

## RDM Newsletter

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July 2019

Dear all,

I'd like to begin the first newsletter of 2019 by highlighting a department-wide effort which has been a major focus this term: the submission of our application to renew the Silver Athena Swan Award that we currently hold. Athena SWAN is a charter established and managed by the UK Equality Challenge Unit to recognise and celebrate good practice in higher education that helps advance gender equality. The Silver Award the department currently holds is the second highest level of accreditation awarded, and we hope to continue to build on this good work.

As [research](#) done in this department shows, incentive-linked Athena SWAN plans make a measurable contribution to positive culture change, though we recognise that much remains to be done. As we wait to hear about the outcome of our application, we have already started to implement the Athena SWAN action plan, and we would welcome your contributions: please get in touch with [Charlotte Smith](#), our Athena SWAN facilitator with your ideas, and we would especially welcome participation and ideas from graduate students.

The first half of this year was also when the biggest ever RDM symposium took place: many thanks to the over 300 RDM staff and students who attended and contributed to a day full of stimulating discussion. Please save the date for next year's RDM symposium: Monday 23 March 2020.

This term also marks some major departures and a new arrival too: we're very sorry to say goodbye to Prof Mark McCarthy (OCDEM), Associate Prof Katja Gehmlich (CVM) and Dr Matt Daniels (CVM) who leave the department, and we wish them the best of luck for the future. All of them will continue to maintain an affiliation within the department. We welcome Dr Amanda Adler as the new Director of the Diabetes Trial Unit (OCDEM), taking over from Prof Rury Holman. Dr Adler is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and joins us after years of experience at the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence.

Please get in touch with [Dr Charvy Narain](#) if you have any news you would like to share with the department – from fundraising and athletic feats to poster prizes and awards, we want to hear your stories.

With best wishes for the summer,

Hugh Watkins

# Congratulations

## **Prof Sten Eirik W. Jacobsen elected as EMBO member**

[Prof Jacobsen](#)'s (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS) election recognises his research unravelling the haematopoietic roadmap. This work has had a major impact on the understanding of normal and dysregulated stem cell biology and lineage specification, with a direct clinical impact on the management of blood disorders.

## **Incoming DTU Director Dr Amanda Adler receives 'Distinguished Contribution to NICE' award**

Dr Adler received the award from the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) chair, Dr Davis Haslam, for her outstanding contribution to the organisation since it was established in 1999. Dr Adler has been a member of the NICE appraisal committee since 2006, and the committee Chair since 2009.

Dr Amanda Adler takes over from Prof Rury Holman as the Director of the Diabetes Trial Unit (DTU). Apart from being a committee chair at the NICE, Dr Adler is also a practising physician within diabetes and general medicine. Dr Adler has worked previously with Prof Holman in Oxford as the clinical epidemiologist for the United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes study, and has been involved in running a number of DTU trials.

Dr Adler is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and has helped the MHRA and EMA in issues related to the safety of drugs for diabetes. Our congratulations and a warm welcome to Dr Adler.

## **Associate Prof Tatjana Sauka-Spengler awarded Wellcome Trust Senior Research Fellowship**

The fellowship will continue the existing interest [Associate Prof Sauka-Spengler](#) (MRC WIMM, NDCLS) has in embryonic neural crest development, and the group now hope to explore in greater depth the principles by which changes in the transcriptional and epigenetic landscape control vertebrate development.

## **Prof Chris Newbold awarded 14th BioMalPar Lifetime Achievement award**

[Prof Chris Newbold](#) (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD) has won this year's 14th BioMalPar Lifetime Achievement award. Each year a malaria researcher is recognised by this honour, which includes a keynote lecture at the EMBL conference on the biology and pathology of the malaria parasite. Major achievements during Prof Newbold's prolific career include the identification of the *var* genes in *P. falciparum*, which code for a major surface antigen that undergoes antigenic variation and therefore facilitates chronic infection. Prof Newbold was also one of the originators and UK co-ordinator of the malaria genome project, and continues to be involved in its update and curation. He also helped establish the Wellcome unit in Kilifi, Kenya, now one of the major overseas Trust funded units.

