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TENOVUS SCOTLAND
SUPPORTING MEDICAL RESEARCH

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Tenovus Scotland Symposium Celebrates Advances in Scottish Health Research

Tenovus Scotland Symposium

The 2025 Tenovus Scotland symposium, hosted on 3rd October by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, proved to be a vibrant showcase of medical research aimed at tackling some of Scotland's most pressing health challenges. The event featured a wide range of presentations from both senior investigators and emerging researchers from across Scotland, all funded by Tenovus Scotland as part of its commitment to driving health research innovation and to improving public health across the country.

The research presented addressed conditions that are particularly prevalent in Scotland, including obesity-related cancers, heart disease, sepsis, and age-related conditions such as delirium and chronic pain. Attendees heard about promising new therapies - from a next-generation heart valve to novel treatments for eye disease and drug-resistant leukaemia. Other highlights included studies on genetic risk factors for atherosclerosis, new approaches to managing inflammation, the design of antibacterial materials to help fight infection, and insight into clinical trials participants compared to everyday patients in Scottish hospitals.

Dr Sourav Banerjee (School of Medicine, University of Dundee) was awarded the prize for the best presentation in which he described designing an orally available brain tumour drug from scratch.

The symposium reaffirmed Tenovus Scotland's role as a catalyst for medical progress - funding research scientists in their medically relevant research to move us closer to real-world solutions for patients.

Best Symposium Presentation

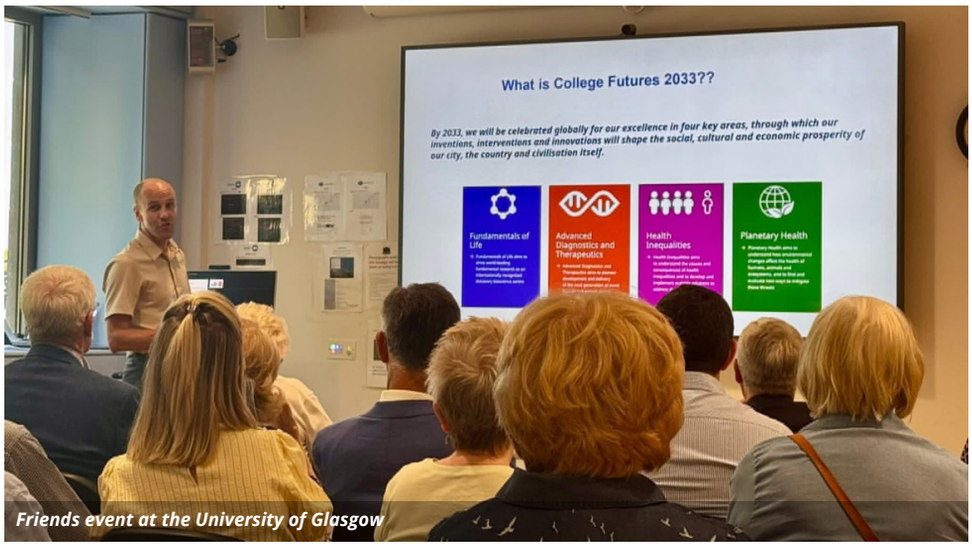
"Over the past four years, our international research team has developed a single molecule which specifically inhibits 10 key drivers of high-grade brain cancer. This has never been achieved before and is important as it simultaneously blocks multiple pathways that promote brain cancer. Our patented drug, Dyr726, improves the lifespan of mice bearing brain cancer with no observable side-effects. We have generated a large amount of data on Dyr726. However, more recently, we hit a major milestone. A new orally effective derivative of Dyr726, called Dyr895, was developed and with improved killing of cancer cells. This will allow the development of a take-at-home pill instead of the need for multiple hospital visits for patients.

At the concept stage, critical seed funding from Tenovus Scotland allowed us to develop the idea and establish the first-in-class molecule. The Tenovus Scotland funding supported preliminary data generation that was key to our success in obtaining over £5.5M funding support from UKRI, Critical Path Institute, Rosetrees Trust, and an angel investor.

Currently, with the help of industry and academic collaborations, we are on a fast-track drug discovery programme toward first-in-human trials within the next two to three years."

Dr Sourav Banerjee,
University of Dundee

Funding and Friends



Friends event at the University of Glasgow

We are most grateful for personal donations as well as for money from trusts and legacies, all of which enable us to continue to fund projects that can change lives.

