



Clinical Infection Research Group
Edinburgh

ANNUAL REPORT

AUGUST 2023-2024



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ABBREVIATIONS



CIRG	Clinical Infection Research Group
EID	Edinburgh Infectious Diseases
WGH	Western General Hospital
ECAT	Edinburgh Clinical Academic Track
PI	Principal Investigator
NRS	NHS Research Scotland
CIR	Centre for Inflammation Research
IRR	Institute for Regeneration & Repair
BARDA	Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority
NIHR	National Institute of Health Research
CRF	Clinical Research Facilities
ART	Anti-retroviral therapy



INTRODUCTION

CIRG has had a diverse and productive year between August 2023-24, building relationships in academia and industry and broadening our infectious diseases research experience.

We currently have 25 active clinical studies involving 14 different PIs and sub-PIs. Our work encompasses a range of pathogens including influenza, COVID-19, hepatitis B, HIV and Staphylococcus aureus and the management of encephalitis, community acquired pneumonia, necrotising otitis externa and antimicrobial resistance. Particular highlights include involvement in 2 multi-centre trials 1) the phase I/II study “STRIVE” p.7 which looks at the use of T-cell receptors to eliminate HIV reservoirs in chronic HIV (PI Matt Adam) and 2) “SNAP” p.7 which looks at management of Staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia (PI Rebecca Sutherland). These studies, as well as many of our other interventional studies, require intense and methodical input from the respective PIs and the trials team and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and attention to detail. It is through their diligence that CIRG has earned the exemplary reputation for recruiting to time and target that has allowed us to continue to grow our research portfolio.

This year has also brought other exciting opportunities for CIRG both locally and internationally. In my role as CIRG chair I have been sitting on the Edinburgh Infectious Diseases (EID) executive committee, which is the University of Edinburgh’s network of infectious disease researchers and clinicians and CIRG PI Rebecca Sutherland gave an excellent talk on antibiotics and clinical research at their annual symposium. EID partners closely with the Fleming Fund (more details p.14) and we are further strengthening relations with EID through PIs Oliver Koch and PI Simon Dewar, along with other CIRG members, mentoring Fleming fellows in Africa. We are also delighted to have been accepted as a GeoSentinel site to contribute to surveillance of imported infectious diseases. Finally, we are very proud of the significant CIRG presence at the Federation of Infection Societies in Edinburgh 2023 with multiple oral and poster presentations from CIRG members.

We continue to support research development in doctors, nurses and allied health professionals through nursing training placements and through our award fund which supports presenting research work at meetings (details p.20). With our award fund we have also supported our Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Treatment service to procure ultrasonographic equipment to allow them to continue their essential work, opening up new doors for further collaborations relating to infection management in multiple specialties.

This next year brings unique challenges as different departments within the Regional Infectious Diseases Unit move from under one roof in our well-loved portacabin to locations throughout the Western General Hospital. We hope that new locations will bring novel opportunities for collaboration and growth and we look forward to reporting our progress to you again this time next year.

As always please get in touch if you would like to get more involved in our research activity (loth.cirg@nhs.scot).

We would love to hear from you.

Best wishes,

Meghan Perry
CIRG Chair





2023-2024

SUMMARY

Aims of CIRG

Grow & develop research capacity within infection medicine specialities

Maximise synergies between the NHS, academia and industries, fostering joint research with universities and companies within the UK and internationally

Identify priority areas for research, building on existing strengths and future ambitions

<p>25 active studies</p> 	<p>Student Nurse Hub</p> 	<p>Publications from Key CIRG Members</p> 
<p>CIRG funding distributed</p> 	<p>CiIRG Clinical Infection Research Group Edinburgh</p>	<p>Establishment of volunteer registry</p> 
<p>John Scrimgeour Lectureship Award</p> 	<p>NRS Clinician Sessions</p> 	<p>OPAT Clinic Collaborations</p> 



2023-2024

ACTIVE STUDIES

immunisation
public health
parasite ethics
prevention
HIV dose escalation
infection
hepatitis vector
transmission
intervention outbreak
host
ebola mAbs
epidemiology symptoms
vaccines
surveillance
placebo communicable
COVID-19 cohort
bnAbs mortality
cabotegravir
protocol paxlovid
randomisation
blinded control
analysis hypothesis
antivirals
review eradication
pathogens

Clinical research plays a vital role in advancing medical knowledge, developing new treatments, and improving patient care across all medical specialities. As a group, CIRG is participating in a broad range of infectious disease studies, adapting to the needs of the medical community.

Between 2023-2024 we have participated in 25 active studies many of which are currently recruiting. This year's cycle includes over 100 recruited participants. These figures reflect that many of these studies are high intensity investigational treatment studies requiring significant input for each individual participant.

We have optimised our recruitment of healthy participants, particularly for vaccine studies, through the travel clinic within the WGH by creating a research registry. With ongoing brand awareness from the team, CIRG has been able to accumulate over 500 healthy volunteers willing to participate in clinical research when possible.