## **Prof Rury Holman first recipient of the Robert Turner Award**

[Prof Holman](#) (OCDEM) is the first recipient of the Robert Turner Award for Research Impact, awarded by Diabetes UK, which recognises his outstanding work on the UKPDS study. Prof Holman has also been named as an NIHR Emeritus Senior Investigator. NIHR Senior Investigators provide research leadership to the NIHR, promoting clinical and applied research in health and social care, and constitute a network of experts able to provide advice to the Department of Health and Social Care. It is a considerable achievement to attain Emeritus status, holders having succeeded twice in achieving Senior Investigator status in open competition and completed two terms as a Senior Investigator.



### Prof Anna Gloyn gives Diabetes UK Dorothy Hodgkin lecture

[Prof Anna Gloyn](#) (OCDEM) is this year's Diabetes UK Dorothy Hodgkin lecture winner. Prof Gloyn (pictured) gave her lecture to a packed audience at the Diabetes UK Professional Conference on Thursday 7 March 2019. Her lecture, entitled '*Type 2 Diabetes GWAS: from bench to bedside*' began with a tribute to Dorothy Hodgkin,

and then explored the genetic architecture of Type 2 Diabetes – including how insights from this basic lab-based research could be used to improve and personalise clinical treatments for patients. She illustrated her talk with pictures of scientists drawn by primary school children (see right) at the Headington Prep school that she has engaged with her team's work, and discussed her team's interest in how specific genes affect the function of beta cells in the pancreas, such as how they produce, store and release insulin.



### Prof Patrik Rorsman awarded Nordic Medical Prize

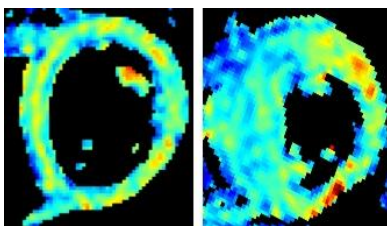
Congratulations to [Prof Patrik Rorsman](#) (OCDEM) who has been awarded the Nordic Medical Prize. This Swedish prize is awarded by the SalusAnsvar/Ulf Nilssonnes Foundation for Medical Research in cooperation with the insurance company Folksam. It is the second largest medical award in the Nordic countries, after the Nobel Prize in Medicine, and has been awarded since 1998.

## In the News

### NIHR incentive-linked Athena SWAN action plans contribute to positive culture change

A study led by [Dr Pavel Ovseiko](#) and [Prof Alastair Buchan](#) (both IMD) demonstrates that widespread implementation of NIHR funding-linked Athena SWAN action plans has contributed to positive culture change in medical sciences. Read the study published in [Interdisciplinary Science Reviews](#), and a news item on the [RDM website](#).

### Spotting heart muscle disarray in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy



Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) is the leading cause of sudden cardiac death in young people, and now a team of researchers led by Profs [Hugh Watkins](#) (CVM) and [Stefan Neubauer](#) (OCMR, CVM) have become the first to spot signs of HCM muscle disarray in living patients. The technique could potentially allow early intervention to reduce the risk of sudden cardiac arrest. The study's first author, [Dr Rina Ariga](#) (OCMR, CVM) was interviewed on BBC Oxford radio prime-time news, and

the study was extensively covered by the press, including by the [BBC](#) and the [Daily Mail](#).

### New approach to tackle Ebola and other deadly infections

[Prof Alain Townsend](#) (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD) and his group have isolated therapeutic antibodies from healthy volunteers exposed to the Ebola vaccine but not Ebola virus itself, suggesting that protective therapies could be developed from people who are disease-free. Read about the study in [The Conversation](#), in an article co-written by first author [Dr Pramila Rijal](#) (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD) and Prof Townsend.

## Greater exposure to bright sunlight correlates with lower diabetes and heart disease risk indicators

A study led by [Dr Costas Christodoulides](#) and [Prof Fredrik Karpe](#) (both OCDEM) used data from local weather stations, Oxford Biobank and the Netherlands Epidemiology of Obesity studies to find an intriguing correlation between increased exposure to bright sunlight and lower levels of insulin and triglycerides. Read the coverage of the study in [The Times](#) and on the [RDM website](#).

## Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy scar progression linked with heart failure and arrhythmia risk

An OCMR study conducted by [Dr Betty Raman](#) under the supervision of [Prof Stefan Neubauer](#) and [Dr Masliza Mahmod](#) (all OCMR, CVM) has used advanced MRI methods to find hypertrophic cardiomyopathy patients who are most at risk of heart failure and sudden cardiac death. The study, published in the [European Heart Journal – Cardiovascular Imaging](#), tracked patients for six years to find the tell-tale signs of scar progression which make the heart weak and prone to electrical disturbances. Read the full story on the [RDM website](#).

# Congratulations to following DPhil students on passing their vivas

**Dr Rina Ariga** worked on the ‘Assessment of Myocardial Fibre Structure in Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy with Magnetic Resonance Diffusion Tensor Imaging’, and was supervised by Profs Stefan Neubauer (OCMR, CVM) and Hugh Watkins (CVM), and Associate Prof Matthew Robson (OCMR, CVM).

**Agata Antepowicz** worked on the ‘Development of lung and muscle factories to deliver therapeutic monoclonal antibodies’, and was supervised by Profs Stephen Hyde and Deborah Gill (both NDCLS).

**Martin Larke** worked on ‘The role of enhancers in regulating the transcription cycle’, and was supervised by Associate Prof Jim Hughes and Prof Douglas Higgs (both MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS).

**Cristina De Genua** worked on ‘The molecular and cellular basis for oncogene collaboration in acute myeloid leukaemia’ and was supervised by Profs Claus Nerlov and Adam Mead (both MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS).

**Henry Laurenson-Schafer** worked on ‘The Impact of Genetic Variation on IFITM3 Related Influenza Virus’ and was supervised by Prof Tao Dong and Associate Prof Jan Rehwinkel (both MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD).

**Ioannis Spiliotis** worked on ‘Investigating the effect of low-dose sulfonylureas on glucagon secretion in diabetes mellitus’ and was supervised by Profs Patrik Rorsman and Fredrik Karpe, and Dr Stephen Charles (all OCDEM).

**Alexander Thomas** worked on ‘How does leukaemia disrupt haematopoiesis?’ and was supervised by Profs Claus Nerlov and Associate Prof Tom Milne (both MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS).

**Zahra Aboukhalil** worked on ‘Characterising early human lympho-myeloid haematopoietic progenitors and their relationship with acute myeloid leukaemia stem cells’ and was supervised by Profs Paresh Vyas and Adam Mead (both MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS).

**Pak Leng Cheong** worked on the ‘Acquired Alpha Thalassaemia in Myelodysplastic Syndrome’ and was supervised by Profs Richard Gibbons and Douglas Higgs (both MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS).

**Mike Barnkob** worked on ‘Role of Neuropilin-1 in regulating CD8+ T cells’ and was supervised by Prof Vincenzo Cerundolo (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD) and Associate Prof Tudor Fulga (MRC WIMM, NDCLS).

**Jennifer Chambers** worked on 'Cancer cell killing using engineered intracellular antibody fragments' and was supervised by Prof Terry Rabbits (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS).

**Yale Michaels** worked on 'Fine tuning gene expression levels in mammalian cells with engineered microRNA target sites' and was supervised by Associate Profs Tudor Fulga (MRC WIMM, NDCLS) and Tom Milne (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS).

**Alexandra Mighiu** worked on 'Modulation of atrial fibrillation susceptibility by gp91 phox-containing NADPH oxidase' and was supervised by Drs Jillian Simon and Svetlana Reilly, and Prof Barbara Casadei (all CVM).

**Wee Suan Low** worked on 'The effect of composition of dietary sugars on hepatic fatty acid synthesis and partitioning and insulin secretion and sensitivity' and was supervised by Profs Leanne Hodson and Jeremy Tomlinson (both OCDEM).

**Odaro Huckstep** worked on 'Molecular and Physiological Consequences of Prematurity and Blood Pressure Elevation on the Young Adult Left Ventricular Stress Response' and was supervised by Prof Paul Leeson and Dr Adam Lewandowski (both CCRF, CVM).

**Eleni Louka** worked on 'Phenotypic and genotypic characterisation of juvenile myelomonocytic leukaemia' and was supervised by Profs Irene Roberts (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, Paediatrics) and Adam Mead (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS).

**Ozlem Taylor** worked on 'CHD7 in CHARGE: the implications of neural crest specific regulation of chromatin remodeller CHD7 in CHARGE syndrome' and was supervised by Associate Prof Tatjana Sauka-Spengler (MRC WIMM, NDCLS).

