New initiatives in research

National Cardiovascular Research Network for Wales

Chris George

14 October 2021
The epidemic of cardiovascular disease

Source: BHF Wales factsheet, 2017
The need for coherence and cohesion

- Wales is home to leading cardiovascular (CV) research groups but the research environment is small and fragmented
- Low critical mass
- Cross-institutional interactions and with regional health boards are not as well developed as we would like
- Poor articulation of strategic vision
- Lack framework for mapping research activity and developing CV projects
- Low funder visibility coupled with the perception that much research activity is ‘off radar’
The opportunities

- Recognised strengths and funding track records in focussed areas (thematic development)
- Leading activities on multi-scale knowledge
- Socio-economic / healthcare demographic
- Landscape to connect
  - Disease aetiology / causal pathways
  - ‘Patients-in-society’
  - Gaps between evidence and best practise
Mission Statement

“The NCRN will create a focused translational infrastructure to facilitate delivery of clinical trials, pathways and/or policy to introduce the learnings from mechanism-oriented, cardiovascular and data science research activities most effectively and appropriately into the clinical and public health domains.”
NCRN research themes

- Inherited cardiac conditions
- Stratified medicine
- Genotype/phenotype linkage
- Mechanism-based drug design

- Coronary disease and AF
- Population healthcare datasets
- Adverse outcome mapping
- Co-morbidities

- Research trials
- Arterial haemodynamics/microvasculature
- Risk factors
- Aging and disease
Vascular Dementia

Cardiovascular
- Stratified approaches to tackle arrhythmia
- CV healthcare outcomes / data science
- Translational vascular physiology

Stoke

Diabetes / Kidney
NCRN activities

Publications
Grants
I&E
Clinical & Research trials
Seminars
Meetings
Studentships
Collaborations
Workshops
External advisors / Funders
Healthcare & Pharmaceutical Industry

Clinical trials & Innovation

Myocardial disease
Data science
Population health
Computational biology
Engineering

Vascular Disease
Engaging HEI, Health Boards and pharma

Executive
To operationalise the delivery of the Network’s aims and objectives

Working Groups
Leading on Network’s activities at HEI / Health board levels

Advisory Group
Broad representation from across CV research landscape

86 PIs in Wales
>300 researchers
What are we achieving now?

- Better communication and enfranchisement ✔
- Improved visibility and profile of CV research in Wales ✔
- Improved levels of funding ✔
- Developing more ambitious cross-discipline projects ✔

What can we achieve in the longer term?
- Translate cross-discipline research excellence into patient benefit

What are the barriers?
- An external research environment changed remarkably by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Challenges of developing sustainable research capacity
ncrn@swansea.ac.uk