ACTIVE STUDIES

INVESTIGATIONAL TREATMENT



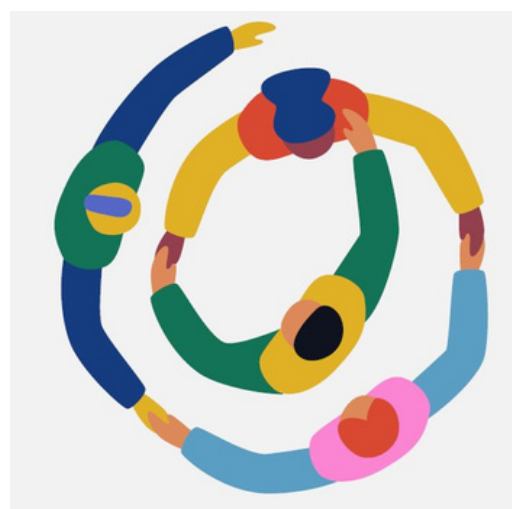
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR REBECCA SUTHERLAND
CLOSED TO RECRUIT JULY 2024

Funded by: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Sponsored by: Imperial College London
Coordinated by: Imperial College London, The University of Oxford and The Rockefeller University

The RIO Trial is a randomised, placebo-controlled trial aiming to evaluate the ability of a novel therapy to render the viral load of HIV patients undetectable. It compares ART plus dual long-acting HIV-specific broadly neutralising antibodies (bNAbs), vs ART plus placebo, in treated primary or early-stage HIV infection on viral control, off ART.

Participants have either: confirmed primary HIV infection, and started ART within six months of this confirmation, or are individuals diagnosed with HIV, who started ART prior to a CD4 count decline below 500 cells/cc3, and who have remained on suppressive ART without interruption for at least 12 months.

This trial requires peripheral blood mononuclear cell ample processing within a category. 3 lab. Our team collaborated with Prof. Juergen HAAS and Prof. David Dockrells' laboratories (IRR, University of Edinburgh) to facilitate this.

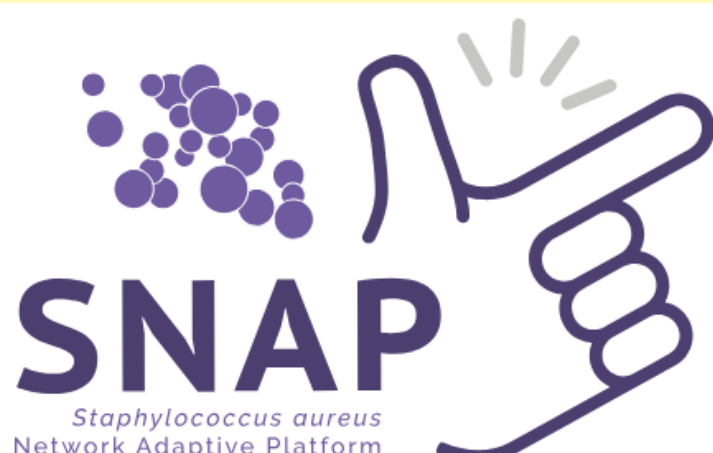


PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR MATTHEW ADAM
OPEN TO RECRUIT

Sponsored by: Immunocore Ltd

STRIVE is a multi-centre open-label dose-escalation Phase 1/2 first-in-human study in HLA-A*02:01-positive adults with chronic HIV infection, who are virologically suppressed, & on ART.

The study will evaluate the safety, tolerability, PK, and anti-HIV activity of single and multiple doses of IMC-M113V. IMC-M113V is an immune-mobilising monoclonal T cell receptor against viruses (ImmTAV®), a new class of bi-specific protein therapeutic designed to deliver targeted elimination of HIV reservoirs in individuals with chronic HIV infection. The study will be conducted in two parts: Part 1 will evaluate single ascending doses; Part 2 will evaluate multiple ascending dose schedules. As a phase I clinical trial, the CIRG collaborate with the Edinburgh CRF.



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR REBECCA SUTHERLAND
OPEN TO RECRUIT

Sponsored by: University of Melbourne

SNAP aims to improve treatment outcomes for patients with Staphylococcus aureus bloodstream infections. Staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia (SAB) is a common and severe infection with a 90-day mortality of 15-3% (mortality lower in children but up to 5%) despite current best available therapies. Using an adaptive platform trial, the study is allowed to simultaneously address multiple questions in the management of SAB: different intravenous therapies, adjudicative treatments, and timing of the IV to oral switch

This trial is a first of its kind in that it is recruiting adults, paediatrics, and youth. The study includes sites from Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Canada, Israel, South Africa, Europe, the UK, and has the potential to expand to other regions.

B-WELL

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR JENNI CRANE
CLOSED TO RECRUIT 2024

Sponsored by: GSK

This is a Phase 3 trial testing the drug bepirovirsen to see if it effectively treats chronic HBV (hepatitis B virus) infection. Participants will receive either bepirovirsen (300 mg weekly for 24 weeks with 2 initial higher doses) or a placebo. The study will track the drug's effectiveness, safety, how it moves through the body, and how long it keeps working.

