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Birmingham Scientists pioneer trauma care improvements

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Scientists at the University of Birmingham have pioneered a ground-breaking centre which brings together military and trauma surgeons and scientists to share their medical research expertise and boost trauma care delivery at the earliest stages of injury.

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Centre for Surgical Reconstruction and Microbiology has been established in collaboration with the University Hospitals Birmingham Foundation Trust, the Department of Health and the Ministry of Defence, and will receive combined funding of £20 million over five years.

Housed in state-of-the-art facilities at Birmingham's recently opened new Queen Elizabeth hospital - where all returning injured UK military personnel are treated - it is the first and only research centre of its kind in the UK to focus on military and civilian care and treatment.

University of Birmingham Provost and Vice-Principal Professor Michael Sheppard commented: 'The University is delighted to be a key partner in this ground-breaking initiative to improve and enhance clinical and scientific capability in trauma care.

'We expect the NIHR centre to provide an unrivalled research environment to improve the treatment of military and civilian trauma patients during the next five years. This will, in part, be achieved by applying the latest microbiological and immunological techniques to improve our understanding, diagnosis and management of trauma-related infection.'

Microbiology research at the centre is supported by the University's high-throughput sequencing capability funded via Birmingham Science City. This has the potential to replace existing laboratory methods and will bring fresh insight into the epidemiology and pathogenesis of wound infection.

The above techniques will be complimented by the University's world-leading expertise in clinical trials. The Birmingham Centre for Clinical Trials manages more than 100 clinical trials per year, generating around £15 million.

Interim Director of the centre is to be Professor Sir Keith Porter, Honorary Professor of Clinical Traumatology at the University of Birmingham and a consultant at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, who was knighted for services to this field in the New Year Honours 2011 for services to the armed forces.

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