

The Institute of Cancer Research: at a glance



Some major ICR discoveries

- We provided the first conclusive evidence that the basic cause of cancer was damage to DNA.
- We discovered the breast cancer gene BRCA2, which enabled families with a history of breast cancer to be assessed for future risk.
- We transformed care for advanced prostate cancer patients by discovering and developing abiraterone, a life-extending drug which is now treating hundreds of thousands of men.
- Since 2005, we have discovered 20 drug candidates and progressed ten new drugs into clinical trials.
- We were the first to show that PARP inhibitors have antitumour activity in tumours with DNA repair defects

The Institute of Cancer Research, London, is one of the world's most influential cancer research institutes, with an outstanding record of achievement dating back more than 100 years. We are passionate about our mission to make the discoveries that defeat cancer.

We are a college of the University of London and have a long history in training the next generation of cancer researchers.

The Drug Development Unit (DDU) and Prostate Cancer Targeted Therapy Group (PCTTG), within the ICR and Royal Marsden, are some of the world's leading centres for clinical trials in cancer, and treat >400 patients each year. The Units aim to seamlessly bring together preclinical drug discovery, proof-of-concept trials and tumour-specific evaluation of novel agents.

The vision is to provide fully personalised medicine, tailored to exploit the specific weaknesses of a patient's tumour at that point in time.

Advanced fellowships for junior oncologists providing training in drug development



Dr. Joline Lim : Previous DDU fellow (2016-2017)
Current position: Consultant, Department of
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‘The department has a strong focus on teaching, with regular journal clubs and teaching sessions that span a multitude of subjects including protocol writing, trial conception, and statistic and data analyses. We’re encouraged to ask questions, to develop our own ideas, and to pitch them at a monthly meeting to consultants who will give feedback on how to improve our proposals. Besides teaching, there are also ample opportunities to help prepare manuscripts for completed trials and meeting abstracts, giving the chance to improve writing skills and pick up how to analyse data that has been collected from patients. What struck me the most was the open-door policy in the department – I never felt that there was any question that was too silly to be asked, any idea too farfetched to propose. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to work amongst the excellent team at the DDU and hope to be able to pay it forward as take the lessons learnt to contribute to the growing phase one unit at my home institute, the National Cancer Institute of Singapore, and mentor younger clinicians looking at branching into research.

We have advanced clinical research fellowships for oncologists in our Drug Development Unit and Prostate Cancer groups, based within our partner hospital The Royal Marsden and The ICR research laboratories. This is an excellent opportunity for higher oncology trainees wishing to get experience of drug development, clinical trials and translational research.

The DDU is a world-leading trials unit focus on evaluating a broad range of novel anti-cancer strategies in early clinical trials (>50).

Clinical research fellows gain extensive clinical experience in designing, setting up, running, and reporting of clinical trials administering novel anti-cancer agents to cancer patients. We prioritize the conduct of proof-of-mechanism and proof-of-concept hypothesis testing trials and focus on the detailed biomarker-driven analyses of drug effects. This training will include in depth training in writing up clinical trial protocols, setting up trials, establishing biomarkers, toxicity management, clinical trial conduct from conception and trial set-up totorial completion and data analysis as well as presentation of findings.

The post includes interaction with industry partners as well as collaborating with laboratory scientists.