Rheumatology Research Group

Group lead(s): Professor Chris Buckley (Head of Rheumatology Research Group), Professor Caroline Gordon, Dr Karim Raza, Dr Andrew Filer, Dr Dagmar Scheel-Toellner, Dr Steve Young

The RRG has focused on collaborative research along lines of common interest. Such collaborations include those with basic scientists as well as those running clinical studies. This has provided a clear focus on important biological questions that cross traditional disciplines and often require long-term commitment and investment. A central of objective of our research is to improve clinical outcomes for those with, and at risk of developing, rheumatoid arthritis, Sjogrens Syndrome and SLE.

Our multidisciplinary team of academic and clinical rheumatologists, general practitioners, biological and social scientists, allied health professionals and patient representatives works in an integrated way to develop and deliver our research objectives. Our major focus is on inflammatory arthritis and in particular the pathobiology and comorbidity associated with rheumatoid arthritis and Sjogren's Syndrome as well as the epidemiology, clinical management and outcome of SLE. A particular strength research in Birmingham is role of the tissue microenvironment in shaping immune and inflammatory responses.

Rheumatologists in Birmingham therefore have an outstanding opportunity to develop a unique platform for clinical research. A tradition and culture of collaboration exists, sharing clinical experiences and participating in ongoing audit and education within the West Midlands. There are excellent links between the West Midlands Rheumatology Services and Training Committee (WMRSTC), Post Graduate Deanery and the University. The patient base in the West Midlands provides enormous opportunity, but requires a co-ordinated academic forum to achieve its potential. There are six major research themes within the RRG:

- Fibroblast biology and animal models of rheumatoid arthritis and Sjogren's Syndrome (Buckley)
- Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) (Gordon)
- Pathobiology of rheumatoid arthritis (Raza)
- Stromal cells as biomarkers and the use of imaging in rheumatoid arthritis (Filer)
- Cytokine networks and Immunopharmacology in rheumatoid arthritis (Scheel-Toellner)
- Metabolomics and the chemistry of disease in rheumatoid arthritis (Young)

We have strong links with our NHS colleagues across a number of NHS Trusts. These collaborators are listed later in this document.

- City and Sandwell Hospitals (SWBH Trust)
- University Hospitals Birmingham (UHB Trust)
- Royal Orthopaedic Hospital (ROH Trust)
- Dudley Group of Hospitals (DGOH Trust)
- Birmingham Children's Hospital (BCH Trust)
- Birmingham Dental Hospital (BDH Trust)

Other research group staff members...

Buckley Group
Clinical Lecturer Dr Paola de Pablo
Wellcome Trust Clinician Scientist Dr Francesca Barone
Non-Clinical Lecturer Dr Helen McGettrick
Arthritis Research UK Foundation Fellow Dr Amy Naylor
Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Fellow Dr Stuart Smith
Post-docs Eva Zelena, Debbie Hardie, Ewan Ross, Saloni Mittal
PhD Students Saba Nayar, Ruth Coughlan one more TBA
Technicians Gemma Choy
Data coordinator Zaida Khalil
Personal Assistant Narinder Ubhi

Gordon Group
Clinician Scientist Dr Chee Seng Yee
Academic Clinical Fellow Dr Mary Gayed
Project Coordinator Dr Veronica Toescu
Lupus UK research nurse Rebecca Gilman
Personal Assistant Sharon Jesic

Raza Group
Nurse Specialist Kanta Kumar
Technicians Kath Howlett, Anne Garfield, Holly Adams
PhD students Sabrina Kapoor, Lorraine Yeo, Louisa Jeffery
Postdoctoral Fellow Rebecca Stack

Filer Group
Clinical Training Fellow Maria Juarez
Post-doctoral Fellow Sarah Essex
Technicians Kath Howlett and Fern Barrington

Scheel-Toellner Group
Post-doc Patricia Lopez, Helen Wright
PhD students Lorraine Yeo, Farrah Ali
Technician Božo Lugonja

Young Group

PhD students Beth Clay, Rachel Bayley
Clinical Research Fellow Sabrina Kapoor

NHS Collaborators
Professor TR Southwood Birmingham Children's Hospital
Dr J McDonagh Birmingham Children's Hospital

Dr David Carruthers City Hospital
Dr Karl Grindulis City Hospital
Dr R Elamanchi City Hospital
Dr D Situnayake City Hospital

Dr F Khattak Sandwell Hospital

Mr A Thomas Royal Orthopaedic Hospital
Mr M Revell Royal Orthopaedic Hospital
Mr E Davis Royal Orthopaedic Hospital
Mr M Snow Royal Orthopaedic Hospital

Dr S Bowman Selly Oak Hospital
Dr P Jobanputra Selly Oak Hospital
Dr A Jordan Selly Oak Hospital

Professor I Chapple Dental Hospital
Professor T Dietrich Dental Hospital

Professor GD Kitas Dudley Group of Hospitals

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