

Maternal and Fetal Health Research Group

Monthly Newsletter

Issue 25
November 2009

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STOP PRESS!!!

**Christmas meal 2009- Get your deposit in quickly or miss out!
See Page 6 for details!**



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Maternal and Fetal Health Research Group

part of the
Research School of Clinical and Laboratory Sciences *in the*
School of Medicine *within the*
Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences.

www.medicine.manchester.ac.uk/research/groups/maternalfetalhealth

Page 1: New Staff and Students

New MRes in Maternal and Fetal Health

September saw the beginning of the MRes in Maternal and Fetal Health, with 8 students joining our group. **Mais Al Junaidy, Laura Hopkins, Fiona Mackie, Nathalie Robinson, Antonietta Rotolo Pulido, Uzo Sampson, Lynne Warrander and Lamia Zafrani** will be with us for a whole year until September 2010.

The Programme Director is John Aplin, Deputy Director is Rebecca Lee Jones and Programme Administrator is Lauren Moss.

New PhD Students in Maternal and Fetal Health

Maternal and Fetal Health gains three new PhD students: **Sarah Coleman, Paula Diaz** and **Kim Hammam**. Welcome!

Rosie Anwar and Ita Wood join Maternal and Fetal Health

Please join me in welcoming **Rosie Anwar** and **Ita Wood** to the Research Floor.

Rosie has recently joined the group to start work as a Data Manager and also works part-time as a Data Analyst for the ENT dept over at MRI.

Her role involves the creation of database management systems and primarily will involve managing the Placental Tissue Bank databases. She is also available to provide advice on the best methods of collecting / storing data and creating databases should anybody need assistance.

As Rosie is also a member of the Clinical Research Network she can also assist and advise with uploading accrual data for Portfolio registered studies onto the Portfolio database.

Ita is Rosie's colleague who also works for the CCRN. Ita's role is as recruitment co-ordinator for ENT, however because Rosie has moved and their jobs are closely linked it seemed best for them both to move together to our lovely new offices!

Welcome both of you!

Page 2: News from Yale

Two of our members, Andrew Sharp and Beth Holder, have been carrying out research at Yale University, USA as part of their PhDs. Andy has recently returned to the UK but here is a little insight into their lives over the pond.

Beth:

I am currently half way through my year here working with Dr. Vikki Abrahams in her reproductive immunology lab. I am investigating the interaction between placental Human Endogenous Retroviruses (HERVs) and the maternal immune system.

In Manchester I focused on the characterization and localization of HERV expression in the placenta. At Yale, I am studying the activation of immune cells in response to HERVs, through measurement of cell activation markers and cytokine production, both in a monocytic cell line and in immune cells isolated from peripheral blood. Whilst here, I have also had the opportunity to attend the American Society of Reproductive Immunology conference in sunny Florida!



Andy:

I am now approaching the end of my collaboration in Dr Gil Mor's lab. The main focus of my work has been furthering the understanding of the mechanism of p53 dependent apoptosis in trophoblast cell lines and also in a pregnant mouse model.

The *in vitro* work has involved BeWo cells and immortalized extravillous trophoblast (Swan 71) cells. To date we have investigated more closely the role of p53 modulation with the p53 activator Nutlin and the p53 inhibitor Pifithrin. This work has built upon studies performed in Manchester.

The *in vivo* studies have looked at the ability of Nutlin to activate p53 dependent mechanisms in the pregnant mouse and the effect of treatment on pregnancy outcome.

Page 3: News from Yale Continued

Fun stuff...

We have had a great time here, even though we had to live together to save money. Andy was a great tea-maker throughout. Beth ended up learning to knit and make custard. We have really enjoyed the lab atmosphere and working with a great bunch of people from a huge variety of backgrounds. We have been praised by a variety of nationalities at our ability to communicate in 'English' English and have become the first point of call for grammar and spelling issues.

We have both been lucky enough to take some time to explore the area. Andy has been to Vermont, Boston, Washington, Niagara Falls and Toronto. Beth has been to Las Vegas, Death Valley, San Francisco, Chicago and Washington. We have both been to New York many times. Andy loves the shopping. Beth will have been up the Ruckerfeller four times with various people by the time she leaves. We have even managed to get on the beach a few times. Overall the experience has been enjoyable both in lab and outside, although Andy is glad to be leaving now that the snow is coming.



Page 4: Successes

Many congratulations to **Milly Cretney** for her achievement of being awarded a Long Service Award for 20 years service to the NHS. Milly was presented with a certificate to mark the occasion by Peter Mount, Chairman of CMHFT, on September 29th. Well done Milly!

Well done to **Colin Sibley** who has been appointed Head of the Research and Innovation Division of Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Welcome back to **Jemma Corcoran** who has just come back from Maternity leave after having her little boy William!