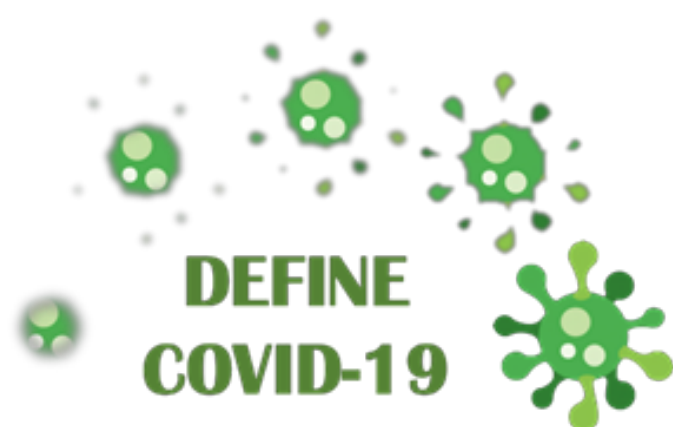


PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR MEGHAN PERRY
HSV ARM CLOSED TO RECRUIT 2022
NON-HSV ARM CLOSED TO RECRUIT 2024

Sponsored by: University of Liverpool

Dexenceph is a study comparing the recovery of patients who receive dexamethasone in addition to aciclovir in the treatment for encephalitis vs those that don't receive adjuvative dexamethasone. Aciclovir is standard treatment for HSV encephalitis. Encephalitis has many different causes; despite treatment, some people are left with significant loss of memory. About 2 out of every 3 people will have memory difficulties long term. Dexamethasone can reduce swelling and reduction in swelling of the brain may improve the recovery of patients with encephalitis.

CIRG participated in both the HSV and non-HSV encephalitis arms of the study.



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR OLIVER KOCH
OPEN TO RECRUIT

Sponsored by: University of Edinburgh

Define COVID-19 is a study for the investigation of a COVID-19 Virus Specific T-cell (VST) therapy for treatment of COVID-19. This treatment aims to be especially beneficial for those at risk of developing severe COVID-19. It requires participants to be positive for SARS-CoV-2 whilst remaining relatively well.

COVID-19 VSTs have never been tested in humans before, rendering this trial a phase I and requiring collaboration with the Wellcome institute's CRF, WGH.



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR CLAIRE MACKINTOSH
CLOSED TO RECRUIT 2024

Sponsored by: University of Oxford

Panoramic is a platform adaptive, randomised trial of antiviral therapeutic agents for use by clinically vulnerable people in the community with confirmed acute symptomatic SARS CoV 2 infection. CIRG were the top recruiting site in the UK.



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR OLIVER KOCH
OPEN TO RECRUIT

Sponsored by: University of Oxford

The RECOVERY trial is the world's largest clinical trial into treatments for COVID 19. It was founded by UK research and Innovation (UKRI)'s Medical Research Council (MRC) and the NIHR.

RECOVERY has now evolved to identify treatments that may be beneficial for people hospitalised with suspected, or confirmed, flu or community acquired pneumonia.

Odyssey

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR REBECCA SUTHERLAND
OPENED & CLOSED TO RECRUIT 2024

Sponsored by: Moderna, Inc.

Odyssey is a phase 1/2 dose ranging study to evaluate the safety, reactogenicity and immunogenicity of mR-118 pandemic influenza candidate vaccines in healthy adults.

SUPERNOVA



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR OLIVER KOCH
CLOSED TO RECRUIT 2024

Sponsored by: AstraZeneca, plc.

Study Understanding Pre-Exposure pRophylaxis of NOVel Antibodies

SUPERNOVA is a global Phase II/III trial designed to establish the safety and efficacy of the antibody AZD5156. The primary endpoints of the trial are safety and neutralising activity of a single, intramuscular (IM) dose of AZD5156, compared to EVUSHELD for the prevention of COVID 19.

Conducted at a variety of sites in the US, UK, EU and Asia, the trial intends to enrol participants 12 years of age or older (minimum weight of 40kg) who are immuno-compromised. Participants will be followed for approximately one year, with SARS CoV 2 neutralising antibodies assessed at one, three and six months.



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR REBECCA SUTHERLAND
OPENED & CLOSED TO RECRUIT 2024

Sponsored by: Moderna, Inc.

A study to investigate the safety, immunogenicity, and relative vaccine efficacy of mRNA 1283.22 injection compared with mRNA 1273.22 injection in participants 12 years or older to prevent COVID 19. The primary endpoints are to demonstrate a non inferior antibody response of different mRNA dosing against Omicron BA

DIAGNOSTIC

MIDAS-RTI

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR KATE TEMPLETON
OPEN TO RECRUIT

Sponsored by: ACCORD

MIDAS is a pragmatic, open randomised, controlled trial. Due to current insensitive diagnostic methods, with a need for reducing broad spectrum antibiotic use, MIDAS aims to assess the utility of a rapid test using fast multiplex real time Polymerase Chain Reaction assays for 26 respiratory bacteria and viruses to personalise antibiotic treatment. This assay is called "MICAP".

