



### Sir Martin Evans wins Nobel Prize 2007

Sir Martin Evans has been awarded the 2007 Nobel Prize for Medicine, along with US scientists Mario Capecchi and Oliver Smithies, for their groundbreaking discoveries concerning embryonic stem cells and DNA recombination in mammals.

They developed the gene targeting technique which enabled them to replicate human diseases in mice by introducing genetic changes into the animal's stem cells. The Nobel Committee praised the technique as "an immensely powerful technology" that is now being used in virtually every area of biomedical research.

The technique, commonly described as gene 'knockout', also enables scientists to disable specific genes, and alter their expression in more subtle ways to create 'knock out' mice carrying the specific genetic alterations that underlie human diseases. More than 10,000 mice genes, around half of the total, have been knocked out to date, with the rest predicted to follow soon. As a result, more than 500 different mouse models of human disorders have been developed, including neuro-degenerative diseases.

Sir Martin Evans is a professor of mammalian genetics at Cardiff University.

### Zeiss wins Microscopy Award

Carl Zeiss has won the Cell Biology Microscopy Instruments category at the Life Science Industry Awards 2007 The Scientist's Choice. "The Scientist's Choice is the ultimate accolade for any instrument manufacturer", says Aubrey Lambert, Marketing Manager at Carl Zeiss UK. "This is not an award for a single instrument but recognition of the whole company's attributes across the board. It demonstrates our commitment to innovation and excellence and our leadership in creating solutions optimally tailored to the needs of modern biomedical research that provide scientists with tools that increase the speed, efficiency and success of their work."

The 2007 Life Science Industry Awards was based on over 3,000 responses to an online survey from readers of The Scientist and registered

members of the Science Advisory Board, the world's largest online community of scientists and healthcare professionals. Consideration was given not only to practical aspects and outstanding properties of the product or complete solution, but also to the cost/benefit ratio.

Carl Zeiss has won Life Science Industry Awards in each of the last four competitions. Explaining the company's continuing success, Lambert says, "In other microscope companies it's still the physicists and engineers in the development team who decide what goes into the product. At Zeiss we have a multi-discipline approach. Our biologists, the people with the application edge, determine feature sets from the market-leading options given to them by the engineering team."



### Rehabilitation research study awarded £2.3 million

Virtual therapists will help patients with chronic conditions take control of their home rehabilitation in a major new research project awarded £2.3 million by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. The four year SMART2 project, lead by Sheffield Hallam University's Centre for Health and Social Care Research, will look at how technologies can be used to help individuals and their families to manage long term conditions. Patients will be supported not only by home visits but also from remote contact with their therapists via high tech sensors and computers in their homes. This new study will look at ways in which the computer can work directly with the patient, changing and altering the programme in accordance with the information it receives about the person's movements both inside and beyond the home and informing their therapist when it does so.

Sheffield Hallam will lead a consortium of universities and institutions comprising University of Ulster, University of Bath and The University of Sheffield. The researchers will fit each of the 60 subjects' homes with a touch screen computer and a range of movement sensors and measurement equipment and study whether these systems improve the lives of the subjects.

### British Geriatrics Society/Dunhill Medical Trust Research Fellowships

Through the generosity of The Dunhill Medical Trust, the British Geriatrics Society has announced two Fellowships, each for up to three years duration, for research related to older people.

Applications are invited to undertake research where the condition and/or interventions to be studied predominantly affect older people (i.e. more than 75% of the subjects are over 70 years of age) or the issue to be studied is specific to the old and/or the very old (i.e. those over 70 or 85 years of age). The Fellowships are open to registered health professionals working as nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and speech and language therapists or similar, and will cover salary, on costs and some running expenses. Successful applicants are expected to undertake an appropriate higher degree (e.g. MSc, MPhil, PhD).

*The closing date for applications is 1 December 2007. It is not necessary for applicants to be members of the British Geriatrics Society. See [www.bgs.org.uk/Grants/dunhill.htm](http://www.bgs.org.uk/Grants/dunhill.htm)*

### MS nurse becomes Queen's nurse

MS Nurse Kathy Franklin has been awarded the title Queen's Nurse. After a 40-year absence, the Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI) has relaunched the award to recognise and encourage excellence in practice, innovation and improvements in patient care.

"Going for this award was my way of thinking outside the box," Kathy says. "It's a differ-

ent way to show commissioners the value of our role as specialist nurses." Kathy's application was backed by testimony from colleagues and patients as well as examples of her innovative work, such as a project to improve palliative care in East Northamptonshire which brings together health services, voluntary organisations and service users.

Kathy has been an MS nurse for four years and before that worked as a lecturer/practitioner health visitor. She will join the other 18 Queen's Nurses to form learning sets to protect, improve and develop standards of care in nursing.

