

Job Description

Job Group	Medical & Dental
Job Title:	Clinical Research Fellow in Hepatology
Remuneration:	
Location:	University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust
Appraiser:	
Professionally Accountable to:	Professor Matthew Cramp Service Line Lead
Managerially Accountable to:	Hayley Smith Support Manager
Date:	

Preamble/introduction

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust is the largest hospital in the Southwest peninsula and a major trauma centre, providing comprehensive secondary and tertiary healthcare.

Our geography gives us a secondary care catchment population of 450,000 with a wider peninsula population of almost 2,000,000 people who can access our specialist services. The population is characterised by its diversity – the rural and the urban, the wealthy and pockets of deprivation, and wide variance in health and life expectancy. Population ageing is a recognised national trend, but is exacerbated locally by the drift of younger people out of the area and older people in. The proportion of our population aged 85 or over is growing ahead of the national average by approximately 10 years and we have developed a Population Health Strategy in response to this demographic shift.

- We work within a network of other hospitals to offer a range of specialist services:
- Kidney transplant
- Pancreatic cancer surgery
- Neurosurgery
- Cardiothoracic surgery
- Bone marrow transplant
- Upper Gastro-intestinal surgery
- Hepatobiliary surgery
- Neonatal intensive care and high-risk obstetrics
- Plastic surgery
- Liver transplant evaluation
- Stereotactic radiosurgery

We have an exciting opportunity to appoint 2 Clinical Research Fellows in Hepatology to contribute to the further development of our extensive research program whilst supporting the clinical work of the South West Liver Unit. These posts will be on a fixed term contract for 12 months in the first instance, renewable for a maximum of 3 years depending on progress towards an MD or PhD.

CLINICAL HEPATOLOGY / DIRECTORATE INFORMATION

The South West Liver Unit is a progressive department that delivers a comprehensive service for patients with all forms of liver disease and provides specialist services for the management of viral hepatitis, portal hypertension, hepatobiliary malignancy & liver transplantation. The department currently consists of:

Prof Matthew Cramp, Professor of Hepatology, Consultant Hepatologist and Service Line Director

Prof Ashwin Dhanda, Professor of Liver Medicine and Hon Consultant Hepatologist

Dr Juan Acevedo, Consultant Hepatologist

Dr Stewart Macdonald, Consultant Hepatologist

Dr David Sheridan, Consultant Hepatologist and Hon Assoc Prof of Hepatology

Dr Aileen Smith, Consultant Hepatologist.

Dr Louisa Vine, Consultant Hepatologist

Dr Freya Rhodes, Consultant Hepatologist

Dr Lucy Walker Consultant Hepatologist

Dr Allister Grant, consultant Hepatologist

We have a large team of liver specialist nurses led by Percy Hendry, Hepatology Nurse Consultant. Areas covered include viral hepatitis, liver transplant, HCC, end of life, community services and research.

The hepatology middle-grade clinical team includes these research posts, a National Training Numbered post in hepatology (joint 6 months rotation with Kings College Hospital), variable number of NIHR Academic Clinical Fellow (ACF) posts, two specialist registrars on the SW gastro training program rotation (of 4 clinical SpRs in gastroenterology at Derriford), and an IMT3 post. The inpatient ward, South West Liver Unit, is further supported by Foundation doctors in training, IMT and a Trust grade StR lower post.

The department works closely with specialist hepatobiliary and interventional radiologists who offer a full range of hepatological imaging and intervention including chemoembolisation, radio frequency and microwave ablation, percutaneous biliary intervention, trans-jugular liver biopsy, portal pressure measurement and TIPS insertion. There are weekly radiology meetings. The Peninsula Radiology Academy based at Plymouth is the largest of its kind in the world and provides outstanding opportunities for radiology training and research.

There are very close working links with the hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgeons Mr David Stell, Mr Matthew Bowles, Prof Somaiah Aroori, Mr Chris Briggs, Mr Adi Kanwar and Ms Charlotte Hitchens who provide a comprehensive liver surgical service including laparoscopic approaches.

Derriford has a very large endoscopy unit with 5 procedure rooms, a large recovery area and offers a comprehensive range of diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopic procedures. Last year over 18,000

procedures were performed. There are 3 scheduled ERCP lists each week with over 350 ERCPs performed annually and Endoscopic Ultrasound and Spyglass services.

