

Parkinson's UK Edinburgh Branch Research Interest Group

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Newsletter December 2013 Issue No. 7

View from the Chair

The most recent ERIG meeting was a Symposium for Branch Members on 30 November 2013, at which our three delegates to the Montréal World Parkinson Congress reported on their impressions. We have made the Edinburgh Parkinson's Lecture an annual event, and in this issue we announce preliminary details of the 2014 lecture.

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The Edinburgh Parkinson's Lecture 2014

Following the success of the 2012 and 2013 lectures, we are pleased to announce the 2014 lecture. Professor Anthony Schapira, of University College London has kindly agreed to give an evening public lecture on Thursday 15th May 2014 at the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh.

Professor Anthony Schapira MD DSc FRCP FMedSci is Head of the Department of Clinical Neurosciences at the UCL Institute of Neurology and Director of UCL Royal Free Campus. Professor Schapira's research interests include the molecular and clinical aspects of neurodegenerative diseases, with special emphasis on Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders.

WPC Symposium



On 30 November 2013 in Bellevue Chapel, a symposium was held at which our Branch delegates to the World Parkinson Congress, Mo Morgan, Simon Wilkinson and Werner Remmele, reported on their experiences and talked about the highlights of Congress from a personal perspective. We also had a presentation from a member of Tilo Kunath's research group at the Scottish Centre for Regenerative

Medicine, Fella Hammachi. who also attended the WPC. Details on our web site at www.edinburghparkinsons.org/wpc-symposium/

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group will be on 8th February 2014, when Dr Carl Counsell of the University of Aberdeen will give a talk entitled:

"What changes over time for Parkinson's patients and their carers".

The venue will be SCRM, 5 Little France Drive, Edinburgh from 10.30 -12.30. A sandwich lunch will be provided for those able to stay. Please let Ken Bowler know by 1st February 2014 if you wish to attend this event.

Research News:

...PBT434 prevents alpha synuclein from aggregating and also prevents the toxic consequences of iron combining with dopamine....

Does PD Map provide a universal framework for research into PD?

PBT434 Drug Shows Promise

Researchers at the University of Leeds are one step closer to developing a new treatment for Parkinson's, thanks to a £150,000 research grant from Parkinson's UK. Dr James Duce and his team will investigate whether a drug known as PBT434 that targets iron may have potential as a new and better Parkinson's drug. Higher levels of iron have been found inside certain parts of the brain of people with Parkinson's.

The researchers say PBT434 prevents alpha synuclein from aggregating and also prevents the toxic consequences of iron combining with dopamine. Dr Duce has published extensively on the role of iron in both the healthy and diseased brain. The funds will be used over 18 months to study the mechanism of action of PBT434 in animal models of Parkinson's disease and Parkinsonian syndromes. In particular the ability of PBT434 to reduce the elevated iron levels in the Parkinsonian brain, attenuate oxidative stress and alter the function or abundance of iron regulated proteins will be investigated.

PD Map

The Luxembourg Centre for Systems Biomedicine (LCSB) in collaboration with the team of Hiroaki Kitano from the Systems Biology Institute (SBI), Tokyo, are working on development of a computerised disease map of Parkinson's disease – the PD map.

The current methods for aggregating, propagating and comparing the results of medical research are largely text based. To evaluate a hypothesis or summarise a particular aspect of research it is necessary to burrow around with keyword searches in bibliographies and peer reviewed journals. An alternative approach is offered by bioinformatics. The PD map is a knowledge repository established to describe mechanisms of PD by means of molecular networks. It can serve as an interface to bioinformatics tools allowing exploration and updating the contents of the map, using standardized annotations to grasp complex relationships between the genetic and environmental risk factors. Another functionality of the map is visualization of large experimental datasets, allowing their analysis in the context of disease mechanisms. The map is described in some detail in an open-access article in the July 2013 issue of the on-line journal Molecular Neurobiology "[Integrating pathways of Parkinson's disease](#)" which provides background to the project and a link to the map itself. Be warned, it is pretty tough going for non-experts!

Web site

The Edinburgh Branch web site is at www.edinburghparkinsons.org and the Research Interest Group page is www.edinburghparkinsons.org/research-interest-group/

Any queries should be directed to the Editor and Chair of the Research Interest Group, [Ken Bowler](mailto:ken@edinburghparkinsons.org) by email to ken@edinburghparkinsons.org

Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A charity registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554).