

Successful joint NIHR Biomedical Research Centre Strategic Project Awards

Four new research projects have been funded by the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre Strategic Advisory Board at King's College London, through an initiative launched at the end of last year to take forward research collaborations between the three National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Centres associated with King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre.

The Joint NIHR Strategic Project Awards aim to encourage novel research collaborations to understand the interface between mental and physical illness; and to support the delivery of high quality clinical outcomes for patient benefit.

The comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, the specialist Biomedical Research Centre for Mental Health at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and the King's Patient Safety and Service Quality Research Centre at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – all linked to King's College London as their academic partner - agreed to fund cross-centre translational research projects, which demonstrate collaboration, scientific excellence and the likelihood of high-impact outcomes for patients.

The titles of the successful research projects are:

- Genetic causes of neurodevelopmental and psychiatric disorders in children: translation and interpretation of novel pathogenic copy number variants and novel rare exonic mutations into clinical practice.

- A new screening tool for the prediction of psychiatric adverse effects in patients receiving interferon: a treatment for chronic viral hepatitis C.
- Improving the identification of new treatments for rheumatoid arthritis by developing a patient-based outcome measure: building on successful innovation in mental health.
- Control of periodontal inflammation, systemic inflammatory responses and cognitive decline.

These projects were approved at a recent meeting of the NIHR BRC Strategic Advisory Board (SAB).

Professor Richard Trembath, Director of the comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre and SAB Chair, said: “The quality of the applications we received demonstrated the merit in bringing together expertise and resources available within the individual centres to drive forward exciting collaborative projects which will impact on patient care in the future.”

Professor Simon Lovestone, Director of the specialist Biomedical Research Centre for Mental Health said: “This new stream of funding is fostering novel interdisciplinary collaborations to pump prime new areas of research in mental and physical health. The scheme will enable the collection of ‘proof of concept’ pilot data to help get high-quality projects off the ground by making them much more attractive to external funding bodies. We’re hugely excited by the potential of the successfully-funded projects.

Anneliese Dodds, Acting Centre Director, King’s PSSQ commented: “Safety and service quality are ever increasing priorities for patients. Through translational research, we can develop methods to improve risk management and thus reduce adverse events in health care. In one of the successfully funded projects, staff from King’s PSSQ will work collaboratively with staff from both the comprehensive and specialist Biomedical Research Centres to develop a new screening tool to predict psychiatric adverse events associated with the use of interferon in chronic viral hepatitis C.”

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Note to editors:

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King's Health Partners is a pioneering collaboration between King's College London, and Guy's and St Thomas', King's College Hospital and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trusts. It is one of only five AHSCs in the UK and brings together an unrivalled range and depth of clinical and research expertise, spanning both physical and mental health. Our combined strengths will drive improvements in care for patients, allowing them to benefit from breakthroughs in medical science and receive leading edge treatment at the earliest possible opportunity.

Three NIHR Biomedical Research Centres underpin the work of King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. These are the comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre at Guy's and St Thomas' and King's College London, the Specialist Centre for Mental Health at South London and Maudsley and the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College London, and the Patient Safety and Service Quality Centre at King's College Hospital and King's College London.

For more information, visit www.kingshealthpartners.org