UCL AGEING EVENT: CULTIVATING RESEARCH CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY

Thursday 3 November 2016
13.30–18.00

www.ucl.ac.uk/research/domains/populations-and-lifelong-health
Programme

13.30-14.00
Registration and networking

14.00-14.05
Welcome and introduction
Chair: Professor Arne Akbar
(Professor of Immunology and Head of Immunosenescence Research Group, UCL Division of Infection & Immunity)

14.05-15.35
Plenary lectures
Chair: Professor Arne Akbar

Dr Jenny Regan
(Postdoctoral Researcher, UCL Institute of Healthy Ageing)
- Sex differences in lifespan and the response to diet

Dr Milica Vukmanovic-Stejic
(Senior Research Fellow, UCL Division of Infection & Immunity)
- Mechanism of immune ageing

Dr Jonathan Schott
(Reader in Clinical Neurology, Dementia Research Centre, UCL Institute of Neurology)
- Insight 46: A neuro-imaging sub-study of the MRC National Survey for Health and Development 1946 birth cohort

Lynis Lewis
(Director, Noclor - Research Support Service and NIHR Clinical Research Network: North Thames)
- The Clinical Research Network: What it can do for you

Tarek Ahmed
(PhD student, UCL Eastman Dental Institute)
- RecommendMe, a UCL spinout driving healthy ageing

Dr Elena Pizzo
(Senior Health Economist, UCL Department of Applied Health Research)
- Cost-effectiveness of interventions in ageing population: examples from dementia and stroke interventions

15.35-16.00
Networking break

16.00-16.15
Funder presentation
Dr Louisa Jenkin
(Strategy and Policy Manager, Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC))

16.15-16.55
Networking session
Chair: Professor Andrew Steptoe
(Director, UCL Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care)

16.55-17.00
Closing remarks

17.00-18.00
Networking drinks reception
Introduction

UCL has significant strength in ageing research, particularly in cohort studies, dementia, neurodegenerative disease, inflammation and biology, animal models of ageing, economics and engineering. There is also considerable expertise in age associated cardiovascular disease, age-related and neurodegenerative disease and many other age-related syndromes.

However, key researchers at UCL that work on ageing are unfamiliar with other scientists who work in different age-related disciplines.

In February 2016 an initial event was held for senior Principal Investigators, which took the first step towards consolidating ageing research and expertise across UCL, encouraging new collaborations, and preparing possible responses for future funding opportunities.

The purpose of this second meeting is to enable more junior UCL researchers working on all aspects of ageing to network and to encourage new collaborations. In order to work together, we have to increase awareness of other scientists with an interest in ageing research across UCL. This event aims to encourage networking and the identification of potential collaborators and expertise that may be available to us. I hope that you will take the opportunity to introduce yourselves to and meet as many people as possible today.

Professor Arne Akbar
Professor of Immunology and Head of the Immunosenescence Research Group, UCL Division of Infection & Immunity

UCL Ageing Research Event Steering Committee

Professor Arne Akbar (Chair)
Dr Nazif Alic
Dr Daniel Davis
Jessica Grant (Event Management)
Helen Hopkins (Strategic Coordination)
Lalita John (Event Support)
Dr Mine Orlu Gul
Dr Jonathan Schott
Dr Milica Vukmanovic-Stejic
The UCL Research Domains are large, cross-disciplinary research communities that span UCL and our partner organisations, with the aim of fostering interaction and collaboration. By bringing together a critical mass of expertise, we believe that we can further encourage and support internationally leading research in our key areas of strength.

UCL Research Domains aim to:
• develop new research collaborations and partnerships, within and beyond UCL
• support academic communities in developing strategic ambitions that further develops UCL’s internationally leading research profile
• underpin strategic developments and attract major funding
• provide development opportunities for early career researchers
• exemplify how research communities can become greater than the sum of their parts.

The current UCL Research Domains are: Neuroscience; Personalised Medicine; Populations & Lifelong Health; Environment; eResearch and Collaborative Social Sciences.

UCL Populations & Lifelong Health Domain
UCL encompasses arguably the greatest concentration of biomedical science and population health expertise in Europe. The Domain brings together over 800 Researchers with an interest in population health from across the university, who conduct world-leading work.

Our researchers generate 10% of the country’s contribution to the most highly cited publications in public, occupational and environmental health, and in the last five years the citations of the ten most highly cited researchers exceeded 180,000.

