

## **UCL Partners News**

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

### **UCL Partners and Yale unite to improve global health**

UCL, UCL Partners, Yale University and Yale-New Haven Hospital have formed an alliance to improve global health through scientific research, clinical and educational collaboration. The agreement is based on the organisations' shared aims to advance biomedical research and treatment of disease for people around the world.

Alongside their partner hospitals, both UCL and Yale University are centres of biomedical research and rank in the top echelon of educational institutions in the world. They hold fourth and third place respectively in the Times Higher Education–QS World University Rankings 2009, published today.

The new collaboration will immediately create new joint clinical programmes to treat cardiomyopathy, congenital heart disease, sudden cardiac death and chronic total occlusion of the coronary arteries. In addition to exchanging expert physicians to treat individual cases at each site, the members of the collaboration will make use of telemedicine technology to share clinical information and expertise among themselves, and eventually with other institutions around the world.

The UCL–Yale collaboration is the brainchild of Professor John Martin from UCL and Yale's Michael Simons, two distinguished heart researchers and physicians. The agreement was signed in the presence of Tony Blair, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom who is currently teaching at Yale.

"UCL Partners welcomes the many opportunities this collaboration creates," said Professor David Fish, Managing Director of UCL Partners. "We can learn from each others' different experiences, optimise complementary resources, and help find ways that better address the healthcare challenges of the populations we serve."

The system of comprehensive clinical care delivered by the hospital trusts that form UCL Partners will enable joint longitudinal studies and clinical trials of new medicines which could greatly benefit patients. By analysing healthcare delivery in the diverse settings overseen by each institution, researchers can work to develop best management practices for hospitals. UCL scientists will also benefit from new links to Yale's renowned scientists and physicians, and will be able to make use of Yale's world-class research infrastructure.

"This is a remarkable partnership between two of the world's top universities," said UCL President and Provost Professor Malcolm Grant. "We will be combining forces to tackle some of the world's major problems, working closely with our partner hospitals. Our initial focus will be on cardiovascular disease, cancer and neurosciences. This will be a very active partnership and we look forward to the advances, in biomedicine and beyond, which will be the consequence of this unique alliance."

#### **Collaborative projects**

UCL and Yale will work together to search for genes that cause congenital heart disease, funded by a £2.8 million grant from the National Institute of Health. The team will be led by John Deanfield (British Heart Foundation Professor of Pediatric Cardiology) and Professor William McKenna (Head of the Inherited Cardiovascular Disease Unit) at UCL and Martina Brueckner, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatric Cardiology and Genetics, at Yale. It will use cutting-edge genomic screening at Yale to investigate a large cohort of heart disease patients being followed at UCL, University of Rochester and Yale in order to identify disease genes.

Many other basic research projects are already underway on the genetic basis of hypertension and heart disease, as well as initiatives in drug discovery and imaging – areas in which UCL and Yale both have top researchers and well-developed infrastructure.

The collaboration will expand into other areas of basic research, including cancer biology, neuroscience and women's health. Partners in industry will be sought to advance projects that have commercial applications.

Ideas for future collaborations include a transatlantic fiber-optic network joining high-performance computing resources at UCL and Yale to share data efficiently, and a coordinated PhD training programme that will allow doctoral students to take advantage of the clinical and research resources of both UCL and Yale.

For further information or related images, please contact Ruth Howells in UCL Media Relations, tel: + 44 (0) 20 7679 9739, email: [ruth.howells@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ruth.howells@ucl.ac.uk)

## **About UCL Partners (UCLP)**

UCL Partners (UCLP) is Europe's leading health research powerhouse. It includes UCL and its five partner hospital trusts: Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust, Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, the Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust and University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Together, these organisations treat over 1.5 million patients every year, support over 3,500 scientists, senior researchers and consultants, and have a combined annual turnover of around £2 billion. UCLP was officially designated as one of the UK's first academic health science centres by the UK Department of Health in March 2009. [www.uclpartners.com](http://www.uclpartners.com)