

Spotlight

The NDM Newsletter

Issue 07: November 2015

Spotlight

Welcome to the seventh edition of *Spotlight*, the newsletter for NDM staff and students. We publish news items and updates from the Department four times a year.

If you have any comments or news items for the newsletter, please get in touch at public@ndm.ox.ac.uk.

New resource for early career researchers

The Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine is committed to supporting the long-term development of its researchers, and we have brought together online resources, support and advice on researcher development at <http://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/researcher-development>

We understand that life as a medical researcher can be challenging as well as rewarding, and together with the Oxford Learning Institute, we are currently developing a new programme to expand the training and support we provide. The new programme will be specifically aimed at new and aspiring primary investigators (including senior post-doctoral researchers who are considering leading their own independent projects).

The new programme will include web-based as well as face-to-face training, as well as podcasts building on this training. Watch this space for more information, and do check our training webpages for more support.

Art from the gut



Image credit: Chris Wood

Dr Nicola Fawcett from the Modernising Medical Microbiology research group has created art in an unusual medium: she used bacteria harvested from faecal samples to make agar artwork. The bacteria, normally found in the gut, were stamped onto chromogenic agar (which changes colour in the presence of different bacteria), and then left to grow overnight.

Dr Fawcett said, 'A healthy, desirable world is portrayed as one free of bacteria: sterile and scrubbed clean. It's increasingly clear that this isn't true and that we need bacteria in order to survive. One of the most important places this happens is in our partnership with the bacteria in the gut.'

'The artwork was created to help draw attention to the research we are doing into gut bacteria, how they are affected by lifestyle, healthcare, and by antibiotics, and what that means for our health.'

The artwork was created for the annual American Society of Microbiology Agar art competition. You can read more about this work on Dr Fawcett's blog, <https://livinginamicrobialworld.wordpress.com/>

NDM Staff win Ebola Medals



The Vice-Chancellor Professor Andrew Hamilton and Professor Sir Peter Ratcliffe presented NDM staff with the Ebola medal, awarded to 'recognise the bravery and hard work' of people who helped tackle the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The medal winners include Professor Peter Horby (on right in photo), who led fast-tracked Ebola trials.

Professor Horby said, 'The fact that the whole group's work has been recognised is very pleasing. Once the outbreak began, teams of people worked to get government funding, co-ordinate with other organisations like Médecins Sans Frontières and many people also went out to tackle the disease. A lot of people had to convince their loved ones to go out there and put themselves at risk to help fight the disease.'

You can watch Professor Horby's well-received public lecture about his experience in carrying out an Ebola trial, on our website: ndm.ac/p-horby-ebola

Athena SWAN news



NDM is proud to hold the Silver Athena SWAN Award: it demonstrates the department's commitment to gender equality in the sciences, and it is a recognition of the hard work put in by many people in order to achieve this aim. We are dedicated to ensuring we now maintain momentum on our commitment to the continuous improvement and the success of our staff and students.

Keep up to date with Athena SWAN news and events, view our career profiles and podcasts, see our progress summary on our Silver Award Action Plan and find out more about Athena SWAN, our initiatives, and your Unit Athena SWAN Self Assessment (ASSA) teams by visiting our dedicated website pages:
<http://www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/athena-swan>.

Or email the departmental coordinator at athena.swan@ndm.ox.ac.uk.

NDM in Mexico



Over the past few months, NDM has been exploring opportunities for innovative partnerships with Mexican research and public health institutions. Mexican research students (pictured left) have already got a taste of research at NDM during workshop training: over the coming months, the department aims to set-up a research hub to facilitate the exchange of new ideas and research activities across the Atlantic. More to come soon!