The primary objective is to explore whether participants admitted with lower respiratory tract infection can safely receive personalised antibiotic therapy within 12 hours of consent for this test, using an existing sputum samples.

OBSERVATIONAL



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR SIMON DEWAR
OPEN TO RECRUIT

Sponsored by: University of Aberdeen

UKAR (UK Antimicrobial registry) aims to answer a broad set of research questions around novel anti-microbial agents. It would allow the description of the use of such novel agents throughout the UK and to quantify the clinical outcomes and safety profile associated with their use in a real world setting.



CORAL

CORAL is a non-interventional study to characterise the real-world implementation, roll out, safety and patient experience of the long-acting injectable HIV treatment regimen of 2-monthly cabotegravir and rilpivirine.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR DANIEL CLUTTERBUCK
OPEN TO RECRUIT

Sponsored by: University College London



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR CLAIRE MACKINTOSH
OPEN TO RECRUIT

Sponsored by: University College London

Cascade is a mixed methods observational study exploring the management of the current HIV epidemic in Europe; collecting important insights from HIV sero converter cohorts. The main aim is to explore viral and host characteristics, measure the outcomes of individuals who have recently acquired HIV 1 in Europe, and to understand their experiences and needs.

PrEPaRe

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR DANIEL CLUTTERBUCK
OPEN TO RECRUIT

Sponsored by: RESPOND

The PrEPaRe study, part of the RESPOND network, is an observational study collecting individual data on people newly diagnosed with HIV, who report having used Pre exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

The aim of the study is to assess the use of PrEP among people newly diagnosed with HIV, to understand the circumstances under which these HIV infections occurred, and to estimate the prevalence of HIV drug resistance. Data will be collected from clinics across Europe assisting and providing care/monitoring for people newly diagnosed with HIV with the baseline visit within 3 months from the date of diagnosis.



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR CLAIRE MACKINTOSH
CLOSED TO RECRUIT JULY 2024

Nested within: EUROSIDA

MISTRAL is a study aiming to assess the influence of the microbiome on HIV vaccine response. An observational study, requiring the collection of microbiome related clinical data, as well as blood and stool samples, it aims to use 1,000 individuals established in EuroSIDA sites.

These participants will provide samples at their baseline visit and additionally 10-24 months after their initial visit. Samples will be used to conduct pre specified analyses into microbiome and immunological related factors, as well as forming the basis of an ongoing research biobank for future exploration of the impact on microbiome on clinical outcomes in people living with HIV/AIDS.



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR CLAIRE MACKINTOSH

CLOSED TO RECRUIT

Partnered with: CHIP

The EuroSIDA study is a prospective observational cohort study of more than 22,000 patients followed in 100 hospitals in 35 European countries plus Israel and Argentina. The main objective of the study is to follow the long-term clinical prognosis for the general population of HIV-infected patients living in Europe and to assess the impact of anti-retroviral drugs on the long-term prognosis for these patients. The EuroSIDA study was initiated in 1994 and continues to expand in multiple ways. Being an observational study, the type of data collected has diversified tremendously since the start, as advances in the medical management of HIV has allowed for HIV-infected patients to foresee a good life prognosis.

The EuroSIDA study has published more than 270 peer-reviewed publications, based on EuroSIDA only data and in collaborations with others.



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: DR REBECCA SUTHERLAND

NIHR ASSOCIATE PI: DR MICHAEL HOPKINS

CLOSED TO RECRUIT 2024

Sponsored by: University of Oxford

IONOE is a multicentre prospective study to improve outcomes of Necrotising Otitis Externa (NOE) in the UK. NOE is a severe ear infection that causes bad ear pain and hearing loss. There are no national or international guidelines for how to diagnose or treat NOE.

In this study, specialists working at a number of hospitals in the UK will keep detailed records of how they diagnose and treat NOE, and whether the treatment works. Information will then be analysed to determine the demographics, clinical presentation, surgical and medical management and outcomes of clinically possible cases of NOE in the UK.

A further six studies, which have not actively recruited between 2023-2024, remain operational within the CIRG's repertoire and workload.

To contact CIRG, for study involvement or collaboration, please email:

loth.CIRG@nhs.scot

We look forward to hearing from you.





2023-2024

UPCOMING RESEARCH LANDSCAPE

CIRG were approached regarding 22 studies in the last year, from August 2023-2024. Of these 22 studies, this pie chart presents the studies stratified into ‘generic diseases categories’: 9 are vaccine studies, 7 “other”, 2 COVID, 3 HIV, & 1 Challenge/phase I. This is a higher proportion of vaccine studies and studies focusing on “other” pathogens when compared to 2022-2023. “Other” in 2023-2024 represents studies on Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

Of these studies 8 have progressed from feasibility to site set-up including studies on *C. diff*, *S. aureus*, norovirus, HSV, HBV, RSV, and HIV.

