



Report of Cancer and Nutrition NIHR infrastructure collaboration Research workshop on Wednesday 13th September 2017 at Imperial College, London

Background

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together members of the research work stream's three sub-groups and provide an opportunity for sharing information about current and future research studies into cancer and nutrition. The overall aim was to start work on producing a comprehensive research strategy and action plan for the next phase of the collaboration's activity. Within that aim, there were four defined objectives:

1. To share existing research capability, capacity and particular nutritional focus
2. To explore novel approaches for collaboration in research
3. Within these, to identify research priorities based on patient need and practicability
4. To explore funding models and opportunities

Participants

The workshop was attended by 29 people representing Biomedical Research Centres (BRCs), academic institutions, clinicians and funders from across the UK. Unfortunately as travel costs could not be covered it was difficult for colleagues from the devolved nations to attend. In addition to researchers, clinicians and funders, there were three patient representatives present. (See Appendix A for a full list of participants)

Summary of proceedings

Dr Steve Wootton, Deputy Chair of the collaboration, opened the workshop and welcomed everyone, thanking Imperial College for providing the venue and catering. There were a number of presentations from researchers, funders and a patient representative. In addition, Professor Philip Calder from the NIHR Southampton Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) spoke about the ESPEN clinical guidelines and recommendations for research in cancer and nutrition, highlighting the many opportunities for building the evidence base that this offers the research community, with the aim of improving outcomes for patients.

The focus of presentations from researchers was wide-ranging and included the following topics:

- the therapeutic role of essential fatty acids in bowel cancer
- sulforaphane from broccoli in prostate cancer
- improving physical fitness prior to surgery for cancer patients
- LDL cholesterol as a biomarker and therapeutic target in breast cancer
- behavioural interventions and weight loss in cancer survivorship
- eating difficulties during chemotherapy treatment
- use of oesophageal and pyloric stents in palliative care
- nutritional needs before, during and after autologous stem cell transplant in multiple myeloma
- optimal nutritional care and physical activity versus usual care for oesophago-gastric cancer patients

Key outcomes

A wealth of information was shared amongst the participants and there was a great deal of enthusiasm to collaborate on research studies into the links between nutrition and cancer. It was agreed that while the potential for opportunistic collaborations between people is clear, a mapping exercise to capture capability and capacity across institutions and individuals would be beneficial to everyone. Secondly it was agreed that in order to adequately characterise nutritional status in people with cancer, a common Toolkit* consisting of standard procedures and methodologies is required. The Toolkit should be designed within a quality assured framework whereby competence can be measured and evaluated effectively. Thirdly, in a 2-3 year timeframe, the collaboration should aim towards submitting an ambitious and comprehensive research proposal in which the nutritional status of people with cancer can be characterised concurrently across a number of different cancer sites, in order to better understand how nutritional status affects both response to treatment and resilience to cancer in the longer term. This type of study will allow for the mechanisms involved to be explored, both in terms of generic processes as well as site specificity and variability.

Next steps for the collaboration Secretariat and the research work stream:

- Share all participants' contact details and slides presented at the workshop
- Plan and undertake a mapping exercise to share capability and capacity across research institutions to encourage further opportunistic collaborations
- Develop a standardised Toolkit for the characterisation of nutritional status in people living with and beyond cancer
- Develop a goal-orientated research strategy and action plan for the next 2-3 years that works towards submission of an ambitious and comprehensive research proposal to one of the large funders operating in this space
- All participants to reflect on the workshop and for the collaboration to aim for a follow-up in the next six months, if resources allow
- Aim to host a session on Nutrition and Cancer at the NCRI Conference in 2018

*This Toolkit is being developed in the work stream led by Dr Bernard Corfe, *Characterising Nutritional Status in Cancer*.

Appendix A – delegate list

Name	Title	Institution
Professor Sam Ahmedzai	Emeritus Professor of Palliative Medicine	University of Sheffield
Millie Barrett	Project Manager	Cancer and Nutrition NIHR infrastructure collaboration
Professor Karen Brown	Professional of Translational Cancer Research	University of Leicester
Professor Philip Calder	Professor of Nutritional Immunology	University of Southampton
Dr Helen Croker	Senior Dietitian	UCL, Behavioural Science & Health
Fiona Davey	Assistant Project Manager	Cancer and Nutrition NIHR infrastructure collaboration
June Davis	National Cancer Rehabilitation Lead	Macmillan
Lucy Eldridge	Clinical Dietitian Lead	Royal Marsden Hospital
Jacqui Gath	Patient and Public Representative	Cancer and Nutrition NIHR infrastructure collaboration
Professor Mark Hull	Professor of Molecular Gastroenterology and Honorary Consultant Gastroenterologist	University of Leeds
Dr Sandy Jack	Clinical Scientist (Critical Care)	University of Southampton
Professor Alan Jackson	Emeritus Professor in Human Nutrition	University of Southampton
Dr Antonietta Melchini	Senior Researcher	Institute for Food Research
Dr Giota Mitrou	Head of Research Funding and Science Activities	WCRF UK
Dr Fehmidah Munir	Reader in Health Psychology	Loughborough University
Dr Anbu Paramasivam	Senior Research Funding Manager	Cancer Research UK
Hazel Phillips	Manager	Bristol BRC
Monica Ritco Vonsovici	Manager	Royal Marsden BRC
Ann Russell	Patient and Public Representative	Cancer and Nutrition NIHR infrastructure collaboration
Dr James Thorne	Academic Fellow and Junior Group Lead	University of Leeds
Lesley Turner	Patient and Public Representative lead	Cancer and Nutrition NIHR infrastructure collaboration
Professor Eila Watson	Professor in Supportive Cancer Care	Oxford Brookes University
Dr Sally Wheelwright	Macmillan Senior Research Fellow	University of Southampton
Professor Martin Wiseman	Medical and Scientific Adviser	WCRF UK
Dr Abby Woodfin	Research Funding Manager	Cancer Research UK
Dr Steve Wootton	Associate Professor in Human	University of Southampton

Nutrition		
Dr Tom Yates	Senior Lecturer in Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Health	University of Leicester