

Cambridge Cancer Centre

The Cambridge Cancer Centre (CCC; www.cancer.cam.ac.uk) is a virtual network that brings together researchers from Cambridge and the surrounding areas – from the University, affiliated institutes, hospitals and biotech – whose work has current or potential application to cancer.

The Centre was launched in June 2007 at the inaugural one day symposium and the Centre's vision is to promote collaborative projects at the interface between different disciplines in cancer research. There are currently 206 members registered with the Centre. In January 2008 the first five research allocations were made for small scale, collaborative research projects:

- Genome-wide analysis of transcriptional reprogramming in acute myeloid leukaemia: Bertie Gottgens (Department of Haematology), Brian Huntly (Department of Haematology), Andrew Bannister (Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute) and Gos Micklem (Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics)
- Engineering the effect of cellular shape and substrate topology on epidermal stem cell differentiation: Wilhelm Huck (Department of Chemistry) and Fiona Watt (CRI)
- Investigating the use of cell elasticity as a marker of susceptibility to cancer: Kerstin Meyer (CRI) and Jochen Guck (Department of Physics)
- MicroRNAs as therapeutic targets in cancer – a small molecule approach: Eric Miska (Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute), Shankar Balasubramanian (Department of Chemistry), Carlos Caldas (CRI) and Simon Tavaré (CRI)
- Devising new approaches to allosteric inhibition of the polo-like kinase Plk1: Ashok Venkitaraman (Hutchison/MRC Research Centre) and Chris Abell (Department of Chemistry)

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The 2008 Symposium took place on 27 June at the CRI. Approximately 270 delegates attended from University departments, Cambridge institutes, biotech companies and journal editorial offices. The day was a success, largely due to the excellence and variety of talks – perfect for the diverse audience. Invited talks were given by Tom Blundell (Department of Biochemistry), Neil Burnet (Department of Oncology), Tim Eisen (Department of Oncology), Alan Fersht (MRC Centre for Protein Engineering), Daniela Rhodes (MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology), Michael Stratton (Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute), Simon Tavaré (CRI), Christine Watson (Department of Pathology), Fiona Watt (CRI) and Andrew Wyllie (Department of Pathology). Between the talks and at the BBQ there was much opportunity for initiating new collaborations and discussing the posters. The Keynote lecture was given by Cancer Research UK Chief Scientist, Sir David Lane.



Discussion during coffee at the Postdoctoral Meeting

The Postdoctoral Meeting, organised by postdoctoral scientists from the CRI, Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute, MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Hutchison/MRC Centre and Wellcome Trust Centre for Stem Cell Research, took place on 28 November. The day consisted of talks in the morning from selected participants with ten workshops in the afternoon led by senior members of the CCC. The workshops covered topics such as Experimental Therapeutics/Drug Discovery, Animal Models, Epigenetics/Chromatin and Immunology. The Keynote lecture was given by Professor Kim Nasmyth (Department of Biochemistry, University of Oxford) and was followed by a poster session. The Meeting was a great success and future postdoctoral meetings are planned.