

Research Taster Week at St John's Institute of Dermatology, by Matthew Wynne.

Monday:

I started by discussing the current work of Dr Sophia Karagiannis' group, including understanding B cell and antibody responses in melanoma and the production of IgE class antibodies, for the treatment of solid organ tumours. Her research group was responsible for the production, study and translation of MOv18 IgE, which is currently the first ever IgE antibody in a human trial. She also asked me to review a manuscript, currently being worked on by her team, about combination treatments for melanoma.

I was also present for a meeting between a prospective student and Dr Karagiannis, discussing the outline of the proposed PhD and had a tour of the laboratory.

In the afternoon, I attended the busy cutaneous lymphoma clinic with Dr Mary Wain and saw multiple cases of mycosis fungoides, including patch, tumour and erythrodermic leukaemic variant stage. I was also present for a discussion between a patient with the leukaemic variant and a Consultant Oncologist, regarding the possibility of transplant for their disease.

Tuesday:

I was fortunate for my visit to coincide with the AllergoOncology Task Force meeting, of which Dr Karagiannis is a co-founder. This group, which focusses on the relationship between allergy, IgE and cancer, has been given Task Force status, by the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. A new paper investigating the relationship of acrolein (found in cigarette smoke), to tumour growth and allergy status was presented. The most recent position paper of this task force was also reviewed and discussed.

Wednesday:

I started by discussing the current work of one of the PhD students, involving mechanisms of resistance to treatment in cutaneous T cell lymphoma and I also spoke to a dermatology registrar and fellow about setting up a study and applications.

I then joined a postdoctoral researcher from the Karagiannis group to attend the early phase trial meeting, led by Professor James Spicer, which reviews all patients under their care and on clinical trials. It was interesting to hear about the logistics of sending tissue samples between hospital sites.

In the afternoon, I discussed further work with PhD students and observe experiments testing the function of anti-cancer antibodies in assays, including human serum in the lab. I then met with Dr Katie Lacy, consultant dermatologist at St John's, discussing her career path and obtaining advice for my own.

Thursday:

I attended the MDM for all melanoma patients and then the melanoma clinic with Professor Sean Whittaker. It was of huge benefit to see the method of careful examination of scar sites, for lumps, which could represent in transit metastases. It was a pleasure to see every concern of both the patients and anxious relatives, being given plenty of time to be addressed with sensitivity.

In the afternoon, I met with Dr Tracey Mitchell. We discussed pathways into academic medicine and the possibility of me returning next year to set up a project.

Friday:

I met with a current PhD student, Dr Wisam Alwan, who 7 years ago, was an FY2 and who also attended a taster week at St John's. His advice about pathways into academic medicine, obtaining funding and other insights, only obtained after having gone through these processes, was invaluable. We were able to talk extensively and I received further useful advice about the ST3 applications process for Dermatology.

In the afternoon, I worked on the manuscript that I was asked to review. This has been intellectually stimulating and of great benefit to my understanding of: genetics and mutations in melanoma; new therapies such as checkpoint inhibitors; and mechanisms of resistance to these therapies.

I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to Dr Karagiannis and Dr Mitchell, for allowing me to join them and learn from their teams and to everyone else who took the time to help give me an insight into a career in translational research. It was been a privilege and a pleasure to visit St John's. I would also like to thank the NIHR and the BAD, for supporting this visit, through their bursary programme.



AllergoOncology Task Force Meeting Tuesday 25/4/17