**Francesco Reina** worked on 'Applications of Interferometric Scattering (iSCAT) Microscopy to Single Particle Tracking in model and cell membranes' and was supervised by Profs Philipp Kukura (Chemistry) and Christian Eggeling (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD).

**Julia Truch** worked on the 'Role of the chromatin remodeler ATRX in the regulation of gene expression' and was supervised by Profs Philipp Kukura (Chemistry) and Christian Eggeling (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD).

**Pippa Gunn** worked on 'The dynamics of hepatic lipid metabolism in humans: understanding their role in fatty liver disease' and was supervised by Profs Fredrik Karpe and Leanne Hodson (both OCDEM) and Dr Charlotte Green (formerly at OCDEM).

**Jonathan Hazlehurst** worked on the 'Linking glucocorticoid action and hypoxia: A novel' and was supervised by Profs Leanne Hodson and Jeremy Tomlinson (both OCDEM).

**Ferenc Mozes** worked on the 'Magnetic resonance imaging of the liver. T1 dynamics: confounders and modelling' and was supervised by Associate Prof Matthew Robson and Dr Liz Tunnicliffe (both OCMR, CVM).

**Marzia Rigolli** worked on the 'Novel assessment of cardiorespiratory interactions in aortic stenosis' and was supervised by Associate Prof Saul Myerson (OCMR, CVM) and Prof Mona Bafadhel (NDM).

**Alia Komsamy** worked on the 'Discovery of Molecular Signatures Underlying Angiogenic Versus Non Angiogenic Tumours' and was supervised by Profs Francesco Pezzella (NDCLS) and Benedikt Kessler (NDM).

**Yara Alenazi** worked on the 'Targeting the Chemokine Signalling Pathway Using Tick Saliva Peptides' and was supervised by Prof Shoumo Bhattacharya (CVM) and Dr Akane Kawamura (Chemistry).

**Iva Trenevaska** worked on the 'Developing anti-p53/HLA-A\*0201 T-cell receptor mimic antibodies for cancer immunotherapy' and was supervised by Dr Demin Li and Prof Alison Banham (both NDCLS).

**Wilby Williamson** worked on the 'Heart-Brain Axis and Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Young Adults' and was supervised by Prof Paul Leeson (CCRF, CVM) and Dr Charles MacDonald Foster (Primary Care Health Sciences).

**Dr Betty Raman** worked on the 'Insights into mechanisms and clinical implications of myocardial fibrosis and its progression in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy' and was supervised by Prof Stefan Neubauer and Dr Masliza Mahmod (both OCMR, CVM) and Prof Hugh Watkins (CVM).

**Dr Mahesh Umapathysivam** worked on the 'Physiological investigation of causal genetic variants in metabolic disease' and was supervised by Profs Mark McCarthy and Anna Gloyn (both OCDEM).

## Prizes and awards

We're always keen to hear about your prize wins: please email [communications@rdm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:communications@rdm.ox.ac.uk) to let us know.

### Dr Danuta Jeziorska named rising star in biobusiness

[Dr Jeziorska](#) (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS), a postdoctoral researcher with Prof Douglas Higgs, was named one of the Rising Stars in BioBeat's '50 Movers and Shakers in BioBusiness 2018' report, for supporting innovation from concept to market. In 2015, Dr Jeziorska co-founded the Oxford branch of Innovation Forum, a global non-profit organisation with a mission to accelerate innovative technology by connecting academics, industry, healthcare and policy makers.

### Dr Betty Raman wins Young Investigator Award

[Dr Betty Raman](#) (OCMR, CVM) was awarded the first prize at this British Society of Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance Imaging meeting in May this year. Dr Raman, who recently completed her DPhil with [Dr Masliza Mahmod](#), [Prof Stefan Neubauer](#) (both OCMR, CVM) and [Prof Hugh Watkins](#) (CVM), is studying hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM). Many congratulations to Dr Raman!

### 2019 RDM Symposium awards

The annual RDM symposium on Thursday 14 March brought together more than 300 staff and students, over 50 posters and stands. The audience enjoyed the in-depth talk from our keynote speaker, Prof Chas Bountra, as well as the three excellent talks from our 2018 [graduate prize winners](#): Christopher Booth, Evangelos Oikonomou and Marieke Oudelaar. Our poster judges had a tough job too, but after much discussion, the poster prizes went to:



In the Student category, Martyna Lukosevicuite (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS; pictured left) from the Sauka-Spengler lab for her poster on '*The Two-Faced foxd3 and its Roles in Neural Crest Chromatin Remodelling*'.