Populations & Lifelong Health is a strategic priority for UCL, with research in this field accounting for almost 20% of UCL’s entire research income.

Our success is built not just on world-class infrastructure but fundamentally on the people who make up the UCL Populations & Lifelong Health Domain community. Our vision is to build upon our existing excellence by supporting and investing in cross-disciplinary research teams, to become the world’s leading institution focused on populations and lifelong health.

In addition to the six Institutes that form the UCL Faculty of Population Health Sciences, the Domain brings together activity in six Research Themes. These Institutes and Themes reflect the strength of research in populations and lifelong health at UCL.

Our work ranges from studies that measure the burden of disease in populations, through to cross-sectional and longitudinal studies which seek to understand the relative influences of environmental, socio-economic, behavioural, biological and genetic factors on disease and lifelong health. We undertake clinical, behaviour change and health service interventions in community, primary and secondary care settings nationally and globally to evaluate their benefits to health in populations.

The health of populations is influenced by a wide range of factors including law, economics, culture and the environment. A key objective of the Domain is to bring together researchers across the UCL School of Life and Medical Sciences (SLMS) and beyond, whose work has a bearing on populations and lifelong health e.g. lawyers, health economists, geographers, philosophers, ethicists, anthropologists, mathematicians and those working on the built environment. We aim to build capacity by bringing together researchers working across a broad range of disciplines, and developing strategic initiatives to build the academic community and further developing novel research. We also aim to disseminate UCL’s research and support interaction with key opinion formers and practitioners to translate research into policy and practice.
Welcome and Chair

Professor Arne Akbar
Professor of Immunology and Head of the Immunosenescence Research Group, UCL Division of Infection & Immunity

Professor Akbar’s research has focused on the understanding of T cell dysfunction, in particular immune dysregulation associated with chronic viral antigenic stress and ageing. His work on T cell differentiation has led to new insights into the mechanisms that regulate changes in the immune system in older humans. His research group has identified a concrete link between ageing, nutrient sensing pathways and the efficiency of the immune system in older humans. Professor Akbar has a wide national and international collaborative network, with universities and research organisations in Europe, the United States and Singapore.

Dr Jenny Regan
Postdoctoral Researcher, UCL Institute of Healthy Ageing

Sex differences in lifespan and the response to diet

After an undergraduate degree in Biology at Sussex University, Jenny completed her PhD at UCL in Steve Wilson’s lab, where she studied the development of left/right brain asymmetry in fish. Here, she became interested in cell migration, leading to a change of topic and model system when she went to Lisbon to research macrophage migration in Drosophila (fruitflies) with Antonio Jacinto. Jenny has used the fly to model various aspects of innate immunity, most recently in Linda Partridge’s lab in the UCL Institute of Healthy Ageing, where she studies sex differences in immunity, pathology and lifespan.
Speakers

Dr Milica Vukmanovic-Stejic
Senior Research Fellow,
UCL Division of Infection & Immunity

**Mechanism of immune ageing**

Milica Vukmanovic-Stejic obtained her PhD at King’s College London, in the lab of Professor Mike Kemeny working on human CD8 T cell subsets. Subsequently Milica undertook postdoctoral training with Professor Arne Akbar at the Royal Free Hospital / University College London where she focused on developing models for studying human immune responses in the skin. In 2009 she was awarded a Medical Research Council (MRC) New Investigator grant to study effects of age on responses to Varicella Zoster Virus. Her main interests are immune regulation, ageing and skin immunology.

Dr Jonathan Schott
Reader in Clinical Neurology,
Dementia Research Centre,
UCL Institute of Neurology

**Insight 46: A neuro-imaging sub-study of the MRC National Survey for Health and Development 1946 birth cohort**

Jonathan is a clinical academic neurologist providing a clinical service for patients with dementia at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery (UCLH), and running a programme of translational clinical research in the dementias at the UCL Institute of Neurology. He has particular interest in how biomarkers (CSF/imaging), genetics, and life course data can be combined to improve molecular diagnosis of the dementia, and identify pre-symptomatic Alzheimer’s disease for prevention studies. He leads clinical studies investigating heterogeneity in young onset Alzheimer’s disease; the role of amyloid and tau PET imaging; CSF biomarkers for diagnosis and disease tracking; an international consortium exploring the genetics of posterior cortical atrophy; and a longitudinal study to detect prodromal dementia in the MRC National Survey for Health and Development 1946 Birth Cohort. Jonathan supervises ten PhD students, has published more than 160 papers on a wide range of topics relevant to dementia, and edited the *Oxford textbook of Cognitive Neurology and Dementia*. He serves on a number of national (Deputy Chair of the Association of British Neurologists Cognitive Disorders Advisory Group, Dementias Platform UK Steering Committee) and international bodies (European Academy of Neurology Dementia Panel, Chair Elect International Society to Advance Alzheimer’s Research and Treatment Executive) influencing dementia research and clinical practice.
Lynis Lewis
Director, Noclor - Research Support Service & NIHR Clinical Research Network: North Thames

