

About us

One of eight national Healthcare Technology Co-operatives (HTCs) funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the NIHR Enteric HTC at Barts Health NHS Trust aims to be the premier centre for facilitating innovative technology in bowel and gastrointestinal disorders for the NHS and beyond.

We are based in the National Centre for Bowel Research and Surgical Innovation (NCBRSI) and are building on the success of the pilot HTC, enteric.

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A new hope for ulcerative colitis

Tissue engineering techniques in the future may help reduce the need for surgery in ulcerative colitis (UC). This debilitating disease causes inflammation of the colon in early adult life causing chronic diarrhoea and blood loss. Although symptoms can be controlled by medication, the disease cannot be cured and approximately 15% of patients with UC will eventually require major surgery, with a significant proportion ending up with a permanent stoma.

The inflammatory response in UC is maintained by an auto-immune process sited and targeted in the mucosa and submucosa of the colon and rectum and modified according to the patient's genetic profile. These basic pathological facts suggest that the manifestations of the disease could be eradicated if the colorectal mucosa and submucosa could be completely removed and replaced by viable, normal tissue.

To explore this potentially revolutionary treatment, NIHR Enteric HTC has partnered colleagues at Northwick Park with Videregen, a start-up tissue engineering company. Dr Tahera Ansari and Professor Paul Sibbons, along with a newly appointed PhD student will be investigating methods to decellularise colitic bowel and re-populate the remaining scaffold with healthy, disease-free enterocytes.

Contribute with Confidence

Patients and members of the public met with researchers and clinicians to learn from each other in March. This interactive day, which was hosted by NIHR Enteric HTC and Bowel and Cancer Research, involved short talks, meeting the researchers, and participation workshops. One attendee said it was, "very informative, relaxing and thoroughly enjoyable."

The day offered an opportunity to hear from patients, who had been involved in research, meet researchers and hear about their projects and learn about the results of our recent major trial, CONFIDeNT. This trial, which recruited 227 patients from around the UK, compared how efficient Percutaneous Tibial Nerve Stimulation (PTNS) was compared with a sham (placebo) treatment for people with faecal incontinence (Knowles *et al* Lancet 2015). At lunch time, guests could wander around a range of research market stalls. "Meeting the researchers to discuss their studies was great."

The afternoon was filled with workshops. These interactive sessions aimed to improve understanding of research jargon, the basics of trial design, what a trial steering committee does, reviewing patient materials, how patients and public can be involved in analysing trial results, and how to engage the media. Feedback from the day was very positive, with one participant saying "I would recommend any events you do to my patients."

NIHR Enteric HTC Core Team

Clinical Co-Directors:

Professor Norman
Williams
Professor Charles
Knowles

Director of Technology:
Dr Michael Grah

Interim Programme
Manager:
Mr George Sampson

Administrator:
Ms Usha Lekha

Mr Shafi Ahmed meets the man from Apple!

Mr Shafi Ahmed, a colorectal surgeon based at Barts Healthcare Trust, has a keen interest in the use of virtual and augmented reality technology (VR/AR) in the provision of improved surgical training and enhancement of safe and effective surgery. He is working with Enteric HTC on a number of projects that utilise VR/AR.

In May of this year, with his company Virtual Medics, he attended the Digital Health Live Congress in Dubai. There he met with John Sculley, an American businessman, entrepreneur and investor in high-tech startups. Sculley was vice-president and president of Pepsi-Cola, until he became Chief Executive Officer of Apple. The pictures show Shafi demonstrating the use of VR in suturing.

He also met with H.E. Engineer Essa Al Haj Al Maidoor, Director General, Dubai Health Authority, who tried out some of the technology.

In the same month, he won the coveted AsiT Silver Scalpel award. The ASiT Silver Scalpel Award has been recognising excellence in surgical training since 2000. It is awarded annually to inspirational trainers who have scored highly across five categories: leadership, resourcefulness, training and development, professionalism, and communication.

This year, the award was handed to Medical Realities co-founder, who received recognition for supporting students pastorally as well as professionally by helping them to settle into their new team and working environment, often in a new country with different cultures.

Ajit Abraham, Consultant HPB Surgeon and Group Director Surgery and Cancer, Barts Health NHS Trust, said: "I am delighted that Mr Ahmed's outstanding contribution to developing trainee surgeons has been recognised and celebrated by our well-respected colleagues at The Association of Surgeons in Training. Professor Anthony Warrens, Dean for Education, Queen Mary University of London, comments: "Mr Ahmed is a passionate and dedicated surgical tutor and we are very proud to have him on board training the next generation of doctors and delighted to see his contribution recognised by The Association of Surgeons in Training. This award is hugely deserved, and reflects Mr Ahmed's position as one of our most innovative and forward-thinking teachers."



New Recruits



The Steering Committee has a new member in **Professor Christine Norton** who is Florence Nightingale Foundation Chair in Clinical Nursing Practice Research at King's College London. She was one of the first continence nurse specialists in the UK and was the first Secretary of the Association for Continence Advice. Later she was founder and Director of the UK Continence Foundation. Professor Norton is considered an internationally renowned expert on incontinence and gastrointestinal nursing. She is a Cochrane editor and reviewer, and holds a wide range of advisory and Trustee positions, in patient-led organisations.



George Sampson, an experienced executive from the medical technology industry, has been acting as a part-time interim Enteric Programme Manager since earlier this year. His background includes senior roles within both multi-national and SME companies. George will continue to act as a consultant and advisor for Enteric HTC.



This summer a new Administrator – **Ms Usha Lekha** – has joined the team. Usha will also work in the Bowel & Cancer Research team. Her background is working in local hospitals, schools and health organisations.

Changing of the Guard

As reported in the last Enteric Newsletter, after a number of years being at the forefront of Enteric HTC, the two stalwarts – Sue Taylor and Antonio Quadrucci – have moved on to pastures new.

They were involved in the successful transition of Enteric HTC from a pilot phase starting in 2008 (with Devices for Dignity (D4D) HTC) to a leading member of the cohort of eight Healthcare Technology Co-operatives formed in 2012.

During this period, they contributed to the growth of innovative products and projects in the GI and Colorectal sphere involving academic, clinical and industrial partners working with Enteric.

Part of this activity was the planning and arrangement of successful meetings – such as the Enteric Hackday at the RSM in October 2014; also reported in the last newsletter.

Enteric's Chairman, Richard Coleman, and Clinical Directors, Professor Sir Norman Williams and Professor Charles Knowles, would like to thank Sue and Antonio for their sterling work and contribution towards the continuing success of the HTC. In addition, they would like to welcome George, Usha and Christine to the Enteric team.