The runner up was [Maryam Alsharqi](#) (CCRF, CVM); pictured right) from the Leeson lab (for her work entitled '*Predicting Adverse Responses to Physical Activity in Young Adults with Suboptimal Blood Pressure*').



In the Non-student category, [Dr Louise Johnson](#) (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD; pictured left) from the Jackson lab for her poster entitled '*Regulation of dendritic cell trafficking in lymphatics by hyaluronan and its receptors LYVE-1 and CD44*'.

The runner up in this category was [Dr Angela Lee](#) (CVM) from the Bhattacharya lab for her poster entitled '*A novel disulfide-bonded scaffold that directs the CXC-chemokine binding specificity of tick salivary evasins*'.

[Prof Leanne Hodson](#) (OCDEM) and [Associate Prof Jim Hughes](#) (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS) were both joint winners of the RDM Excellent Supervision Award.

Many congratulations to all award winners!



# Research funding

Don't forget to visit the ['Find Funding'](#) section of the website to learn about the support that we can provide with your grant applications. Details of all RDM internal deadlines can also be found there. For any funding related queries, please contact the [RDM Strategy and Funding team](#) (Dr [Ruth McCaffrey](#), Dr [Serena Briant](#) and Dr [Kathleen Dolan](#)).

## External funds

[Prof Adam Mead](#) (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS) has been awarded an Early Detection project grant by Cancer Research UK for a project entitled *'Early detection of platelet biased HSCs in myelofibrosis and clonal haematopoiesis'*.

[Prof Hugh Watkins](#) (CVM) has been awarded a four year Special Project grant entitled *'Genetic discovery-based targeting of the vascular interface in atherosclerosis'*. This is jointly funded between the BHF and DZHK (German Centre for Cardiovascular Research).

**Dr Onima Chowdhury**, in collaboration with Prof Adam Mead (both MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS), has been awarded a Clinical Academic Research Partnerships grant from the MRC for a project entitled *'Application of single cell genomics for precision medicine in myelodysplastic syndromes'*.

[Dr Nikolaos Nikolaou](#), from the Tomlinson and Hodson labs (all OCDEM), has been awarded a Society for Endocrinology Early Career grant with a project entitled *'AKR1D1 Activity as a regulator of adipose tissue biology function'*. He has also received funding for an 8 week summer studentship for an enthusiastic undergraduate.

[Prof Shoumo Bhattacharya](#) (CVM) has been awarded a 5 year programme grant from the BHF for work entitled *'Precision therapeutics for cardiovascular inflammation'*.

**Dr Marco Fritzsche** (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD) has been awarded a three year EPSRC New Investigator Award entitled *'Extend super-resolution three-dimensional mechanical probing in living cells'*.

[Dr Benoit Hastoy](#), from the Gloyn and Rorsman labs (all OCDEM), has been awarded an RD Lawrence Fellowship from Diabetes UK with a project entitled *'Insulin vesicle dynamics in Type 2 Diabetes'*.

[Associate Prof Ellie Tzima](#) (CVM) has been awarded a 3 year project grant from the BHF for work entitled *'PECAM as a novel regulator of cardiac functions'*.

[Dr Lynn Quek](#) (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS) has won funding from Agios Pharmaceuticals. She has also been awarded a Development Fund Project grant from the CRUK Oxford Centre entitled *'Single cell transcriptomic and proteomic analysis of granulocyte-monocyte and erythroid differentiation in normal haematopoietic progenitors and in Acute Myeloid Leukaemia'*.

[Associate Prof Charles Redwood](#) (CVM) has been awarded a 2 year project grant from the BHF entitled *'Design and evaluation of novel compounds that reverse the increase in myofilament calcium affinity in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy'*.

**Dr Elena Gangitano** (OCDEM) has been awarded a short term fellowship from the European Society of Endocrinology to join the Tomlinson lab.

[Associate Prof Catherine Porcher](#) (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS) has been awarded a research grant from the BBSRC with a project entitled *'In vivo characterisation of the lateral plate mesoderm giving rise to the haematopoietic stem cell lineage at a single cell resolution'*.

