

GlaxoSmithKline

Case Study

GSK has been collaborating with the University of Birmingham (UoB) for many years across a variety of areas including dentistry, within the Consumer Healthcare business, and respiratory, within Pharmaceuticals. Interactions between the two organisations range from clinical academics providing advisory services, collaborative research to take drugs towards market, CASE studentships to undertake specific experimentation, and clinical trial activity for the final phases of testing of promising drug candidates.

In the past three years, the breadth of collaborative activities has expanded, particularly in the area of autoimmune disease and in conjunction with GSK's Experimental Medicine Unit. It is in this space that the most novel approaches to collaboration between GSK and UoB have arisen. One such example was where clinical academics from the University came together with their clinical and scientific collaborators from GSK to meet patients who had been diagnosed with Sjogren's Syndrome. This is a long-term autoimmune condition that affects parts of the body that produce fluids and there are minimal available therapies for patients.

During this insightful meeting, patients shared their experiences of living with Sjogren's Syndrome in order that academics and scientists from both organisations could consider these for drug development – a patient-focused approach that GSK is now working to embed across broader drug discovery and development. All participants found the experience to be invaluable, with patients remarking that they felt hopeful that sharing their experiences would improve the lives of Sjogren's sufferers in the future.



Another example of where a novel approach to collaboration has been applied is the appointment of a post-doctoral scientist, employed by GSK, who will work in the laboratory at the University of Birmingham for the first two years of their three year post, returning to GSK for the third year. The focus of the placement is on transfer of knowledge with the scientist developing a novel scientific model which can be used to explore potential drug candidates for Sjogren's syndrome.

This unique partnership allows both partners to develop their work in ways that would not be possible independently. The University, through its partnership with the NHS, opens up access to insights from patients and a broader knowledge base, which complements GSK's research capabilities and expertise. The partnership with GSK allows University academics to translate their research directly for patients' benefit. The collaboration ultimately allows both partners, working together, to contribute to improving global healthcare.