The South West Liver Unit has full level 2 accreditation from the Royal College of Physicians 'Improving Quality in liver Services' (IQILS) programme.

The South West Liver Unit at Derriford has well established and close working links with the liver transplant service at Kings College Hospital, London and is contracted to undertake the pre-transplant assessment and post-transplant care of southwest patients. Patients considered for transplantation undergo comprehensive pre-transplant assessment in Plymouth and are discussed at a weekly joint listing meeting with Kings via audio visual link. Patients are repatriated to Derriford early after surgery with all post-transplant follow up and management carried out locally. A joint transplant MDT and clinic is held with Kings clinicians and other consultants from the southwest twice per year.

The Peninsula HCV Operational Delivery Network is based at Derriford. The South West Hepatology Group, chaired by Prof Cramp, holds yearly educational meetings with invited speakers.

HEPATOLOGY RESEARCH

The department is active in both clinical and laboratory based research. Clinical trials are run from a dedicated clinical trials facility (the Lind Unit) based in the main hospital. Hepatology currently have over 25 active clinical trials, including interventional studies for MASLD, PBC, auto-immune hepatitis, alcohol related hepatitis, acute on chronic liver disease, bleeding varices and HBV infection.

There has been significant investment and growth in liver research at the medical school, with excellent laboratory facilities present in the medical school and the Derriford Research Facility where the Hepatology Research Group (<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/hepatology-research-group>) and the Centre of Environmental Hepatology (<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/centre-of-environmental-hepatology>) are based. Active clinical research programs span alcohol related liver disease, the use of big data and AI for early liver disease detection, to mechanisms of protection from viral hepatitis. The Centre of Environmental Hepatology, led by Professor Shilpa Chokshi, has a cutting edge and expanding program of translational and basic science work looking at the impact of micro- and nanoplastics on liver health. The research programs are delivered and supported by a strong team of senior post-doctoral scientists, clinical research fellows, and PhD students. The research group holds regular weekly meetings and a seminar series from invited speakers.

Job Purpose:

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TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCE IN ADVANCED HEPATOLOGY

This post is aimed at a gastroenterology trainee wishing to take time out-of-programme (OOP) for research to undertake a higher research degree (MD or PhD) whilst at the same time continue their sub-specialist training in hepatology and maintain clinical and procedural skills including endoscopy. Opportunities for training in hepatology and endoscopy are available in line with the Specialty Training Curriculum.

The post holder is expected to provide 3 sessions of Direct Clinical Care and 7 sessions for their own research during the Mon-Friday week. The 3 sessions are typically 2 specialist hepatology clinics and one endoscopy list. In addition, the post-holder will be expected to support the Liver Unit weekend inpatient cover up to 1 in 6 weekends supported by the consultant on-call. This could, if the trainee wishes, include out of hours upper GI endoscopy for GI bleeds.

At the beginning of the attachment, the specific training needs of the individual will be established and a training contract formulated to balance needs of research, clinical training and service delivery. Broadly the following areas are available for the trainee to gain experience during the post.

Area of Interest	Learning Objectives	How met?
<p>Liver Transplantation</p>	<p>Who, how and when to assess for transplantation?</p> <p>Knowledge of established and new immuno-suppression regimens</p> <p>Recognising and managing the post transplant complications including renal dysfunction, rejection and biliary problems</p>	<p>Full inpatient and outpatient involvement in liver transplantation assessment including formulation of assessment and communication with transplant centre</p> <p>Involvement in quarterly specialist transplant clinics as well as regular follow up in weekly clinics</p>
<p>Complex Viral Hepatitis</p>	<p>Clinical assessment and treatment of patients with chronic viral hepatitis</p> <p>The role of virology, histopathology and fibrosis markers in the assessment of viral hepatitis</p>	<p>Participation in viral hepatitis clinics including treatment planning</p> <p>Participation in clinical trials for patients with viral hepatitis</p>