[Associate Prof Craig Lygate](#) (CVM) has been awarded a 4 year programme grant from the BHF for work entitled *'Impact of Creatine / Homoarginine Metabolism in Health and Disease'*.

[Prof Marella De Bruijn](#) (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS) has been awarded a project grant from the University of New South Wales.

[Prof Graham Ogg](#) (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD) has been awarded an MRC Antibody Discovery Award entitled '*Targeting of CD1a for treatment of inflammatory skin disease*'.

[Associate Prof Katja Gehmlich](#) (formerly CVM) has been awarded a 3 year BHF project grant for work entitled '*The role of ALPK3 in autosomal dominant hypertrophic cardiomyopathy*'.

[Dr Kate Lines](#), from the Thakker lab (OCDEM), has been awarded a UKINETS/NET Patient Foundation grant from the UK and Ireland Neuroendocrine Tumour Society for work entitled '*Evaluation of a somatostatin-JQ1 conjugates for the treatment of pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours*'.

[Alba Rodriguez-Meira](#), DPhil student in the Mead lab (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS), has won funding from Mission Bio.

[Prof Barbara Casadei](#) (CVM) has been awarded a programme grant from the BHF entitled '*Impact of subclinical atrial fibrillation (SCA) on cerebrovascular disease and cognitive decline in the UK Biobank cohort*'.

[Prof Deborah Gill](#) (NDCLS) has been awarded a project grant for one year from the Children's Liver Disease Foundation entitled '*In vivo liver genome editing for the treatment of alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency*'.

[Prof Charis Antoniades](#) (CVM) has received Biomedical Catalyst funding from Innovate UK for work entitled '*A new technology to transform cardiac risk management by imaging coronary artery inflammation*'.

[Dr Bethan Psaila](#), from the Mead lab (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS), has been awarded an Advanced Clinician Scientist Fellowship from Cancer Research UK for work entitled '*Novel approaches to targeting pathogenic megakaryocytes and reducing fibrosis in myelofibrosis, a severe bone marrow malignancy*'.

[Associate Prof Jan Rehwinkel](#) (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD) has won grant funding from Janssen Pharmaceutica NV for work entitled '*Generation of research tools for the antiviral sensor MDA5*'.

[Dr Ricardo Carnicer](#) (CVM) got a 2 year extension to his BHF Intermediate Basic Science Research Fellowship to continue his work on '*Translating BH4 cardioprotective effects into type 2 diabetes*'.

[Dr Jakob Knudsen](#) (formerly OCDEM) from the Rorsman lab received an Excellence Emerging Investigator Grant within Endocrinology and Metabolism from the Novo Nordisk Foundation. The grant will support him in his new role as Assistant Professor at the Department of Biology at the University of Copenhagen.

## Internal funds

[Dr Bethan Psaila](#) in collaboration with [Prof Adam Mead](#) (both MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS) has been awarded funding from [Lab 282](#) for a project entitled '*Targeting Megakaryocyte-induced fibrosis in myelofibrosis, a severe bone marrow disorder*'.

[Prof David Ray](#) (OCDEM) has received funding from the Oxford NIHR Biomedical Research Centre Chronic Disease Cluster for '*Sleep Improvement for Metabolic Health – Feasibility Trial*'.

## Funding from the Oxford Hospitals Charity has been awarded to:

- [Associate Prof Saul Myerson](#) (CVM) for a pilot study entitled '*Assessment of flow patterns, diastolic function and effect of iron status in Fontan patients*'.
- [Associate Prof Vanessa Ferreira](#) (CVM) for a project entitled '*Validation of Novel Diagnostic Tools Characterising the Coronary Microcirculation in Aortic Stenosis based on Cardiac Magnetic Resonance Stress/Rest T1-mapping and Invasive Coronary Physiology*'.



- [Prof Charis Antoniadis](#) (CVM) for work entitled 'Collection of 10 year outcome data of the Oxford Heart Vessels and Fat (ox-HVF) cohort'.

