Academic Clinical Directorate of Haematology and Cancer Services

June 2013
Introduction
In 2009 the clinical directorates of haematology and cancer services were merged into a joint directorate, and all cancer treatment delivery co-located in the new regional Northern Centre for Cancer Care. This has presented us with an opportunity to build new collaborations and further enhance clinical research outputs from two existing research active directorates. On this background we are applying to be considered as an Academic Clinical Directorate.

Vision
The vision of the Academic Clinical Directorate of Haematology and Cancer Services is to work in partnership with the Clinical Directorate to offer patients excellence in care and access to the highest quality of treatments, whether within a clinical trial or subsequently as standard of care. We have the ability to do this across all phases of clinical research, and a strong track record in translational research in experimental medicine supported by scientific research collaborations with the Northern Institute for Cancer Research (cancer services) and Institute of Cellular Medicine (non-malignant haematology), Newcastle University. The proposed Academic Directorate already has a strong portfolio of clinical trials, with the largest portfolio of industry sponsored research in the Biomedicine research platforms, and over the next 5 years we will plan to expand this activity in 5 key areas:-

- **Maintenance of a portfolio of commercial late phase and investigator-led studies in non-malignant haematology**
  This will be supported by the existing non-malignant haematology research team that works in close collaboration with the Institute of Cellular Medicine and the Clinical Research Facility, RVI. Active areas of research include trials of new treatments for haemophilia (paediatric and adult; global recruitment; few centres selected in the UK), new oral anticoagulant agents (a major area of commercial expansion), and pharmacogenetic and mechanistic studies of warfarin response (currently supported by NIHR RfPB funding).

- **Expansion of early phase clinical research with increased activity in solid tumours (established area) and haematological malignancies (emerging area)**
  This activity will be supported by the established solid tumour team who have an international reputation for such work, taking 4 first in class molecules into the clinic in 2012/13, having >30 on going industrial collaborations and being ranked in the top tier of such centres in the UK at the recent renewal of NIHR ECMC funding. ECMC and CRUK Centre funding underpin a senior research team, who have supported the first trials in this area in malignant haematology and will continue to do so while this team prepare to apply for TAP Centre status.

- **Maintenance of a broad portfolio of late phase studies such that the majority of tumour site specific areas have active trials open, despite the increasing molecular profiling of patients reducing eligible groups for individual studies**
  Cancer including malignant haematology has the largest portfolio of late phase clinical trials of any directorate. Recruitment is delivered by research active clinicians working in cancer site teams. 6.5 consultant PA’s are funded by the Northumberland Tyne and Wear Clinical Research network and these PA’s are written into job plans. In 2012/13 NUTH delivered 46% of all cancer trial recruitment in the North of England Cancer Research Network-North (around 1300 patients). The directorate has an expanding range of industry studies and an appointed industry team lead. Performance management for all studies is undertaken on a quarterly basis.

- **Developing a culture of biobanking for research in all areas**
  The Clinical Directorate of Haematology and Cancer Services has taken a lead in the implementation of biobanking in collaboration with NICR to ensure that we have well-annotated sample collections for translational research. Recent initiatives include obtaining generic biobanking ethical permission, the development of haematological and solid tumour biobanks such that ~27,000 samples are already in collections and the appointment of a tissue collection HCA post funded by the CRUK Cancer Centre to support...
hepatobiliary and adult malignant haematology sample collection. In the next 5 years these ongoing collections will be expanded to the majority of major disease sub-types in the directorate

- Development of an imaging and radiotherapy research portfolio in solid tumours and haematological malignancies

Significant infrastructure investment by NUTH and Newcastle University means the academic and clinical directorates are uniquely placed to work together to build clinical research activity in these areas, and will work with scientific collaborators (NICR) to take novel imaging tracers into the clinic, and develop the research opportunities presented by the stereotactic radiotherapy equipment. Appointment of an academic clinical oncology position will be a priority.

Training the next generation

In addition to research outputs the academic and clinical directorates will continue to support Newcastle University objectives to provide world class teaching and to train the next generation of researchers. Staff in the directorate innovated and still lead the online oncology MSc and associated other courses, (Drs Dark, Kelly and Azzabi), deliver undergraduate oncology teaching, host SSC students as well as being the regional lead training site for three medical specialties working with three Royal Colleges to deliver higher professional training.

The academic directorate builds on the tradition that staff are offered opportunities to undertake MD/PhD/MClinRes courses at Newcastle University, with an established culture that this is expected of our medical trainees, and we will maintain the flexible approach to working which allows an increasing number of allied health professional staff to also undertake higher degrees. The Newcastle Cancer Centre has an annual allocation scientific PhD and clinical fellowship posts.

Conclusion

There is an existing strong culture of clinical research within the clinical directorate and the Academic Clinical Directorate of Haematology and Cancer Services will continue to work alongside the directorate management team to maintain the existing high impact research outputs and strengthen new areas in line with directorate strategy.