



Experience of the ECMC cross-centre placement and skills sharing scheme

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The Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre Initiative is jointly funded by Cancer Research UK, the National Institute for Health Research in England and the Health Departments for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Background

- **Scheme was launched in 2013:**
Set-up in response to the aim identified in the 2012 ECMC Networking Strategy for more centres to be conducting studies of the highest quality due to staff training
- **Enables staff to learn new techniques and practices at other ECMCs with relevant expertise to meet a current research need**
- **About 40 placements have been awarded**
- **Range of staff and skills from research nurses to research associates to Quality Assurance managers**



Placement One: Introduction

- Alan Bilsland
- Research Associate
- Glasgow ECMC (Translational Pharmacology Lab)
- At the time of the placement, our QA manager and PK analyst had recently left the lab
- Needed to train new staff in High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) methods for PK analysis
- *Particular need: to understand GCPL validation/QC parameters to progress 2 partly-developed projects*



Placement One: Visit

- Newcastle (NICR)
- PI: Gareth Veal
- 2 days: observed complete run-through of analysis of plasma melphalan levels by HPLC
 - Sample preparation\extraction methods
 - Method design\setup\testing
 - Use of software including audit-trail functions
 - Results interpretation and QC
 - Newer technologies
 - *Training based on same systems installed in Glasgow – SOPs provided for all steps*

Placement One: Learnings and next steps

- Experience was excellent – the Veal lab were very tolerant of stupid questions. Also, opportunity to get an overview of interests in the Newcastle ECMC
- We were able to complete validation of the assays, allowing these to be run on patient samples
- Equivalent commercial courses in HPLC: “How to set up/run HPLC methods.” Phenomenex – theoretical course - £550 registration (+ transport and accommodation – 2 trips). Cross centre placement training was free, *tailored to our needs*, and transport/accommodation covered by ECMC.

Placement Two: Introduction

- Dr Karen E Swales
- Senior Scientific Officer, Clinical PD Biomarker Group
- The Institute of Cancer Research and Royal Marsden Hospital

- Aim of placement:

To learn from best practice examples of how a similar group in Manchester addressed laboratory linked-GCP challenges including fast-track method validation and QA systems



Placement Two: Visit

- **Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology Group, Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute**
- **Contact: Jeffrey Cummings**
- **Duration: 2 days**
- **Visit consisted of**
 - **Lectures**
 - The development of QA within CEP
 - Fit for purpose Biomarkers method validation
 - **Lab tour**
 - **Demonstrations of GCP compliance and project approval, document control, ELISA and multiplex ELISA, CEP audit programme and CSV**
 - **Observation of the QA team daily PDR**
 - **Discussions including biostatistics**

Placement Two: Learnings and next steps

- Informative thought-provoking experience
 - Reinforced current practices
 - High-lighted areas for improvement and time-saving
 - Accessed resources not available at our centre
- Examples of learnings implemented
 - Reviewed training matrices, introduced a tiered system and reduced no. of replicate assays for training
 - Reviewed CAPA process and introduced a single CAPA log for internal and external audits
- Highly beneficial to meet counterparts at another centre
 - Generated understanding of the expertise within each centre
 - Established knowledge and experience sharing. for use in the future



Summary

- Scheme is open all year round
- Placement duration from one day to three weeks
- Will fund travel and accommodation up to £1k
- Details on the ECMC website:
<http://www.ecmcnetwork.org.uk/cross-centre-placements-and-skill-sharing-scheme>
or contact hannah.brown@cancer.org.uk

