Birmingham secures 3.75 million pounds for new Biomedical Research Centre

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Birmingham is to be the home for a new 3.75 million research centre to develop new therapies for liver disease.

Birmingham's centre is one of twelve new National Institute for Health Research Biomedical Research Units, which will be supported by a £45 million package of funding announced by the government today.

The new unit will focus on getting basic medical research out of the laboratory and into the hospital clinic to deliver new treatments for patients with liver disease.

The Birmingham centre will be a collaboration between clinicians and researchers from University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Birmingham.

Professor Richard Lilford, the Director of the Birmingham Clinical Research Academy comments: "It is important that patients in Birmingham have access to the best treatment. This means developing collaborations, which allow us to turn scientific research into clinical trials and new therapies.

The new Biomedical Research Unit will provide an additional boost to Birmingham's already excellent research in liver disease and help to pass on these benefits in better patient treatment."

Birmingham already has an international reputation for work in liver disease including liver transplantation, Hepatitis C research and treating liver cancer.

Professor David Adams, who leads a major programme of liver research: "We are delighted to have secured this new funding, which will allow us to translate our laboratory work into new treatments for patients with otherwise untreatable liver disease.

We are facing an epidemic of liver disease leading to liver failure and liver cancer. Unfortunately the number of patients with liver disease far outstrips the number of donors for liver transplantation hence our need for new treatments.

Traditionally these areas have received relatively limited amounts of research funding, so the new unit gives us a great opportunity to deliver new therapies for otherwise untreatable liver diseases.

We have developed new approaches to therapy based on the use of the patients' own blood cells including stem cells to suppress liver damage and promote healing. We have already piloted a cell-based vaccine that stimulates the patient's immune system to fight liver cancer and the new Unit will allow us to develop this and other approaches into definitive treatments."

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

Ben Hill – Press Officer, University of Birmingham

tel: 0121 414 5134 / email: b.r.hill@bham.ac.uk / mob: 07789 921163

Louise Rowan – Media Communications Manager, University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

tel: 0121 627 2023 / email: louise.rowan@uhb.nhs.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

The University of Birmingham and the University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust (UHBFT) already enjoy a strong working partnership, and both organisations have benefited from a physical campus co-location for more than 50 years, with the University's Medical School and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital sited next door to each other.

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