

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Translational research: making basic research a clinical reality**

Potential for the translation of health related research in south London has received a significant boost with the creation of a brand new role and funding programme co-funded by Guy's and St Thomas' Charity and the Medical Research Council. Dr Julie Lotharius of King's College London has been appointed as the UK's first ever university-based Research Translator, tasked with identifying opportunities for translating laboratory research into human studies, as the basis of new clinical practice.

Dr Lotharius, who has previously been involved in research activities and translation in Sweden, Denmark and the US, will assess the wide diversity of research projects currently running in departments throughout King's College London, including the five specialist Medical Research Council centres, and the clinical research facilities part-funded by Guy's and St Thomas' Charity at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. She will assess the results of pre-clinical biomedical research for potential development into new therapies that can eventually be evaluated in clinical trials, with the possible support of pharmaceutical or bio-technology companies.

The translational research model is already used in the pharmaceutical industry, but the development in an academic and teaching hospital setting is ground-breaking, with Dr Lotharius only the second person in the UK to hold a full time research translator post. Her pilot scheme will run for three years, focussing both on neuroscience projects and those that deal with inflammation, infection and immunity. A translational research unit is planned dependent on the results of an evaluation on the success of the pilot, which has also been funded by the Charity.

Medical research covers a wide range of activities from initial test-tube experiments in research laboratories through to clinical trials with sick patients. Dr Lotharius intends to identify gaps in the research chain, as well as looking at how research projects in pre-clinical and clinical areas might relate to each other. The aim is to efficiently exploit new opportunities, reduce duplication and synthesise projects for more, possibly unexpected, widespread results.

Dr Lotharius said: "I hope to bring about a change in culture regarding how research can be developed and moved forward. This pilot role aims to highlight greater opportunities for clinicians and researchers to take research forward to its ultimate goal of patient care." more...

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Professor Stuart Bevan, project lead at King's College London, who has 10 years' of translational research experience in industry, said: "Identifying competing research projects that have a good probability of success will be challenging but enormously rewarding. This is an exhilarating opportunity to increase the efficiency of translating the investment in basic bio-medical research findings into improvements in healthcare."

Partnership funding from the Medical Research Council (£520,000), Guy's and St Thomas' Charity (£171,000) and King's College London (£60,000) for an overall grant of £750,000.

Ends

Notes to News Editors:

1. To arrange an interview or for more information please contact Laura Mason, Communications Assistant on Tel: (020) 7188 9083 or email: [laura.mason@gsttcharity.org.uk](mailto:laura.mason@gsttcharity.org.uk) or out of office hours: 0772 2119 157

2. Guy's and St Thomas' Charity provides funding to support health services in Lambeth and Southwark and to benefit the wider NHS. For further information contact Laura Mason (as above) or visit [www.gsttcharity.org.uk](http://www.gsttcharity.org.uk)

3. King's College London is one of the top 25 universities in the world (Times Higher 2007) and the fourth oldest in England. A research-led university based in the heart of London, King's has 19,300 students from more than 130 countries, and 5,000 employees. King's has an outstanding reputation for providing world-class teaching and cutting-edge research. The College is in the top group of UK universities for research earnings and has an annual income of approximately £400 million. An investment of £500 million has been made in the redevelopment of its estate. King's has a particularly distinguished reputation in the humanities, law, social sciences, the health sciences, natural sciences and engineering, and has played a major role in many of the advances that have shaped modern life, such as the discovery of the structure of DNA. It is the largest centre for the education of healthcare professionals in Europe and is home to five Medical Research Council Centres - more than any other university.

4. The Medical Research Council is dedicated to improving human health through excellent science. It invests on behalf of the UK taxpayer. Its work ranges from molecular level science to public health research, carried out in universities, hospitals and a network of its own units and institutes. The MRC liaises with the Health Departments, the National Health Service and industry to take account of the public's needs. The results have led to some of the most significant discoveries in medical science and benefited the health and wealth of millions of people in the UK and around the world.  
[www.mrc.ac.uk](http://www.mrc.ac.uk)