	<p>The challenges of viral hepatitis within the community at large</p> <p>The role of transplantation in the management of advanced viral hepatitis</p>	<p>Opportunities for participation in outreach services</p> <p>Participation in the Peninsula HCV Operational Delivery Network MDT</p>
<p>Decompensated Liver Disease and Alcohol related Hepatitis</p>	<p>Management of encephalopathy, hepatorenal failure, electrolyte disturbance and ascites</p> <p>Identification and treatment of precipitating factors for hepatic decompensation</p> <p>Management of alcoholic hepatitis including nutrition, corticosteroids and new agents</p> <p>Identification and treatment of acute alcohol withdrawal</p>	<p>Providing additional ward cover for hepatology inpatients including advice for referring teams</p> <p>Close collaboration with nutrition teams, specialist hepatology nurses, ITU and acute medical service</p>
<p>Autoimmune Liver Disease</p>	<p>Recognition, diagnosis and treatment of autoimmune liver diseases, including overlap syndromes.</p> <p>The use of established and novel immunosuppressive regimens.</p>	<p>Attendance at hepatology clinics</p>
<p>Hepatobiliary malignancy</p>	<p>Diagnostic modalities for pancreaticobiliary and primary hepatological malignancy including the timely use of CT, MRI, EUS and ERCP</p>	<p>Involvement at a senior level in the Acute Jaundice Service.</p>

	<p>Who and when to refer for surgery or transplantation. The medico-surgical interface.</p> <p>Non surgical modalities for the treatment of malignancy including the role of endoscopic palliation, TACE and RFA.</p> <p>Strategies for HCC surveillance</p>	<p>Attendance at MDT meetings and liaison with surgical and radiological colleagues</p> <p>ERCP training if appropriate</p>
<p>Portal Hypertension</p>	<p>Primary and secondary prevention of variceal haemorrhage including portal pressure studies</p> <p>Endoscopic and medical management of acute variceal haemorrhage</p> <p>The role of TIPS</p>	<p>Regular supervised endoscopy lists with a bias toward PHT, aiming to achieve full competency in variceal band ligation and other haemostatic techniques</p> <p>Possible involvement in the out of hours acute GI bleeding service (TBC)</p>

These areas are certainly not exhaustive and the training objectives of the post will be tailored to the requirements of the individual.

Training in ERCP is not a component of this post. However, if a trainee has started ERCP training and wishes to continue then this may be supported depending upon individual circumstances.

PRIMARY DUTIES & AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Role Requirements

RESEARCH AND AUDIT

Research is a primary focus of this post, the successful applicant will be expected to undertake an original and substantial research project within the Hepatology Research Group, supported by one of the Principle investigators Prof Cramp, Prof Dhanda and Prof Chokshi. Specific research project ideas and plans can be discussed and agreed.

The applicant is expected to register for a higher degree MD or PhD, and the Hepatology Research

Group at University of Plymouth will provide lab facilities in the Derriford Research Facility and research training and supervision according to the successful candidates proposed research program.

It is envisaged that the successful applicant will identify a research project early in their appointment with a view to publications and presentations at national/international meetings.

The successful applicant will also support the Liver unit's clinical governance and service improvement programmes including IQILS accreditation by engaging with clinical audit and governance processes.

ON CALL COMMITMENT

The post holder will provide middle-grade weekend daytime support for Hepatology inpatients up to 1 in 6 weekends.

PERSON SPECIFICATION
Post:: Clinical Research Fellowship in Hepatology

REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<p>1. Education, qualifications and special training -</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic – MBBS or equivalent • Postgraduate MRCP - UK or I. Non-UK graduates without MRCP must provide evidence of appropriate knowledge, training and experience, particularly in the case of acute medical conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc
<p>2. Knowledge and skills -</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sound knowledge of basic clinical sciences and the ability to apply this knowledge to clinical practice. • An understanding of the principles of gastrointestinal and liver physiology and pathology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient at upper and lower GI endoscopy. <p>Experience of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clinical research including clinical trials. • Therapeutic endoscopy including management of GI bleeding and polypectomy
<p>3. Experience -</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of clinical hepatology at registrar level including in-patient and out-patient management • Understanding of principles of audit, research and evidence based medicine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of at least 1 years at Specialist Registrar level or equivalent in gastroenterology.
<p>4. Personal Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to cope with stressful situations and take responsibility. • Good communication, organisational and interpersonal skills. • Punctual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to cope with stress and good leadership qualities. • Initiative. • Able to organise own learning and time.
<p>5. Practical requirement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared to live in the southwest as specified. • Ability to work hours of the job, including on-call. Ability to stand for prolonged periods during endoscopy sessions. • Eligibility for full or limited GMC registration, as per the GMC registration requirements (www.gmc-uk.org) • Ability to fulfil travel requirements of posts, including on-call and movement between sites. 	