These approaches to CIRG reflect our increase in PIs and increased diversity of infection research focus - we look forward to expanding this further.

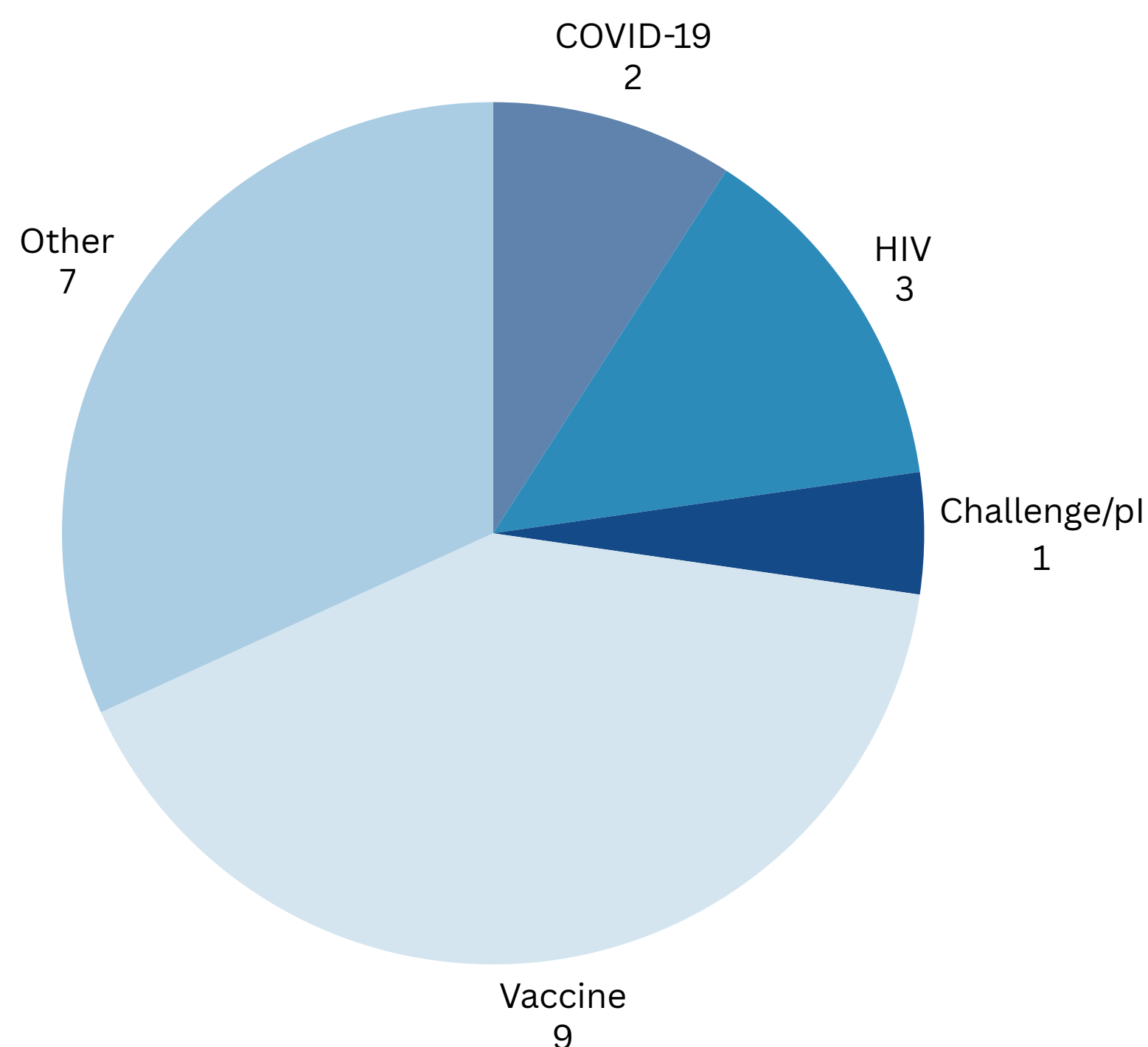


Figure 3. Graphical representation of how many studies CIRG have been approached over and which disease categories these can be stratified to. Inclusion into data is independent of further pursuit in fulfilling the study (whether CIRG took the study on). August 2023 - August 2024.

Parameters: Vaccine, any study that involves administration and investigation of a vaccine product, independent of which disease this pertains to. Other, any study not being classified under the other listed disease categories, included but not limited to HBV and sexual health. Table of data available at request.



UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH COLLABORATIONS

Many CIRG members serve as honorary clinical senior lecturers at the University of Edinburgh (UoE), and collaborate with UoE scientists including from UoE's [Edinburgh Infectious Diseases network](#). This is an ongoing partnership and CIRG is committed to enhancing, expanding and building upon it. We are deeply grateful and remain thankful for our partnership with UoE.

