

Infectious Disease Mission

THE INSTITUTE OF TRANSLATIONAL MEDICINE

A REVIEW OF 2024/2025



News

Phage science takes a step forward in the UK

Prof Martha Clokie and her team at The University of Leicester, in collaboration with numerous Phage experts and UHCW Microbiology have submitted an application to become the National Phage Centre. See article 8.

Events

Events of 2024/2025/2026

Event reviews of 2024/2025.

Upcoming events from the Mission

Upcoming events from the University

Celebrating World Antimicrobial Awareness Day. See article

Opportunities

Hiring? Collaborating?

New students/staff members appointed within infection (next edition)

Meet Infection Specialists in Coventry and Warwickshire (next edition)

How do I join the Infectious Disease Mission and help make it a success?



WHAT IS THE INSTITUTE OF TRANSLATIONAL MEDICINE (ITM)?

The ITM is hosted by Warwick Medical School, but its aim is to bring academics, clinicians, industry partners and patient representatives together from all sectors/faculties/directorates to collaborate on projects which will ultimately improve our populations health both locally and globally. The Infectious Disease health mission is a key mission of the ITM, which we are currently in the process of building. We are currently networking locally and sharing knowledge with a goal to improve communications and involve our stakeholders and partners to enhance our vision to define our strategy in a collaborative manner. Please read more about the ITM here [Institute of Translational Medicine](#)

Day 3 of World Antimicrobial Awareness Week 2024 - A Visit to UHCW from the University of Warwick Infection Specialists

Academics with a specialist interest in infection science from the University of Warwick visited the Pathology department at UHCW on the 20/11/2024 as part of World Antimicrobial (resistance) Awareness Week to gain first-hand experience into how research can improve a patient's journey in a hospital and their outcomes.

The aim of the day was giving our esteemed colleagues (both our academic colleagues and our guest research champions, previous patients who give their own time to promote clinical research) a personalised tour of the wards in which septic patients will be cared for, including ED and the ID ward (31a) as well as a tour around working NHS microbiology and virology labs.



Supporting Undergraduate Education

URINARY TRACT INFECTION SOP CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Prof Christopher Dowson reached out to Dr Steven Montgomery-Laird to support a BMS undergraduate who wished to critically appraise the NICE guideline for UTI's and diagnostics. Whilst, Emily Rutt, the student did this, she also reviewed UHCW's in-house lab process after she joined the NHS team for a visit (March 2025). This was possible after the WAAW November meeting.

[Overview | Urinary tract infection \(lower\): antimicrobial prescribing | Guidance | NICE](#)

“Leadership in education isn't just about guiding others; it's about lighting the path for future generations.”

“Empowerment in the classroom begins with a leader's unwavering belief in their students.”

New and ongoing collaborative projects between UHCW and UoW

EXAMPLES OF INFECTION PROJECTS WHICH HAVE BENEFITED FROM ACADEMIC AND CLINICAL CONTRIBUTION

- 1) *C. difficile* isolate characteristics linked to antimicrobial use and infection features (Meera Unnikrishnan (WMS)/Sean James (Arden Tissue Bank)/Katie Jones (Head of IPC at UHCW))
- 2) Vancomycin resistance in *C. difficile*, a multi-site collaboration (David Roper (SLS), Steven Montgomery-Laird (CWPS/UHCW), Rob Fagan (University of Sheffield) and others.)
- 3) IMPACT Accelerator into UTI diagnostics (Meera Unnikrishnan, Andrea Dsouza (WMS), Natasha Ratnaraja (UHCW/CWPS))
- 4) Intubation tube biofilm studies (Freya Harrison (SLS), Steven Montgomery-Laird (UHCW), Sean James (Arden Tissue Bank))
- 5) UKRI Second Stage Application-Soil Phages (Mojgan Rabiey (SLS), Steven Montgomery-Laird (UHCW) Andrew Millard (University of Leicester) and others.)
- 6) Training phages to continue to match with their historic *E. coli* hosts and their new resistant progeny. (Richard Puxty (SLS), Steven Montgomery-Laird (UHCW))
- 7) POCT Respiratory AI Microscopy (Nicole Robb (WMS) and Nicholas Trotter, Steven Montgomery-Laird (UHCW)) RespVir is now NIHR portfolio.

EDUCATION AND NETWORKING EVENT West Midlands Infection Group's (WMIG) premier meeting at Birmingham Library, with academics from Leicester and Warwick Universities plus regional paediatricians with Infection interests joining together for the first time (15th July 2025).

