

Building work starts on University's human tissue bank

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Construction work has started on the building that will house a licensed human tissue bank at the University of Birmingham, set up with £2.5 million of funding from Birmingham Science City, via Advantage West Midlands.

The building, which will stand on the site of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's old Rose Garden, will be home to the Human Biomaterials Resource Centre (HBRC) licensed by the Human Tissue Authority. It will be the first facility of its kind in the West Midlands.

The centre will be dedicated to the collection and storage of appropriately consented, quality-assured biomaterials for distribution to biomedical research groups in academia and industry.

Its Director is Dr Jane Steele, who works in collaboration with local pathologists, surgeons and other hospital personnel to collect, store and catalogue the tissue.

She commented: 'There are many hospitals in the West Midlands serving a broad range of ethnic groups, and we therefore have access to tissue which could aid research into a wide range of illnesses and conditions.'

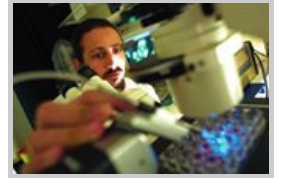
Human biomaterials are collected and banked in response to demand for existing research, and will enable development in important future research areas, such as biomarker discovery programmes.

The centre will offer access to existing sample collections, bespoke tissue collections and processing for specific research projects. This includes access to material from patients in a variety of disease settings, tissue that is surplus to diagnosis, waste material, additional samples taken for research purposes and material from patients in clinical trials. The centre has received NHS ethical approval making it easier for researchers to access the materials.

The biorepository is one of several translational medicine projects being carried out under the umbrella of the Science City Research Alliance, a collaboration between the Universities of Birmingham and Warwick, to catalyse, strengthen and expand the West Midlands' capacity in this field, providing new medical technologies, research jobs and new companies.

The new building will also house a gene therapy pharmacy and business development space.

Dr Steele added: 'Human tissue samples represent a most valuable resource for scientists engaged in clinical research. Access to such collections will undoubtedly aid the development of better diagnostic and prognostic tools and new drug therapies.'



Medical research being carried out at the University