

## SUMMER 2019 NEWS

### **12 months of success at the Queen Square MRC Centre**

The last twelve months have been exceptionally successful in all areas; this includes in internationally leading research, and in innovative clinical care for our patients.

#### **People, promotions and fellowships**

Professor Mary Reilly completed a successful term as President of the [Association of British Neurologists](#) where she was the first ever female President in 85 years - about time!

[Professor Michael Hanna was elected to the Fellowship of the Academy of Medical Sciences](#) for his long-standing research in elucidating the molecular genetic mechanisms in mitochondrial diseases and muscle/neurological channelopathies, as well as translational research and the development of improved genetic diagnostics.



#### **Successful UCL academic promotions**

There has been major success across the Centre in academic promotions: Mike Lunn and Ros Quinlivan have been promoted to UCL Professor.



Rob Pitceathly, Pedro Machado and Emma Matthews have been promoted to UCL Principal Research Fellow. Andrea Cortese secured a very prestigious MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowship. This is the second Clinician Scientist Fellowship awarded to the Centre in the past 12 months, following Rob Pitceathly's success in summer 2018. Dr Rachel Brown has just been awarded an MRC Clinical Training Fellowship.



Congratulations to all on these major achievements!

## New starters

We welcome Lindsay Wilson, Senior Research Coordinator for the new International Centre for Genomic Medicine in Neuromuscular Diseases, and Dolapo Anifowoshe, Trial Coordinator, to the Centre. The second trial coordinator post was only possible as a result of the major success of the charity dinner “Mission Possible”, conceived and led by Hadi Manji in partnership with the National Brain Appeal.



**The National  
Brain Appeal**  
Funding advances  
in neurology and  
neurosurgery

NEURO  
MUSCULAR  
BRAIN INJURY  
STROKE EPILEPSY  
BRAIN TUMOUR  
DEMENTIA PRION  
PARKINSONS  
MIGRAINES  
SPINAL  
CORD  
MULTIPLE  
SCLEROSIS

## Prizes

MRC Centre students have done exceptionally well in securing prizes at major international meetings. These include Andrea Cortese and Stephen Keddie, who won two of the 5 prestigious awards at the Peripheral Nerve Society Annual Meeting in Genoa, Italy, in June 2019. Stephen was awarded the Arthur K. Asbury prize for inflammatory neuropathy research, and Andrea the PK Thomas prize for inherited neuropathies. Andrea was also awarded a prize by the Italian Society of the Peripheral Nervous System in April 2019.



Ben O’Callaghan and Karen Suetterlin won two of the six poster prizes at the UK Neuromuscular Translational Research Conference in Newcastle in March 2019, whilst Aleks Pietrusz and Stephen Keddie were both finalists. The prizes were awarded by the Cambridge Mitochondrial Biology Unit and the Newcastle Centre for Aging and Vitality.



## Over £10 million in new grant awards in the last 12 months

Professors Hanna, Reilly, Houlden, Muntoni and Voit led a successful bid to the MRC to establish an [International Centre for Genomic Medicine in Neuromuscular Diseases](#), with host support totalling £5.5 million, commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019, and linking 17 centres across six countries. This was officially launched by Professor Fiona Watt MRC CEO at a [major event at the House of Lords on 3<sup>rd</sup> April](#), attended by High Commissioners and Ambassadors from relevant High Commissions and Embassies, and hosted by The Rt Hon. the Lord Kakkar PC. We are also delighted to welcome Dr Lindsay Wilson who had moved from the MRC to join us as Senior Research Coordinator for the new international centre.



Professor Mary Reilly has led applications and secured over \$3 million in three grants from the USA (one from the MDA and 2 from the NIH) with MRC Centre colleagues Mike Hanna, Jasper Morrow, John Thornton, Tarek Yousry, Gita Ramdharry and Matilde Laura.

The Cochrane Neuromuscular Centre led by Mike Lunn with Ros Quinlivan has been successfully refunded for a further five years by an NIHR grant of £750,000.

We are delighted that all our academic activity now comes under the brand new Department of Neuromuscular Diseases at the UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology, headed by Professor Linda Greensmith.

### Publications

Investigators at the Centre have published over 125 peer-reviewed publications in top tier journals including the Lancet, Nature Genetics, Neurology and Brain, in the last 12 months.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/cnmd/research/research-publications>

### Clinical Service

The expanding clinical team continues to increase the size and quality of the clinical service offered to our all patients, now exceeding 5,000 patients per year. The Neuromuscular Complex care centre is now open seven days per week, and is in very high demand. It is extremely popular with patients, and quality and safety metrics are excellent. Our Centre was recognised as an MDUK centre for excellence in 2018.



### And finally....

On 27 May 2019, Mike Hanna led the CNMD Team running The Vitality London 10,000 race. This was our eleventh consecutive year participating in the event, and we are delighted that we have smashed our fundraising target, raising almost £12,000 in aid of The National Brain Appeal to support training at The Queen Square Centre for Neuromuscular Diseases! That's over £150,000 in last 11 years! Thank you to everyone who has taken part and donated.



For more information see [www.ucl.ac.uk/cnmd](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/cnmd)