Dementia Research Day 2018: Thursday 12th July at St John’s College Oxford

You can now register for free for the annual Oxford Dementia Research Day jointly organised by NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre and Alzheimer’s Research UK Oxford Local Network. This will be a full day of talks covering cellular and clinical research, managing dementia and cognition. There will also be poster sessions through the day with plenty of time for networking and an evening reception followed by an ECR social. CPD credits to be applied for.

The keynote speaker will be Diane Hanger, Professor of Neuroscience at King’s College London who will talk on “Using cell and animal models to uncover molecular mechanisms underlying dementia”.

To submit an abstract to present a poster please complete an abstract submission form and return to aruk.administrator@dpag.ox.ac.uk by Wednesday June 20th.

Meet the network: Francesco Tamagnini joins Reading University

I was born and raised in the Republic of San Marino. After my studies in pharmaceutical biotechnologies at the University of Bologna, in 2008 I started my PhD in neuroscience on synaptic correlates of recognition memory in rodent brain slices, at the same University. In 2010 I moved to the University of Bristol, collaborating with Prof Bashir; in 2012, I started working with Prof Randall on the alteration of single cell electrophysiology in dementia mouse models and on the functional characterization of stem cell-derived neurons. In 2015 I was awarded an Alzheimer’s Society Junior Fellowship and a MRC “Proximity to Discovery: Industry engagement” Grant. So, from April to October 2015 I was at the research facilities of Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals (Windlesham, UK), to characterize altered synaptic dynamics in a mouse model of amyloid pathology, with 2P in vivo imaging. Finally, in October 2015, I have started my Fellowship, investigating altered inhibitory neuronal function in a mouse model of progressive tauopathy. In September 2017 I have started my adventure at Reading, as a Lecturer in Pharmacology: my research focus is on the causal relationship between neuronal electrical alterations and cognitive decline in dementia.

ARUK Early Careers Network Update by Francesca Nicholls, Early Careers Representative

It’s been a good start to 2018 for the Early Careers network. There was a good turnout for our first social of the year in January. We decided not to launch our own website in the end, as NIHR have launched their own ECR website, Dementia Researcher, which we think addresses the needs of the community. But do let us know if you still think there’s a need for our own site for ARUK Oxford Network ECRs. We’ve also been involved in Reading Pint of Science this year, with ECRs mostly choosing to take on organisational rather than speaking roles this year and putting together an excellent sold out evening featuring members of the ARUK Oxford Network.

We’re looking forward to seeing you all at the Dementia Research Day on July 12th. We have some great ECR speakers doing talks on the day, and will be hosting a social in the St John’s college bar afterwards, with special guests from MedComms, Editing and Industry who are there to chat and answer your questions about their career paths. We will also have free drinks available for ECR network members, including a special Moji-tau cocktail!
We’re now working on our next big event, which will be a grant writing event in September. If you have particular suggestions for the day or would like to help us plan it, please drop Francesca, Tim or Laura an email.


The objective of this ARUK funded PhD studentship is to use human cells derived from induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) in order to investigate why the Apolipoprotein E (ApoE) allele is a genetic risk factor for Alzheimer’s disease (AD). Astrocytes are the primary source of ApoE in the brain, but it is not clear how this links to the loss of synaptic connections between neurons, which is an early hallmark of cognitive decline in AD. We are establishing a novel in vitro system that combines human astrocytes and neurons from different patients. We are using this to investigate how astrocyte isoforms of ApoE exert different effects upon the formation and maintenance of synaptic connections between neurons.

Outreach News

The 2018 ARUK Oxford Dementia open day was held in March during Brain Awareness Week at the JR hospital in Oxford. Over 200 people came along with attendees including healthcare professionals, carers, dementia patients and families, as well as members of the public and students interested in current research on dementia. Talks covered a range of subjects and included efforts towards more dementia friendly hospitals, drug discovery, use of mobile phones for detection and monitoring of dementia and studies of brain electrical activity. A popular part of the day was the chance to visit support and dementia research organisations represented in our break. We are very grateful to all who took part.

More information, including videos of the talk available at http://www.oxdare.ox.ac.uk/public-events.

Diary of events

- Alzheimer's Disease Research Methodology, 11-14 June Edinburgh
- Oxford Dementia Research Day, 12 July, Oxford
- Alzheimer’s Association International Conference, 22-24 July, Chicago, US
- Gordon Conference: Neurobiology of Brain Disorders, 5-10 Aug, Castelldefels, Spain
- International Conference on Alzheimers, Dementia and Related Neurodegenerative Diseases, 27 – 28 August, Madrid, Spain
- Berlin-Oxford Summer School on Open, transparent, and reproducible research in the life sciences, 17-20 Sept, Berlin