#### Medical Sciences Internal Fund (MSIF) pump priming awards were made to:

- [Dr Erdinc Sezgin](#) from the Eggeling lab (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD), for a project entitled '*Role of plasma membrane lipids in Niemann-Pick disease Type C*'.
- [Dr Christian Babbs](#) from the Buckle lab (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS), for a project entitled '*Identifying Novel Causes of Anaemia*'.
- [Dr Marieke Oudelaar](#) from the Higgs and Hughes labs (both MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS), for a project entitled '*Investigation of the role of non-coding mutations in blood cancer development by integrating whole-genome sequencing and functional genomic approaches*'.

#### John Fell Fund (JFF) awards were made to:

- [Prof Christian Eggeling](#) (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD) for the expansion of the Wolfson Imaging Centre capacity and capabilities by addition of a confocal microscope with Airyscan detector.
- [Dr Marco Fritzsche](#) (MRC HIU, MRC WIMM, IMD) for a project entitled '*Development of biophotonic cytotoxicity platform for high-throughput screening of cytolytic killing*'.

This year, funding from the [Returning Carers' Fund](#) has been awarded to [Dr Rina Ariga](#) (OCMR, CVM) in the Neubauer and Watkins labs.

#### Grant Writing Workshop

On 28 June, RDM held its 5th annual Grant Writing Workshop, run by Dr Peter Dukes from the MRC. Once again, it was an excellent day where attendees were given an insight into how to write a good grant application and how peer review works. The success of this workshop is clear: we have had a total of 85 attendees from the first four workshops; of these 45 have applied for funding and 35 (18 F; 17 M) have successfully obtained it, giving a phenomenal success rate of 78%. Many have secured funding from the myriad of internal funding schemes within the University, but a significant number have obtained funding from external sources, including 9 individuals (5 F; 4 M) who have secured Fellowships.

## RDM Equality and Diversity news

#### RDM Athena SWAN Application

In April 2019, we submitted an application to renew our current Silver Athena SWAN award. Based on information gathered across the department, the RDM Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team (SAT) wrote the 122 page application and submitted it to the accreditation body, the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). The ECU typically receive 100+ submissions per round, and each application is reviewed by a panel of assessors who examine four or five applications. The results are usually released in September / October and the current overall success rate for a Silver award is 44%. The application process relies heavily on the input from people in all RDM divisions, especially those who contribute to the working groups and reply to surveys, so THANK YOU to everyone who worked on the application, answered any RDM surveys and / or contributed to any of RDM working groups. Over the next four years, the RDM working groups and SAT will be working on the Athena SWAN Action Plan, which formed a substantial section of the recent application. We will be sending out regular updates via the Bulletin, website and other communication channels. If you would like to find out more about Athena SWAN, the RDM Self-Assessment Team, or any of the working groups, please contact [Charlotte Smith](#).

## 2019 International Women's Day

March 8 every year is International Women's Day (IWD), and this year we worked with our colleagues in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences (NDCN) to put on a panel discussion which featured RDM and NDCN women researchers at different stages of their career, and highlighted the career support available at the University. RDM Head of Department, Prof Hugh Watkins, chaired the panel and introduced talks from the Head of NDCN, Prof Irene Tracey; BHF Senior Fellow & Professor of Metabolic Physiology, Prof Leanne Hodson (OCDEM); Clinical Research Fellow and DPhil student, Dr Shveta Monga (OCMR, CVM); and Assistant Registrar in the Medical Sciences Division, Gillian Morris. After networking over refreshments, NDCN's Dr Stacie Allen introduced Dr Clara Barker from the Department of Materials, and the afternoon ended with a screening of [Dr Barker's TedX](#) talk and an engaging Q&A with her. The event was held in the WIMM and it was a good afternoon with over 60 attendees from across RDM and NDCN. We would love to hear your ideas for future IWD events: please contact [Charlotte Smith](#) or [Dr Charvy Narain](#).

## Anti-Bullying and Harassment

Between 2015 and 2018, we asked all existing members of RDM to undertake anti-bullying and harassment training (new staff should all be undertaking training as part of their probation). We have also run additional courses in Bystander awareness and promoted our extensive Harassment Advisor network. In the staff survey summary which we distributed last year, the percentage of those who have felt bullied / harassed has not changed over the last two years, so we are working with colleagues across RDM, MSD and the University on additional approaches to combat bullying and harassing behaviours, on developing reporting tools, on advertising the presence of harassment advisors and in production of a dignity at work policy (to be released later in 2019). See the [RDM website](#) for more information.

