

PUTTING UK PHARMACOLOGY ON THE MAP – NOW AND IN THE FUTURE



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With over 3,000 members, the British Pharmacological Society is the primary UK learned society concerned with research into drugs and the way they work. The Society has, at its heart, the development and promotion of pharmacology and of its members who are training and working in academia, government, industry and the health service. Many of its activities are underpinned by the significant impact that drug discovery and development has on the health and wealth of the UK.

The British Pharmacological Society undertook the largest survey ever conducted with our members in order to improve our understanding of pharmacologists' needs, now and in the near future. As a result of the survey findings, the Society's leadership is committed to building greater awareness of the existing contributions of UK pharmacology to wider society and the economy, while advancing career opportunities for members to ensure breakthroughs continue in the future.

RECOGNISING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF UK PHARMACOLOGY

It was with great pleasure that the British Pharmacological Society supported a special parliamentary reception in December 2013 to honour four sites of special scientific interest linked to discoveries and

Feedback from British Pharmacological Society members

- 97% of members agree with the Society's mission to promote and advance pharmacology, including clinical pharmacology
- 89% of members are likely to recommend joining the Society to colleagues and peers who are not members
- 77-85% of members agree the Society should be doing more to raise awareness of pharmacology across various external audiences, including Government, universities and schools

Full results available from www.bps.ac.uk

contributions in pharmacology. The event formed part of the Society's new 'Putting UK Pharmacology on the Map' initiative and was the culmination of voting by MPs, peers and senior members of the scientific community. The back page of this issue includes photos of the Society's members and parliamentarians who were able to attend, including representatives of the House of Lords' and House of Commons' Science and Technology Committees, as well as the Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP, Shadow Minister for Universities, Science and Skills.

Andrew Miller MP and Stephen Metcalfe MP addressed attendees on the importance of the work of scientists, including pharmacologists, in terms of shaping the development of UK legislation and growing the economy. Andrew then kindly took on the role of Returning Officer and revealed the names of the winning sites, judged to have made outstanding contributions to the discovery and development of medicines:

- **AstraZeneca, Alderley Park:** Important advances made at Alderley Park during its 40-year history include anti-cancer treatments and the first

successful beta-blocker discovered by pharmacologist and Nobel Prize winner Sir James Black

• **The James Black Foundation, King's College London:**

In 1988, in collaboration with Johnson & Johnson, Sir James Black established his own laboratory, primarily concerned with the development of drugs which inhibit the hormone, gastrin

• **The University of Strathclyde:**

Two groups at Strathclyde developed new muscle relaxants, which have since been used extensively in anaesthesiology: one led by pharmacologist Bill Bowman, working in collaboration with Organon Laboratories; the other led by chemist John Stenlake, in collaboration with Wellcome Research Laboratories

• **Wadham College, The University of Oxford:**

The British Pharmacological Society was formed in 1931, at a meeting of 19 pharmacologists at Wadham College. The Society aims to promote and advance pharmacology, including clinical pharmacology

These winners demonstrate that life-saving innovations have been accomplished by industrial, academic and NHS sites – and often through partnerships across these three sectors. Each site was awarded a special trophy to commemorate the outcome of the vote and the general consensus among attendees was that further sites that have helped to establish the world standing of UK pharmacology should be honoured in the future. The four winning sites are merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the achievements of UK pharmacology – in total 26 sites have already been nominated for consideration by British

Pharmacological Society members!

ADVANCING THE FUTURE OF PHARMACOLOGY IN THE UK

While a third of our members are under 30 years old, the British Pharmacological Society recognises that continued investment in education, professional development and careers resources will not only support these members but also the future of pharmacology more broadly. It is worth remembering that the scientific breakthroughs in 2050 will be made by individuals who are currently undergraduates – or who haven't even left school yet!

The Society's forward-thinking approach includes activities addressing future skills provision, embracing technology and developing long term partnerships. For example, the Society is a committed member of the Drug Discovery Pathways Group (DDPG), which seeks to establish a networked community of skilled researchers to help revitalise the UK pharmaceutical sector, to provide exciting career opportunities for world-class scientists and to translate advances in biomedical research into safe and effective therapies that deliver benefit to patients and contribute to the UK's growth.

The Diploma in Advanced Pharmacology was established by the Society to extend the knowledge base of researchers who are either entering the field of pharmacology, or who wish to develop their expertise in this area. This programme has been developed by our members from academia and industry to provide an advanced pharmacological education whilst maintaining expected

THE SUCCESSFUL SITES

Clive Morris, UK Strategic Implementation Lead at AstraZeneca: *"Alderley Park has a rich heritage of important advancements in the discovery and developments of life changing medicines and we are honoured to receive this prestigious award for our work. With an increasing number of life science companies being based at the site as we develop the Alderley Park BioHub, the site will hopefully continue to play an important part in the future of pharmacology in the UK."*

Professor Peter Hylands, Head of the Institute of Pharmaceutical Science, King's College London: *"We are delighted that the James Black Foundation, King's College London, has been recognised for its major contribution to UK Pharmacology. King's is proud to be associated with Sir James Black particularly his contribution to the development of gastrin inhibitors for the treatment of gastrointestinal diseases."*

Professor Philip Winn, Head of Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences, University of Strathclyde: *"The University of Strathclyde is honoured to receive this award in recognition of the major contribution that the basic scientific research carried out here has made to the discovery and development of new, improved medicines. Our scientists will continue to carry out world-class research, leading to more new, useful drugs."*

Warden of Wadham College, Ken Macdonald QC: *"Since it was founded in 1610, Wadham College has seen many exceptional and world-changing scientists pass through its gates, including those famous seventeenth century polymaths who went on to found the Royal Society. We are delighted to have hosted the first meeting of the British Pharmacological Society back in 1931, and we continue to promote excellence in science and medicine through our talented students, our teaching and our research."*

employee duties. Already 20 individuals have graduated, and feedback suggests that the Diploma has improved both their research and career progression.

The Society is also taking steps to provide increased opportunities and support for women in the profession. Our Women in Pharmacology committee is leading on a number of innovative initiatives for our many (36%) female members: a successful mentoring programme (in its ninth year), the AstraZeneca Prize for Women in Pharmacology (in its fifth year) and a newly-created career break membership category

allowing members taking extended leave to retain all of the benefits of membership without cost and regardless of gender.

With more women than ever studying science in general, and pharmacology in particular, at university, it is the Society's hope that an increasing number will reach the pinnacle of the profession in the future. It is clear that alone we cannot solve gender imbalance in the workplace, but we are optimistic that our relatively small changes will go some way to effecting change on behalf of our members.