Congratulations to **Colin Sibley, Phil Baker, Sue Greenwood and Mark Wareing** who have received £2,421,280 from the MRC for their study, 'Assessment of potential therapies for Pre-eclampsia and Fetal Growth Restriction using murine models'.

Congratulations to John Aplin and Lynda Harris who have received £273,013 from the MRC for their study, 'MMP-12-mediated vascular elastolysis- a potential target for therapeutic intervention in complicated pregnancies'.



James Newham was awarded a grant from the Manchester Statistical Society for his project proposal 'Interventions to reduce maternal anxiety during pregnancy'.

Well done to **Karen Forbes** who has been awarded a 4 year Stepping Stones Fellowship for her project, 'Targeting placental microRNAs: towards a therapy to improve fetal growth.'

A MASSIVE THANK YOU to everyone who helped with getting Tommy's annual report written and out in early November. It has now been shipped to Tommy's for review. The Report described the many successes of MFHRG this year including:

➤ Currently hold grants worth around **£7M**, exclusive of funding from Tommy's; as this report was going to press we heard of two new awards to the Centre from the Medical Research Council of **£2.4M** (5 year Programme Grant) and **£0.22M**.

➤ **5** students awarded PhD, **1** MD; **2** clinical fellows awarded Wellcome Trust Clinical Training Fellowships.

➤ **68** papers published in last 12 months; **65%** in high impact journals of research field.

Tommy's

Page 6: Publication Successes



Please include: **Maternal and Fetal Health Research Group, Manchester Academic Health Sciences Centre, University of Manchester** when papers are submitted. You should also acknowledge that the Group is supported by the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre and (if appropriate for your study) the Greater Manchester Local Comprehensive Research Network.

KLISCH, K, WOODING, FB P, **JONES, CJP**. (2010)The glycosylation pattern of secretory granules in binucleate trophoblast cells is highly conserved in ruminants. Placenta (in press)

DL Miller, CJP Jones, JD Aplin, LG Nardo. Altered glycosylation in peri-implantation phase endometrium in women with stages III and IV endometriosis. Human Reproduction (in press)

Bai X, Williams JL, **Greenwood SL, Baker PN, Aplin JD, Crocker IP**. A placental protective role for trophoblast-derived TNF-related apoptosis-inducing ligand (TRAIL). Placenta. 2009 Oct;30(10):855-60. Epub 2009 Aug 11.

Forbes K, West G, Garside R, Aplin JD, Westwood M. The protein-tyrosine phosphatase, SRC homology-2 domain containing protein tyrosine phosphatase-2, is a crucial mediator of exogenous insulin-like growth factor signaling to human trophoblast. Endocrinology. 2009 Oct;150(10):4744-54. Epub 2009 Jul 9.

D'SOUZA, Y.B., **JONES, C.J.P.**, SHORT, C.D., BONSHEK, R.E. . Basal laminar drusen and soft drusen have similar glycan composition. Canadian J of Ophthalmology (in press)

SANCHES JCT, **JONES CJP, APLIN JD, ZORN TM** and OLIVEIRA SF. Collagen fibril organization in the pregnant endometrium of decorin-deficient mouse. J. Anat (in press)

Darwin, Z., & Campbell, C. (2009). Understandings of cervical screening in sexual minority women: A Q-methodological study. Feminism & Psychology, 19(4), 534-554.

If you have an abstract accepted for publication please email lauren.moss@manchester.ac.uk a copy of the publication for the newsletter, but also so that the information can be passed on to the Press Officer Aeron Howarth who will contact local/national press.

Page 7: Christmas meal

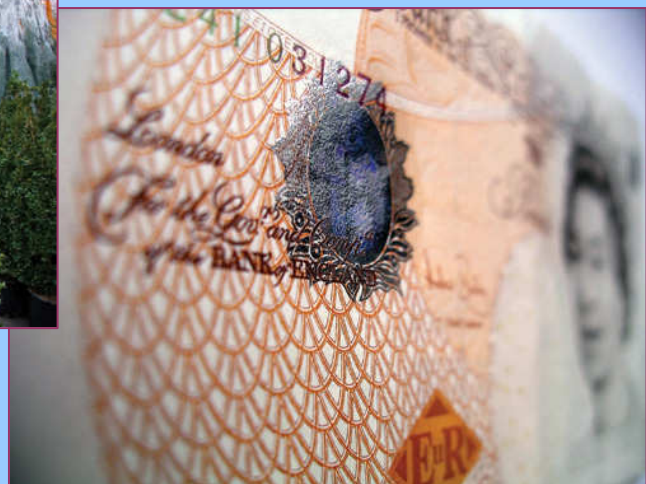
The Maternal and Fetal Health Christmas meal will take place on 18th December, 2pm at the Metropolitan in West Didsbury.