This year we received a generous donation from one of the Friends of Tenovus Scotland, which gave us the opportunity to make a promotional video explaining the work of our charity. This featured some of the researchers who have benefitted from a grant and whose research has led to some remarkable breakthroughs in science and medicine. We look forward to using this video to encourage further support and funding.

Recently, our National Symposium was held in the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow where researchers could tell us about their projects and Friends could mingle afterwards over refreshments to contemplate the importance of what they had heard throughout the day.

Events continue to be arranged in our different regions. Last year saw a symposium organised by Tayside region, and the Grampian, Highlands and Islands region held its annual Lawyers' Evening. It also plans to organise a local symposium next year.

The Strathclyde region held an event in Glasgow Art Club last May, which featured valuations by Lyon and Turnbull, Auctioneers, followed by dinner, and at which our National Chair, Professor Jamie Grieve, entertained us with tales from his interesting career.

The Strathclyde region also held a successful wine tasting evening recently, and it continues to arrange visits to the local universities of Strathclyde, Glasgow, and Caledonian, to hear from its grant holders. There is usually dinner at a nearby restaurant afterwards to round off the evening.

We hope that you will continue to support Tenovus Scotland and spread the name of our charity whenever possible, and we look forward to welcoming you to future events.

Check out our promotional video by scanning the QR code below or by visiting https://player.vimeo.com/video/1139975093

Make one-off or regular donations to Tenovus Scotland

GO TO OUR JUSTGIVING PAGE

www.justgiving.com/tenovusscotland

This website allows you to make a secure one-off donation or set up a valued regular monthly donation to Tenovus Scotland.

SEND A CHEQUE

Make this payable to Tenovus Scotland and send it, along with the completed Gift Aid form, if appropriate, to: Tenovus Scotland, Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Glasgow, 232-242 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5RJ

Sir Kenneth Calman

We were saddened to learn of the death, in July, of Sir Kenneth Calman, our Honorary President from 2013 to 2024.

Sir Kenneth was a renowned cancer specialist before becoming Chief Medical Officer for Scotland in 1989 and Chief Medical Officer for England and Wales from 1991 to 1998.

After retiring as CMO in 1998, he was Vice-Chancellor of Durham University, Chancellor of the University of Glasgow, and Chair of the National Trust for Scotland, amongst other positions. His interests included sundials and cartoons, and he published his poetry and other literature.

All of us at Tenovus Scotland are extremely proud and appreciative of the support he gave to our charity.

New Honorary President of Tenovus Scotland

We are honoured and delighted that Professor Sir David Lane has agreed to be our Honorary President. He is currently a Professor at the Karolinska Institute, and Chairman of Chugai Pharmabody in Singapore.

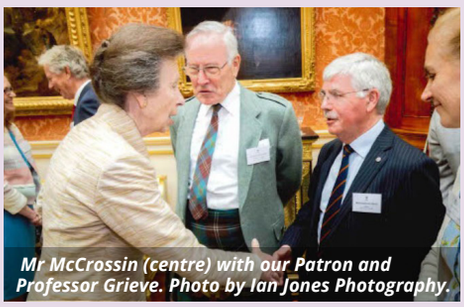
He is a world-renowned immunologist, molecular biologist, and cancer researcher. He is one of the scientists credited with the landmark discovery of cancer gene p53 in 1979. p53, called the "guardian of the genome", is the most frequently mutated gene in human cancer.

Professor Lane was previously the Director of the Cancer Research UK Cell Transformation Research Group and Professor of Oncology at the University of Dundee.

He was knighted in January 2000 and has won many awards such as the Paul Ehrlich Prize in 1998, the Buchanan Medal in 2004, and the Royal Medal from the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2008. He is a Fellow of the UK's premier scientific academies, the Royal Society and the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and is a founder member of the Academy of Medical Science. He is a foreign member of the US National Academy of Science.

Professor Sir David Lane

HRH The Princess Royal's Charities Forum



Mr McCrossin (centre) with our Patron and Professor Grieve. Photo by Ian Jones Photography.

"The Chairman, Professor Jamie Grieve, and I attended a Charities Forum at Buckingham Palace in June this year. Two representatives from charities connected with our Patron HRH The Princess Royal were invited. Consequently, some 111 charities were represented by 216 people assembled in the Ballroom.

By pure chance, Jamie and I found that we were sitting immediately behind HRH as the company listened to presentations from three distinguished speakers on subjects affecting charities - Public Trust, Financial Challenges, and Technology Challenges.