*Details of QNI's awards can be found at [www.qni.org.uk](http://www.qni.org.uk)*

## Philips wins Pioneer in Technology Award

Philips Medical Systems was recently recognised by the International Society of Brain Mapping and Intraoperative Surgical Planning Society (IBMISPS) at their annual meeting in Washington, DC. Philips received the organisation's 'Pioneer in Technology' award for the company's leading role in the development and commercialisation of image guided procedures. This recognition was largely based on Philips' early development and long history of innovations in interactive magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), as well as interventional and intraoperative MRI. Philips

was also recognised for its involvement in developing the 'Operating Room of the Future,' suites that include multiple imaging systems to help physicians simplify diagnosis and improve patient care. Working closely with customers to drive innovation, Philips teamed with the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) to develop the XMR suite, combining MRI and cardio/vascular X-ray, and with Tokai University Japan to develop a MRXO suite, combining MRI, catheterisation (cath) lab, computed tomography (CT) and operating room.



Dr Helen F Routh, Vice President Philips Research, pictured with Mr Babak Kateb, founder and executive director of International Brain mapping & Intra-operative Surgical Planning Society.

## David Marsden Award 2007



The David Marsden Award was presented for the first time in 2003 by the European Dystonia Federation. Professor David Marsden was one of the leading neurologists in Europe, and the Federation wishes to honour the enormous part he played in developing knowledge of an interest in Dystonia.

The Award is intended to encourage research into Dystonia in all European countries, especially by young scientists. The

Medical Advisory Board and the Board of the EDF evaluated 8 papers submitted for the David Marsden Award 2007, and the winner was Mirta Fiorio, from the University of Verona. Her paper was entitled "Defective temporal processing of sensory stimuli in DYT1 mutation carriers: a new endophenotype of dystonia?" The award of 2,500 Euros was made at the EFNS congress in Brussels at the Basal Ganglia Club meeting.

## Peter Bradley Foundation Commendation

The Peter Bradley Foundation, in partnership with BRÍ, were delighted to receive funding for 2006/2007 through the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform's Enhancing Disability Services Programme, enabling them to deliver a project comprising of 12 Education and Information Events on Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) for people with ABI, their families and carers, healthcare and /allied professions; and the design and production of an ABI support manual.

This project received a commendation for Best Patient Education Project Non Pharmaceutical in the Irish 2007 Healthcare Awards and is one of just two projects shortlisted for this category. The final results were announced on Wednesday 24th October as ACNR went to press.



## MS Partnership Awards

Each year the MS Society recognises high quality collaboration between volunteers and health and social care professionals through its Partnership Award scheme. By combining their expertise, resources and financial funds, volunteers and professionals working together can produce greatly enhanced services.

There were three winners this year: North Yorkshire & York PCT with the Hambleton &

Richmondshire MS Society adapted their physiotherapy to the needs of people in a rural area. Services are offered to groups or individuals in various locations depending on need; The West Midlands MS Strategy Group is a multi-faceted partnership of the acute sector, the MS Society's respite service, the PCT, the local authority and volunteers to coordinate services; The Douglas Grant

Rehabilitation Centre worked with MS Society Scotland to offer a six-week user-led education course for people living with MS combining information for newly diagnosed people with expert patient courses.

*A vigorous assessment process ensures the winning services are valued, sustainable and innovative. See [www.mssociety.org.uk/partnership](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/partnership)*

## New formulation of Rebif offers improved injection tolerability

Merck Serono, a division of Merck KGaA, has announced results of a two year Phase IIIb study in 260 patients which has shown that the new formulation of Rebif (interferon beta-1a) offers a near three-fold improvement in injection tolerability for patients with relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS). These results are compared with historical data for the previous formulation of Rebif (30.8% versus 85.8%).

The results were presented at a satellite sym-

posium and poster session at the recent Congress of the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS). "Rebif is an established first-line disease modifying treatment for relapsing types of MS" said Professor Gavin Giovannoni from The Royal London Hospital. "Injection site reactions can lead to withdrawal from treatment. The reduction in these reactions with the new formulation should improve treatment benefit to patients."

The new study results have confirmed consistent efficacy of the new formulation of Rebif compared with previous experience. At 96 weeks, 53.3% of patients remained relapse-free and overall the expanded disability status scale (EDSS) score remained stable throughout the study. The new formulation of Rebif is due to be launched in the UK in early 2008.

*For more information contact Merck on T. 020 8818 7200.*

## APO-go® ampoule service improvement

Following the success of the APO-go Pre-Filled Syringe (PFS) delivery pack, where plastic pump-dedicated syringes are supplied alongside the PFS order at no additional cost, Britannia Pharmaceuticals will shortly be providing a delivery pack for APO-go ampoule orders. This product improvement follows customer feedback, and is aimed at: Providing tailored numbers of plastic pump-dedicated syringes

rather than bulk deliveries; Reducing waste and releasing storage space; Providing less burden for the pharmacists and for patients.

Initially, the delivery packs will consist of boxes of APO-go ampoules (2ml x 5, 5ml x 5) plus a suitable number of plastic pump-dedicated syringes for that quantity of APO-go.

*For more information T. 01737 773741.*

