries of these projects are detailed below. If you would like to find out more about any of these then please get in touch with us on the details below.

Hypertension is the most common preventable cause of premature death in the UK affecting over a quarter of adults – and over half of those over 60 years of age. Scientists at the University of Glasgow have found that one of the parameters in the routine full blood count – the volume percentage of red blood cells in blood known as haematocrit (Hct) – is an independent biomarker for early death in patients with high blood pressure. Laura Paul, a University of Glasgow medical student, and a team of researchers analysed data on 10,961 hypertensive patients in the Glasgow Blood Pressure Clinic and found that, even within the normal range of haematocrit, risk of early death increased at both the upper and lower end of haematocrit levels.

Dr Sandosh Padmanabhan, Reader in the Institute of Cardiovascular and Medical Sciences, who led the study said: “Finding new biomarkers that predict disease or risk is the Holy Grail for medical researchers. We have shown that, in patients with hypertension, haematocrit levels outside of the gender-specific optimal ranges identified in this study should be targeted for more aggressive blood pressure and cardiovascular risk reduction treatment.”

Green light for next stage of stem cell stroke trial

The world’s first clinical safety trial of a human neural stem cell therapy for stroke patients has been given the go-ahead to progress to its next stage.

The PISCES trial is being conducted by the University of Glasgow at the Institute of Neurological Sciences, Southern General Hospital, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board in partnership with pharmaceutical company ReNeuron. The primary aim of the study is to test the safety and tolerability of the treatment in ascending doses of the ReN001 cells, in patients with moderate to severe functional neurological impairments resulting from their stroke. The secondary aim of the study is to evaluate efficacy measures for the design of future clinical trials with ReN001, including imaging measures as well as a number of tests of sensory, motor and cognitive functions. Reductions in neurological impairment and spasticity were observed in all five patients compared with their stable pre-treatment baseline performance and these improvements were sustained in longer term follow-up.

Professor Keith Muir, principal investigator in the trial, said: “We are very pleased that the trial is progressing well and we remain encouraged by the results of the study thus far.”

Glasgow secures new experimental research centre for arthritis

The University of Glasgow has been named as an Arthritis Research UK (ARUK) Experimental Arthritis Treatment Centre (EATC) – the first in Scotland. The Centre will recruit local patients to test new and existing drugs and to find new approaches that can predict which treatment works best in individuals.

With joint start-up funding of £225,000 over three years from medical research charity Arthritis Research UK and the Scottish Government’s Chief Scientist Office, the centre aims to take forward the recent advances in the treatments available for people with arthritis.

Professor Iain McInnes who is leading the study, said: “We want to discover how new drugs can improve brain tumour rates and psychological studies helping to support patients during and after treatment.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition which is coming to you a little later than usual. The mailing schedule will soon be back to normal in 2013 with your spring edition arriving in April when we look forward to updating you about the official opening of our Beatson Translational Research Centre.
Events in 2013

Wolfson Medical School Event

We are looking to hold an event for our medical fund donors and friends early in 2013, with 6th February as the provisional date.

Donors and friends will get a chance to hear about some of the world class research that is taking place in Glasgow, including in the areas of heart disease, arthritis and malaria. If you would like to register your interest then please contact Laura Morton on laura.morton@glasgow.ac.uk or call 0141 330 4951.

Zip Slide across the Clyde

We have zipped over 350 enthusiastic supporters across the Clyde since our Zip Slides began in 2009 and we’re holding another one on 24th March 2013.

Arran Cycling

Christine De Marco and her colleagues from Barclays Finance Glasgow decided to make the Beatson Pebble Appeal their charity of the year in 2012. The main event to raise funds was a mammoth 90 kilometre cycle around Arran in August.

16 team members all successfully managed to complete the cycle, with some finishing in less than 6 hours. Christine managed it in 6 hours 30 minutes which she said “was a decent effort for a novice!”

Thanks to everyone at Barclays Finance who sponsored them or took part.

Bagging a Munro

Our Munro Challenge will be back in May 2013. This event aims to put as many of our supporters on top of as many of Scotland’s 283 Munros as possible, in one weekend!

To register your interest for either the Munro Challenge or the Zip Slide please email Susanne Hill at Susanne.Hill@glasgow.ac.uk or call 0141 330 4951.

We are also hoping to organise a number of challenge events such as bungee jumping or skydiving in 2013 so if you’re interested please get in touch!

Muddy Fun at the First Monster Dash

The University of Glasgow’s first Monster Dash fun run took place on Sunday 28 October. All participants got into the Halloween mood and arrived dressed in a wide range of terrifying outfits. Despite the constant heavy rain all had a wonderful time. The event was organised by David Watt, Service Development Teacher and Recreational Sport Co-ordinator and was raising funds for cardiovascular disease at the University.

David said “the inaugural Monster Dash was a total success, more than anyone could have imagined first time round. The participants, marshals and pretty much everyone involved helped make the atmosphere electric. 2013 promises to be bigger, better and scarier! Bring it on!”
A Sporting Diary of the West Highland Way

At a New Year’s Party, John and his friends decided to take on the challenge of the West Highland Way.

Starting at Milngavie, the 96 mile walk passes through Mugdock Country Park, the shores of Loch Lomond, Glen Falloch, Rannoch Moor, to the head of Glencoe, climbs the Devil’s Staircase, descends to sea level to cross the River Leven before Scotland’s last remaining loch at Fort William. John’s friends chose to fundraise for various causes however John chose walk for the University of Glasgow’s cardiovascular research centre.

John said “Too many people in western Scotland suffer from heart problems, one way or another and I had the chance to help.”

Seven days of back to back walking (averaging 14-19 miles a day) resulted in blisters, aches, pains and swollen ankles. The weather conditions threw up obstacles in the form of blizzards, snow and rain, but even a wee slip and sudden fall, right near the (aptly named) Falls of Falloch, did not deter the group. They were helped along by the stunning scenery of dense woodlands, rolling hills and lowland moors; and a few clootie dumplings, hot bats and drams of whisky.

As the final bell sounded at the end of the fight, photos were taken and relief was the main emotion. End result: Points win to the walkers, but nobody really beats the West Highland Way, the effort expended and the determination to keep going is truly enormous. Thanks to all the people who sponsored us during our week’s walk.

John raised over £400 for University of Glasgow’s cardiovascular research. Well done!

The University of Glasgow is a registered charity, No. SC004401

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Don’t forget to include the University of Glasgow in your will.

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The University of Glasgow Gift Aid Office 
Highland Way.

Name: __________________________

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