_The Clinical Research Network: What it can do for you_

Lynis is a nationally recognised expert in the field of NHS research support. She is the Director for Noclor, a comprehensive research support service based in North London and works to ensure the service provides the best support to researchers from the ideas stage through to completion of the project. Noclor has gained an outstanding reputation for providing a supportive and helpful service, and are seen as a model of good practice nationally for research management and governance in mental health, community health and primary care.

Lynis is also involved in The NIHR Clinical Research Network for North Thames which is the clinical research delivery arm of the NHS. She leads division 5 of the network with Professor David Isenberg which covers clinical areas such as ageing, dermatology and musculoskeletal and is the specialty lead for mental health in division 4.

Tarek Ahmed
PhD student, UCL Eastman Dental Institute

_RecommendMe, a UCL spinout driving healthy ageing_

Beginning his career as an engineer, Tarek is currently pursuing a PhD in Ageing with an emphasis on Nanotech and Tissue Engineering. He also exchanged on the MBA programme at the London Business School and has experience consulting for spinouts and large corporations (running UCL’s first and only highly successful pro bono strategy consultancy). Since Cofounding RecommendMe, Tarek began exploring digital transformation of public services by startups and is currently working with a variety of public and private sector bodies to bring RecommendMe’s services to the older adult community.
Dr Louisa Jenkin
Strategy and Policy Manager,
Bioscience for Health Sector,
Biotechnology & Biological Sciences
Research Council (BBSRC)

Funder presentation

Dr Jenkin has a PhD in prostate biology (Bristol) and was a postdoctoral researcher (cell/molecular biology) at the University of Bristol, Institute of Zoology (London) and the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control, before moving on to a career in scientific administration at BBSRC in 2001. Her role as Strategy and Policy Manager in the Bioscience for Health sector involves the development and management of funding portfolios to deliver BBSRC’s strategic research priorities and corporate investment strategy. She currently manages BBSRC’s Lifelong Health, Nutrition and Health, and Biosocial Science research portfolios. She also has experience in working across the Research Councils, and with Government Departments, international funders, the UK and European Space Agencies, charities and a range of stakeholders.

Research on ageing and collaborative approaches are embedded into standard BBSRC funding mechanisms, including a responsive mode priority on Healthy ageing across the lifecourse: www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/grants/priorities/healthy-ageing/

Dr Elena Pizzo
Senior Health Economist,
UCL Department of Applied Health Research

Cost-effectiveness of interventions in ageing population: examples from dementia and stroke interventions

Dr Elena Pizzo holds a PhD in Economics and Management and an MSc in Economics and Management of Health Care Services. Her main research area includes economic evaluation of health care technologies and interventions, clinical decision analysis and, more generally, costing and measurement of health and distributional aspects of health policy.

She has expertise in health economic evaluation of complex interventions, particularly those in primary care, prevention, dementia and maternity care. At UCL she is currently working as health economist for the NIHR CLAHRC North Thames and she is involved on a broad range of projects, including the evaluation of a new model of treatment in patients with dementia (VALID), the cost-effectiveness of mechanical thrombectomy to treat ischemic stroke and the evaluation of interventions to improve orthopaedics care (GIRFT).
Networking session

How the Networking session will work

Participants will be provided with name tags that read, “My expertise is” and "I'm looking for collaborations with", to provide a conversation starter.

During this session, attendees are encouraged not to talk to people they already know.

All attendees are kindly asked to turn their electronic devices off for the duration of the Networking session.

Professor Andrew Steptoe
Director, UCL Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care, and British Heart Foundation Professor of Psychology, UCL Research Department of Epidemiology and Public Health

Chair: Networking session

Andrew Steptoe is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care. He coordinates the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), a large population study of older men and women living in England. His research focuses on psychosocial aspects of ageing, and on connections between psychological and biological processes in ageing and health.