## RDM Rainbow Lanyards

Oxford University's rainbow lanyards have been a great success, and this term, we created and distributed our own departmental rainbow lanyards, based on our 2018 survey results that suggested a need for fostering a departmental identity. The departmental rainbow lanyards were extremely popular at the RDM symposium. We have more: ask your local administrator for one, or contact [Charlotte Smith](#).

# Staff news

## Staffing updates

[Prof Mark McCarthy](#), Robert Turner Professor of Diabetic Medicine at Oxford, has moved to a position within the biotechnology company Genentech. He is now a Visiting Professor in RDM.

[Associate Prof Katja Gehmlich](#), formerly a BHF Intermediate Basic Science Research Fellow and PI within CVM, is now a senior lecturer at the University of Birmingham.

[Dr Matt Daniels](#), also formerly a PI within CVM, is now a Clinical Senior Lecturer within the Division of Cardiovascular Sciences at the University of Manchester.

**Dr Amanda Adler** is the incoming Diabetes Trial Unit (DTU) Director, taking over from Prof Rury Holman.

[Prof Gerton Lunter](#) and his research group are now part of the MRC WIMM centre for Computational Biology.

[Jill Walker](#) has taken over from Dr Bob Mahoney as the Graduate Studies Manager for RDM. A warm welcome to Jill.

## Obituary

### Professor Sir David Weatherall (1933-2018)

It is with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Sir David Weatherall on 8 December 2018. Sir David, fondly called 'Prof' by those who knew him, was a general physician, a haematologist, and a clinician scientist whose pioneering work on the genetics of blood disorders such as thalassaemia and sickle cell disease continues to have a major impact. His work sparked the revolution in the application of molecular biology to all aspects of clinical medicine, starting over 30 years ago when he established the first Institute of Molecular Medicine in the UK, based at the John Radcliffe Hospital and part of the University of Oxford: the MRC Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine is just one part of his enormous legacy encompassing David's unique approach to medicine, science and mentoring. Read more about Sir David's life and work on the [RDM website](#).

## Public Engagement with Research

### Award-winning RDM researchers at the Weston Library, Pint of Science and the Oxford IF festival

It's been a busy term for public engagement with science for RDM researchers: both [Dr Naveed Akbar](#) (CVM) and the [MRC WIMM](#) Public Engagement Committee won the University of Oxford's Vice-Chancellor's Public Engagement Awards in the 'Building Capacity' category. Drs [Naveed Akbar](#) (CVM) and [Will Watson](#) (OCMR, CVM) also tried their hand at science stand-up comedy about their work at the Pint of Science festival, while Drs [Jillian Simon](#) and [Parag Gajendragadkar](#) (both CVM) and [Associate Prof Jim Hughes](#) (MRC MHU, MRC WIMM, NDCLS) were part of the 'Living Library' at the Weston Library late event for their 'Thinking in 3D' exhibition. The evening also featured Flux Dance Company's pop-up dance performances about atrial fibrillation, developed in coordination with CVM researchers, and the MRC WIMM's 'DNA origami' stand, including a VR tour inside DNA (developed by [Dr Stephen Taylor](#), MRC WIMM). The months-long 'Thinking in 3D' exhibition has the tagline 'From Leonardo to the Present', and one of the highlights in the exhibition featured the work of [Prof Robin Choudhury](#) (CVM), who also gave a packed lecture at the Oxford Literary Festival about the depictions of the heart from Leonardo Da Vinci to the present day.



[Dr Naveed Akbar](#) (CVM) and [Prof Deborah Gill](#) (NDCLS) will also be putting in an appearance at Oxford's IF festival this October and November, while [Dr Will Watson](#) (OCMR, CVM) used the medium of comedy to describe the world of his research (which is mostly about weak hearts and strong magnetic fields) at this year's Offbeat Festival.

To round off the summer, Drs My-Nhan Nguyen and [Sandy Chu](#) (both CVM) will be heading off to Einstein's Garden at the Greenman Festival, where they'll be setting up a repeat of the living library alongside the pop-up dance performances about atrial fibrillation by the Flux Dance Company.

We're always on the lookout to develop ideas and provide training for public engagement with research, so if you've got any ideas or questions, please contact the RDM communications and public engagement manager [Dr Charvy Narain](#).