You can view the menu at

[http:// www.the-metropolitan.co.uk/christmas09.htm](http://www.the-metropolitan.co.uk/christmas09.htm)

There are still a few places left so if you would like to join in the fun please pay the £10 deposit to **Lauren Moss** ASAP. The full price is £20.95.

Also, Don't forget before the Christmas lunch we'll have the annual Christmas Quiz run by Mark Wareing and Alex Heazell and for anyone who wants to join in there will be the Yankee Swap- maximum amount to spend £10.



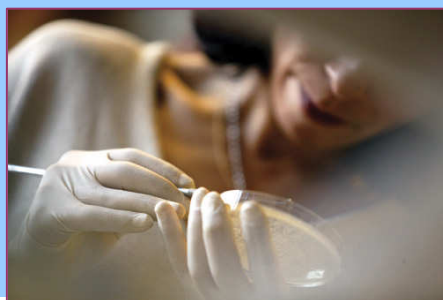
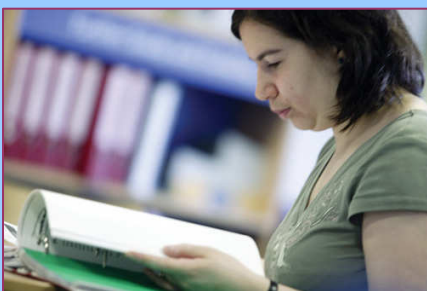
The annual academic promotions round for promotions to Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Fellow is formally communicated each year in the Autumn within Schools. A detailed communication (and the School's deadline) about this will be sent around by Faculty sometime in November, in the meantime, please bear in mind the following points:

- Applications for promotion will be made through the School structures that are currently in existence.
- Contribution to Teaching & Learning will be assessed in part from the data held on TOPCAT therefore you must ensure that your TOPCAT entry is up to date. Failure to do so could result in your promotion case not being passed for approval to the Faculty Promotions Committee.

If you wish to start preparing an application for promotion in advance of the formal Faculty communication you may find it helpful to look at the Faculty intranet which has details of the 2008-9 procedure:

(<http://www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/admingroups/humanresources/policiesandprocedures/academicpromotions/>)

The documentation, whilst not likely to change significantly, will be updated when the formal Faculty communication takes place.



Page 9: Funding Opportunity

Postgraduate Research Student Conference Travel Funds available

The University have announced a new scheme to aid postgraduate researchers in attending national or international conferences to present their research. The PGR Conference Travel Funds will assist with the costs of travel, conference registration fees and accommodation expenses, and are intended to supplement the applicant's own contribution or funds from other sources.

The funds are available to all 2nd and 3rd Year PhD students (or equivalent for part time students), with only one grant being available per student per year.

Up to £250 for a visit in the UK or £400 for a visit outside of the UK is available

Only students who are presenting a paper or poster at a conference will be considered for funding. Applications from candidates who are not presenting a paper or poster will not be considered under any circumstances.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/skills/travel%20fund/>

Or contact
Anne-Marie Walsh
Research Office, 2nd Floor Christie Building

anne-marie.walsh@manchester.ac.uk
Tel: 0161 275 7132



Page 10: Regular Meetings

Maternal and Fetal Health Research Group Tuesday 'Work in Progress' Meetings

Seminar Room A/B
Research Floor
5th Floor
St Mary's Hospital

08:45 – 09:45

24/11/2009	Jayne Fitzsimmons, Debbie Smith	Samantha Smith, Zoe Darwin
01/12/2009	Stefania C, Caroline Wright	Christal Fisher, Richard Blankley
08/12/2009	Andy Sharp, Helen Miller	Yu Zhang, Alison Cooke
15/12/2009	Paula Diaz, Sarah Coleman, Khiria Alsaghiri	Michelle Desforbes, Karen Forbes

Maternal and Fetal Health Research Group Wednesday Lab Meetings

For more information email
jean.french@manchester.ac.uk

Seminar Room A
Research Floor
5th Floor
St Mary's Hospital

09:00 – 09:30

25/11/09- Paula Diaz

16/12/09- NO MEETING

02/12/09- Sarah Coleman

09/12/09- Justine Nugent

Endocrine & Diabetes Research Group Seminars

Please note these meetings are not compulsory.

Room 1.006,
AV Hill Building

13.00-14.00

20/11/09- Advanced Glycation Endproducts in extracellular matrix proteins contribute to the pathogenesis of diabetic neuropathy

27/11/09- Prolactin gene transcription dynamics in adult and developing pituitary & Role and regulation of SOX9 during human pancreas development

4/12/09- Post transcriptional gene control in chondrocytes: From SOX to COX

11/12/09- Oocytes rule OK: local control of ovarian function