DR C MACKINTOSH

Dr Claire Mackintosh, associate member of the UoE Centre of Homelessness and Inclusion Health, collaborates with Professors Sarah Johnsen & Helen Eborall for co-supervision of the mult morbidity PhD: *identifying service gaps and recommending solutions for an extremely vulnerable, multimorbid population*, in addition to being on the group's steering committee and research sub-committee.

Further, Dr Mackintosh collaborates with Prof Richard Lowrie for a NIHR grant application for a pilot RCT on Cyrenians hospital in-reach programme.

PROF. D DOCKRELL

Professor David Dockrell is one of our key CIRG members. Through collaboration with his laboratory (CIR, IRR, UoE), the use of the tissue culture facilities, and utilisation of the groups' research assistants' expertise, our involvement in the RIO study (p.7) has been possible.

CLINICAL DIAGNOSTICS

CIRG member Kate Templeton continues to collaborate with a broad range of departments within UoE to drive forward ground breaking molecular diagnostic work, notably including the MIDAS trial.

EDINBURGH INFECTIOUS DISEASES (EID)

CIRG chair Meghan Perry now sits on the executive committee of the EID. She continues to have an active collaboration with members of EID in exploring how antimicrobial resistance genes detected in sewage can be monitored to help worldwide surveillance of antimicrobial resistance and in developing new diagnostics for UTIs.



UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH COLLABORATIONS

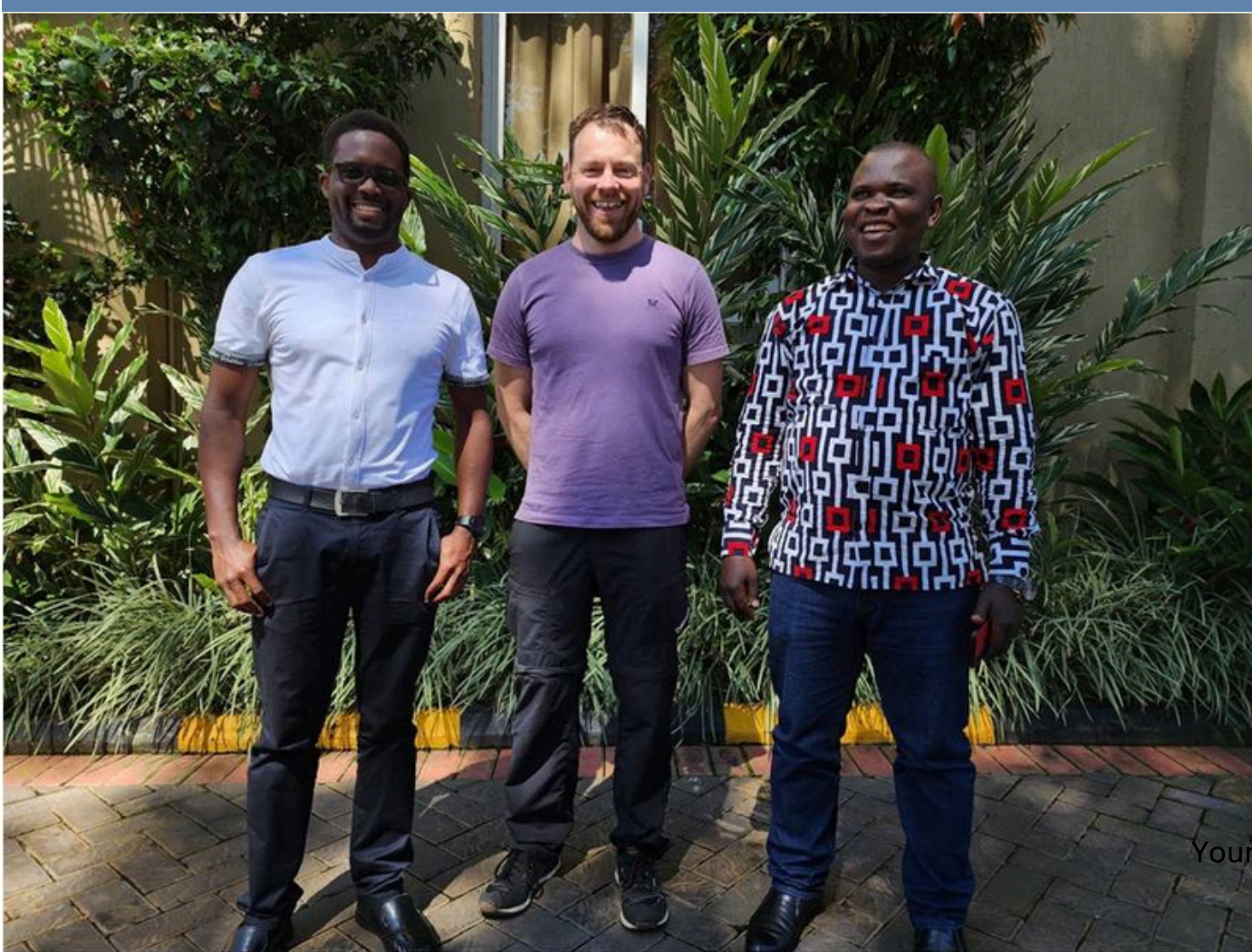
FLEMING FUND

The Fleming Fund is a UK Government Aid Programme administered by the Department of Health and Social Care. The programme aims to improve AMR surveillance, raise public awareness and promote responsible use of antibiotics in LMICs. The aim of the Fleming fund Fellowship is to train cohorts of fellows who will form a global network of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) experts and advocate for action in their own countries.