After decades, the annual WMIG event which prior to this year only brought together medical doctors training in Infectious disease, microbiology and virology invited academic colleagues from Warwick and Leicester Universities to present findings from their labs or strategic work evolving in their specialty.

Notably, Nicholas Briggs (Prof David Roper's lab) presented work uncovering the effect on antibiotics on cell wall synthesis, Caroline Williamson (Leicester and UHCW academic Infection Specialist Registrar) talked about her work in South African and the UK describing new models for TB transmission, challenging old IPC precautions and a number of other trainees presented research and audit spanning all realms of infection. This day was Organised and Chaired by Dr Samira Afzal-Mohd.



Warwick AMR - Warwick Antimicrobial Interdisciplinary Centre

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STRATEGY EVENT

AMR Centre of Excellence led by WAMIC (18th June 2025)

UHCW MICROBIOLOGY JOIN WAMIC FOR TALKS ABOUT THE FUTURE VIA TEAMS

9:45: Update from the WAMIC Early career researcher group

10.00-10.30- Discussion: activities and support for ECRs

break

10-45- 12.00: Discussion: Future of WAMIC- towards a funded AMR Centre at Warwick

12:00 LUNCH AND NETWORKING

NETWORKING AND EDUCATION EVENT Prof David Roper visits UHCW lab and shares his recent findings

WE TEACH DAVID HOW TO PERFORM AND GRAM STAIN (AUGUST 2025)

As an update from the presentation Nic Briggs gave us in Birmingham, David came and covered the PBP protein work his lab have done and gave us an update within the lab setting. This work was well received, especially by those who were unable to go to Birmingham due to NHS service cover.



The Midlands have applied to host the National Phage Centre with support from Phage Scientists in the region and UHCW/CWPS.

LEICESTER'S BID FOR THE NATIONAL PHAGE CENTRE

After meeting Prof Martha Clokie at the WAAW day UHCW Microbiology department were asked to support the application for the Becky Mayer Centre for Phage Research to become the national centre. We have a number of amazing Phage researchers at UoW such as Dr Antonia Sagona, Dr Mojgan Rabiey and Dr Richard Puxty to name a few so bringing such an important institute to the region was very important to support local science but also so we can rapidly support translation of phage libraries, manufacturing and process into patients who have no antimicrobial options left. Below are links to the Becky Mayer Centre and our Phage experts named above.

[Becky Mayer Centre for Phage Research | Research Centres | University of Leicester](#)

[Dr Richard Puxty](#) [Dr Antonia Sagona](#) [Dr Mojgan Rabiey](#)



Ashleigh Hale Joins Dr Orin Courtenay this year and heads off to Belize

Ashleigh is a Clinical Scientist in her final years of training who is now doing a DClinSci via UHCW and The University of Manchester. She has joined Orin and the British Military Micro/ID Consultants in order to bring her unique skills to the team in order to produce a lateral flow test which will detect seropositive residents of Belize (both in the British Military and the local population) whom have been exposed to Leishmaniasis, a vector borne parasitic disease. See the link below to find out more about Dr Courtenay's work.

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/lifesci/people/ocourtenay/>

Upcoming events

World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (18th-24th Nov 2025)

UoW Campus: 19th Nov 2025. Claire Guest and her Medical Detection Dogs will present the use of canines to smell active UTI's. The talk is 3.30 PM- 4.30 PM at the IBRB at Gibbet Hill followed by a networking session from 4.30 PM- 5.30 PM in the IBRB atrium where our researchers will be showcasing their work focused on antimicrobial resistance. For more WAAW information or tools see the UK based website below.

[World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week \(WAAW\) and European Antibiotic Awareness Day \(EAAD\) - GOV.UK](#)

Influenza Update Meeting 15-16 December,
Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Building, University of Warwick

This informal meeting will once again bring together the influenza virus research community from across industry, government and academia to present and discuss ongoing research. For more details visit:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/biomedical/influenza-update-meeting/>

Our Mission is only one year old, but we are making progress. Now we need people from all disciplines to tell us what they want and how we can facilitate collaboration to lead Infection science and medicine into a whole new era in Coventry and Warwickshire.

To become involved in the success of this mission

Please email steven.laird@uhcw.nhs.uk and m.unnikrishnan@warwick.ac.uk

Subject: COUNT ME IN THE INFECTIOUS DISEASE MISSION



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This newsletter was brought to you by Dr Steven Montgomery-Laird and Prof Meera Unnikrishnan