

Re-launch of the OxDARE newsletter!

We are excited to announce the re-launch of our seasonal newsletter. We aim to keep you informed on the latest research developments in the area of ageing and dementia, to provide you with details on current studies looking for volunteers, and upcoming local events that will give you an opportunity to find out more about the fascinating research that is ongoing at Oxford.



*OxDARE scientists and Oxford Health NHS FT members:
Prof. Simon Lovestone, Prof. John Geddes, Prof. Liz Tunbridge, Stuart Bell CBE,
Prof. Alastair Buchan, Prof. Catherine Harmer & Prof. Clare Mackay.*

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Find out more:

Website

www.oxdare.ox.ac.uk

Email

oxdare@psych.ox.ac.uk

About OxDARE

Oxford Dementia and Ageing Research (OxDARE) was set up in 2012 by the NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre to co-ordinate Oxford's response to the Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia. As a collaborative network of clinicians and researchers based across Oxfordshire NHS Trusts and departments of the University of Oxford, our primary objective is to improve understanding on the processes involved in ageing and dementia and to translate this research into patient care. We use a range of techniques in our research to meet these objectives, including neuroimaging, clinical, neuropsychological and genetics assessments. We also organise regular research events and annual open days to keep the public informed about the exciting developments that have been made in dementia research.

Professor Simon Lovestone was recently knighted in recognition for his contributions towards dementia research.



Professor Lovestone said that he was “thrilled and delighted to be honoured in this way. The past 25 years working in dementia research has been, and continues to be, the most fulfilling and rewarding experience and it has been the greatest of pleasures to work with superb scientists and students in my group and through collaboration; I am humbled by the excellence of their work and their dedication.”

The New NIHR Biomedical Research Centre, was officially opened in March.

Having secured funding of £12.8 million for the next five years, the new NIHR BRC will facilitate further advances in ageing and dementia research. To mark this special occasion, Nicola Blackwood MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Innovation, unveiled a plaque at the Warneford Hospital.



Nicola Blackwood MP unveiling the plaque to celebrate the opening of the new NIHR BRC, beside the director of the centre, Professor John Geddes.

The Oxford Dementia Research Day 2017 took place in July.

This meeting brought together clinicians and scientists within Oxford to present and discuss the recent accomplishments that had been made in the field of ageing and dementia. As the keynote speaker, Professor Frank Gunn-Moore from the University of St. Andrews, delivered an inspiring talk on how combining biology, physics and chemistry can be used to understand Alzheimer’s disease. The Oxford Health BRC session, chaired by Prof Kia Nobre, featured talks by Dr Claire Sexton, Dr Sana Suri, Dr Rupert McShane and Prof John Geddes.



Congratulation to the winner of the Best Poster Award, Dr. Ludovica Griffanti!

Research Highlights

Even moderate levels of alcohol, roughly equivalent to a glass of wine per day, have been related to changes in the brain in old age.

This study, lead by Dr. Anya Topiwala and colleagues, found that in a group of 527 older adults, moderate alcohol consumption predicted shrinkage in a region of the brain critical for memory, the hippocampus.

On the study results, Dr. Topiwala said that they “support the recent reduction in UK safe limits and call into question the current US guidelines, which suggest that up to 24.5 units a week is safe for men, as we found increased odds of hippocampal atrophy at just 14-21 units a week, and we found no support for a protective effect of light consumption on brain structure.”

[Click here](#) to listen to Dr. Topiwala discuss her recent study in more detail, which is published in the *British Medical Journal*.

Sexual activity can improve cognitive performance in old age.

A study carried out by researchers from the University of Oxford and Coventry University reported that regular sexual activity among individuals aged 50+ is associated with better performance on cognitive tests, particularly on measures of verbal fluency (i.e. naming as many animals/ words starting with ‘F’, in 60 seconds).

Regarding the next steps, Dr. Nele Demeyere plans to apply “these measures in large populations to give both increased depth and breadth of cognitive measures, moving away from a singular focus on memory as the key domain of research into ageing and dementia.”



The feasibility study for what is described as the ‘World’s biggest study into Alzheimer’s Disease’ and is lead by Professor Simon Lovestone, is well underway.

The MRC/NIHR funded ‘Deep and Frequent Phenotyping’ study aims to identify the earliest markers of Alzheimer’s Disease, which could be used in future clinical trials. The study will involve repeatedly administering a large number of tests in middle-aged adults, over the course of several years.

More information on the study as well as an interview with Professor Lovestone and Professor Clare Mackay on the current obstacles that researchers face in developing treatments for dementia and what can be gained from ‘big data’ approaches, can be found in the [first](#) and [second](#) BBC World reports by Andrew Bomford.

Current Studies

Information on the PREVENT Dementia study, which is currently looking for volunteers, can be found [here](#). For current opportunities to volunteer in research, please contact oxdare@psych.ox.ac.uk or visit our [website](#) and become a Friend of OxDARE, where we will email you with information about studies that you might be interested in participating in.

Upcoming Events

Brain Diaries

10th March 2017—1st January 2018
10am—5pm every day
Oxford University Museum of Natural History
Free

Description

A fascinating and interactive exhibition on how the brain changes throughout the lifetime. From interesting talks held by Oxford neuroscientist, demos of some of the tools used in research to other fun hands-on activities—it's an event that shouldn't be missed! See the website for full programme details.



Website

www.oum.ox.ac.uk/braindiaries/

Upcoming Events

Window on the Brain

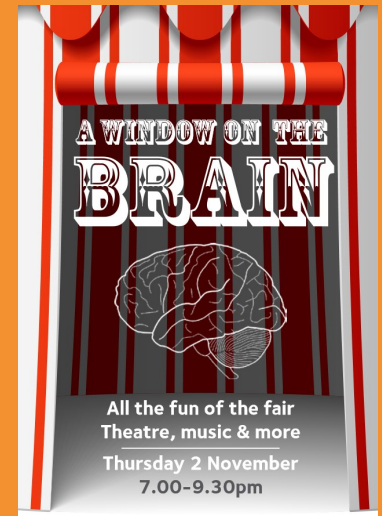
2nd November
2017
7pm—9.30pm
Oxford University
Museum of
Natural History
Free

Description

See the brain in a completely new light through theatre, music and neuroscience, to celebrate the launch of the Wellcome Centre for Integrative Neuroimaging (WIN).

Website

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/>



Oxford Dementia Café

1st Tuesday of every month
10.30am—12pm
Oxford Options Resource Centre
Free

Description

Run by the Alzheimer's Society, this monthly café provides those affected by dementia and their carers an informal and relaxed environment to learn more about the local support services that are available. Tea and biscuits provided.

Website

www.alzheimers.org.uk