Simon Dewar and Oliver Koch, PIs within CIRG, as well as CIRG colleagues Robyn Campbell, Espe Palenzuela and Katharine Relph, are partnering with UoE Infectious Diseases in providing mentorship for Fleming Fund Fellowships (infection health care professionals) in Uganda, Kenya and Malawi. In total, they are mentoring 6 fellows.

More information available [here](#) & on the

[Fleming Fund Website](#)



Dr Simon Dewar with other members of the Fleming Fund project

HUMAN RESOURCES

2023-2024

satisfaction
engagement
staff culture
flexibility
growth
environment
balance motivate
cohesion
healthy mentality
learning life
innovation wellness
research
productivity
together dynamic
recognition uplift
teams develop
communication
opportunity
protocols leadership
meetings
collaborative
empowerment
support professional
wellbeing

Nursing Team

Clinical Trials
Assistants

NRS Clinician
Sessions

Clinical Research
Fellows

CIRG Chair

CIRG Members



CIRG PEOPLE

As we reflect on another successful year, I want to take a moment to recognize the incredible people behind the success of the CIRG. This includes a diverse array of clinical and support staff, within the immediate research group and further into the partnerships within the NHS, University of Edinburgh and beyond.

It has been both thrilling and rewarding to witness the progress we've made as a team. The growth and development of our people have been a major highlight.

Anna Gordon and Alexandra Chung, who served as Clinical Fellows, have moved on to their next exciting chapters—Anna to GP training, and Alexandra to the prestigious London School of Tropical Medicine. We are proud of their achievements and wish them every success as they continue their professional journeys.

In August 2024, we will welcome Angus McCance as our new Clinical Fellow, and we look forward to the fresh energy and passions he will bring to the team. Angus joins us after months volunteering clinically in Guatemala, following the completion of his FY 1 & 2 years across Lewisham & East Kent.

We bid farewell to Penelope Saverton, who will be joining the Jenner Institute at the University of Oxford. We are excited for her as she embarks on this new opportunity and are grateful for her contributions to the team. As we look to welcome our new clinical trial assistant, Connor Dalby will continue to provide CTA support remotely as he pursues his PhD—another example of the ambition and dedication that defines the people within CIRG.

Looking ahead, I am confident that we will continue to grow, innovate, and accomplish even more together. The expansion of our team is not just about numbers—it's about the collective strength, expertise, and passion that each member brings to the table. I'm excited for what the future holds and look forward to working within the team as we continue to push boundaries and achieve new milestones.

Amy Shepherd
Lead Research Nurse



THE CIRG TRIALS TEAM



Amy Shepherd
Lead Research Nurse



Susie Ferguson
Senior Research Nurse



Jacqueline Henderson
Senior Research Nurse



Anne Saunderson
Senior Research Nurse



Louise Sharp
Senior Research Nurse



Connor Dalby
Clinical Trials Assistant



Angus McCance
Clinical Fellow

[Full
profiles
here](#)



CIRG PIS & STEERING GROUP



Dr Naomi Buteel



Dr Iain Page



Dr Matt Adam



Dr Simon Dewar



Dr Ian Laurenson



Dr Daniel Clutterbuck



Dr Kate Templeton



Prof David Dockrell



Dr Rebecca Sutherland
NRS Clinician



Dr Claire Mackintosh



Dr Oliver Koch
NRS Clinician



Dr Meghan R Perry
CIRG Chair



NRS

CLINICIAN SESSIONS

CIRG's NRS clinician sessions were developed in association with NHS Research & Development to support clinicians who are interested in broadening their research portfolio and experience. The sessions provide funding for protected time, which can be used to plan and conduct research, write grants, and disseminate research findings.

In the year 2023-2024, we have 14 active CIRG principal and sub-principal investigators drawn from CIRG members. Two of the CIRG Principal Investigators have taken up NRS PA sessions, which commenced Feb 2024, Dr Sutherland & Dr Koch. Funding is secured covering 2023-2026 from the CIRG budget



Dr Oliver Koch

Dr Koch's research interests lie within respiratory infections, tuberculosis, tropical infections and travel medicine. He is PI on our COVID therapeutics trials including Recovery and Define as well as PI for Supernova. Since becoming an NRS clinician he has secured Edinburgh as a GeoSentinel site for global research and surveillance network of the International Society of Travel Medicine.