After a Question-and-Answer session, Princess Anne concluded the proceedings with a twelve-minute wide-ranging speech, before greeting everyone in attendance at a reception in the Picture Gallery. It was an extremely pleasant and informative day."

Francis McCrossin,
National Treasurer

Young Ambassadors

From 10th to 12th June, Tenvous Scotland and the University of Strathclyde hosted the first Tenovus Scotland Ambassadors Programme, welcoming 14 pupils from Eastbank Academy, Glasgow. Selected for their enthusiasm and potential in science, the S4–S6 students explored medical innovation through interactive lectures, lab sessions, and facility tours.

Taking place within the Department of Biomedical Engineering, the event included hands-on microscopy, biochemical assays, insights into prosthetics, rehabilitation, and diagnostic technologies. Pupils engaged with current undergraduates and researchers, gaining a real-world view of biomedical careers.

The programme highlights Tenovus Scotland's vital role in research and fundraising, while also broadening impact beyond early career researchers and PhD students to inspire school leavers at the very start of their journeys into medicine and science. Among the participants, one pupil had already secured a place to study Medicine at the University of Glasgow, while others shared aspirations in fields such as paediatrics, haematology, and biomedical engineering. Each participant received a certificate and a Tenovus Scotland promotional pack celebrating their achievement.

Feedback from pupils was overwhelmingly positive, with one participant reflecting "there are so many opportunities—I definitely feel there's a place for me in medicine." The success of the programme at the University of Strathclyde has laid a foundation for future growth, with plans already underway for its return in 2026, and potential to expand the initiative and bring its impact to other regions.

Face to Face

Dr Fiona Murray is a Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology at The School of Medicine, University of Aberdeen.

Dr Fiona Murray

Why did you get involved in medical research?

My journey in medical research began with a genuine interest in understanding how medicines work in the body. After training as a pharmacologist, I am now able to apply my knowledge of drug mechanism to identify new or more effective targets for disease. I am driven by the belief that the advances we make at the bench can have direct impact on patient lives. My goal, as a pharmacologist, is to name the right drug target for the right disease for the right patient, while understanding how the drug target influences disease progression.

What has been your career path to date?

My career in pharmacology started with a B.Sc. in Pharmacology at the University of Aberdeen, followed by a PhD at the University of Glasgow studying new drug targets for high blood pressure in the lung. After completing my PhD, I continued my research as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, San Diego, where I also held a faculty position before returning to the University of Aberdeen to be a Senior Lecturer. My research has a focus on G protein-coupled receptors, which are a family of drug targets on the surface of cells that regulate numerous functions throughout the body. Currently over 30% of medicines, such as those that treat asthma and high blood pressure, act on this class of drug targets.

What funding did you get from Tenovus Scotland?

The Tenovus Scotland pilot grant provided us with vital support to generate key data to validate GPR75 as a new drug target for metabolic syndrome. Tenovus Scotland funding enabled a new collaboration between researchers at the Aberdeen Cardiovascular and Diabetes Centre and Robert Gordon University.
Our lab is interested in one G protein-coupled receptor, namely GPR75, which we had initially been studying as a target for high blood pressure in the lung. Through genetic studies and experimental models, we discovered evidence suggesting that GPR75 may also play a role in metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome, which is a global health problem, is the medical term for a group of risk factors that increase the likelihood of heart disease, diabetes, and stroke. The risk factors for metabolic syndrome include high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and excess body fat: obesity is a key driving force. Given the prevalence, complexity and associated costs of metabolic syndrome, in addition to preventative approaches, understanding key regulators and uncovering new drug targets is essential.

How did the Tenovus Scotland funding progress your research and other funding opportunities?

Our Tenovus funded project was extremely successful in that the data generated showed GPR75 deficiency protected against obesity-induced fat mass, diabetes and hypertension and validated GPR75 as a drug target for metabolic syndrome. Our data, which we published in Cell Metabolism, attracted considerable interest from industry, leading to ongoing collaborations and industry-funded PhDs. Industry funding has significantly advanced the translational impact of our research.

What do you regard as the benefits of Tenovus Scotland?

Tenovus Scotland has played a key role in my own career and success. The funding Tenovus Scotland provides allows researchers to explore innovative and high-risk projects that may not yet have enough preliminary data to attract major research council grants. The quick turnaround of the application process also means projects can move forward efficiently. Tenovus Scotland conferences have connected me with a community of researchers across Scotland, opening valuable opportunities for new collaboration.

Dr Murray's lab