Dr Sutherland's research interests focus on vaccinology, HIV and the optimal treatment of bacterial infections. She was PI for the COVID vaccine response, and continues to lead on vaccine studies and innovative therapies for HIV; as well as the SNAP study which is asking essential questions about the management of Staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia



Dr Rebecca Sutherland

CIRG AWARDS & EDUCATION

The CIRG is dedicated to fostering a supportive environment for research, while also enhancing research training and educational opportunities for staff. This commitment not only aids in the progression of individual research careers but also integrates a culture of clinical research into everyday practice.

To achieve these goals, the CIRG has established various pathways and initiatives, including the CIRG Funding Awards, which are currently open for applications and have previously sponsored conference attendees, as well as contributing to the purchase of equipment in the clinical area of the RIDU.

Additionally, the CIRG offers the Student Nurse Research Placement Hub, the First Steps into Research program, protected time for clinical fellows to build their research portfolios and skills, and mentoring for junior doctors applying for higher degrees.

This year, the CIRG has successfully hosted three student nurses, providing them with valuable research placements. Looking ahead, CIRG remains committed to collaborating closely with universities to continue offering these opportunities, supporting the nurture of the next generation of research nurses.

The year 2024-2025 saw a further 9 applicants supported by the CIRG awards scheme. This funding is provided to attend a variety of national and international infection conferences. Work was presented in the form of oral or poster presentations.

We hope that the fund will inspire and galvanise further representation of CIRG activity at a broad range of conferences.

Further information on these presentations can be found under 'News' on the [CIRG website](#).

To apply to the CIRG AWARD FUND, available for any related Infectious Disease research, including international conferences,

[Click here](#)

For information on the application process, or to contact the team, please email:

loth.cirg@nhs.scot



OPPORTUNITIES & PLACEMENTS

STUDENT NURSE RESEARCH HUB & PLACEMENT

Following the launch of the clinical research placement hub, CIRG welcomed its first student nurse in September 2023, marking a pioneering step in the integration of research into nursing education—a role traditionally absent in clinical training. The research nurse student hub placements offer student nurses a unique opportunity to gain experience in clinical research, with these placements typically provided by NHS trusts and universities with a strong research focus. These placements follow a hub-and-spoke model, facilitating a central hub like CIRG, where students spend an extended period, such as 6-8 weeks, engaging in diverse research activities.

Our team, led by Senior Research Nurse Louise Sharp, collaborated and developed a program in spring 2023, supported by mentorship training, to ensure a robust learning experience for the students. Since welcoming the first student nurse in September 2023, two more have joined the program. This initiative aims to inspire future nurses to pursue careers as clinical research nurses or, to instill a deep appreciation for the role of clinical research in their future practice.

FIRST STEPS INTO RESEARCH

The CIRG was selected to offer the First Steps into Research Award as part of the Clinical Academic Research Gateway Awards, funded by NHS Lothian Charity. This program targets NMAHPPS professionals who are interested in research but lack the experience and knowledge to pursue funded clinical academic pathways at the master's level or higher.

The award provides 12 days of mentored research experience, which can be completed flexibly over 12 months, allowing early career professionals to integrate into an established research team within higher education, or the NHS. An assigned research mentor guides participants through various research activities and helps the participant explore further career development opportunities beyond the award.



CIRG WIDER

Volunteer Research Registry Development

Publications

CIRG is fostering a culture of collaborative publishing and is proud to celebrate these publicly across social platforms and in sponsoring presentations at conferences

EID Symposium Presentations

Research in Progress Meetings

PI Meetings

CIRG's monthly active PI meeting enables PI's to understand all studies within CIRG, in addition to providing opportunities to present new research opportunities of interest.

Collaboration & funding contribution for OPAT clinic equipment

UoE Collaboration

John Scrimgeour Lectureship Award

Awarded to CIRG Clinical Fellow, Dr Anna Gordon



VOLUNTEER RESEARCH REGISTRY

CIRG proposed the creation of a Healthy Volunteer Research Registry specifically for infectious disease research within NHS Lothian: enabling individuals to voluntarily sign up to express their willingness to be contacted about potential participation in clinical research studies.

This registry aims to streamline the process of contacting individuals willing to participate in research by maintaining a database of volunteers who meet the varying definitions of "healthy". "Healthy" within clinical research is "an individual who participates in research studies and does not have the condition, or disease, being studied" with the definition therefore varying dependent on the study.

After its conception, the idea underwent rigorous review and approvals, including information governance and communications - with advice from ethics and R&D - to ensure compliance and proper dissemination of resources. Following this, the concept was presented at a Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) meeting to gather feedback. Moving forward, the system will remain adaptable, continuously evolving in response to feedback, maintenance needs, and updates. This approach ensures that the registry stays user-friendly while adhering to local regulatory requirements, ultimately maximising its effectiveness and success.

The registry aims to facilitate faster and more targeted recruitment for studies by allowing for the stratification of basic health data, such as age, to match volunteers with appropriate research opportunities.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CIRG team would like to take this opportunity to thank our trial participants. Without their involvement, these studies would not be possible. We appreciate their sacrifice for research, and their contribution to a future with better healthcare.

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