



The Christie International Fellowship Programme Newsletter

Winter 2021 edition

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Engagement

For any enquiries about The Christie International Fellowship Programme or queries on how to apply please visit [The Christie Interational Fellowships webpages](#).

@ the-christie.fellowships@nhs.net

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Welcome from Professor Richard Fuller

Hello and welcome to the first edition of The Christie International Fellowship Programme's newsletter.

Fellows are a key part of our Christie Education portfolio, bringing their own experience and expertise to the trust and our patients. Over the past three years we have hosted over 150 fellowships at The Christie and we continue to be delighted with some amazing achievements, whilst learning a considerable amount from each fellow ourselves.

These fellowships span a range of opportunities and activities but all share in benefiting from working in Europe's largest single-site cancer centre, with a global reputation for academic research and education excellence with our partners in Manchester Cancer Research Centre (MCRC) and The University of Manchester. Fellowships are available for those intending to experience and enhance their clinical service skills, those looking to build their research skills and portfolio or develop as academic clinical educators. Several fellows undertake their fellowship alongside an academic qualification through our major HEI partner - The University of Manchester.

A huge part of the success of this Fellowship Programme has been down to the energy, creativity and inspiration of Professor Amit Patel, who very sadly died recently after a period of illness. Amit has been instrumental in improving so much of the experience of our recent fellows, through his role of Fellowship Lead, and their success is a lasting testament to his work. The Christie Haematology department have organised an [online memorial board](#) for Amit.

The Christie International Fellowship Programme is overseen and managed by Professor Richard Fuller (Director, Christie Education/School of Oncology), Rachel Chown (Head of Academic Education), and Joanne Forsyth (Education Coordinator). The success of the Fellowship Programme is generously enabled through the support of our funders, including The Christie Charity.



Rachel Chown



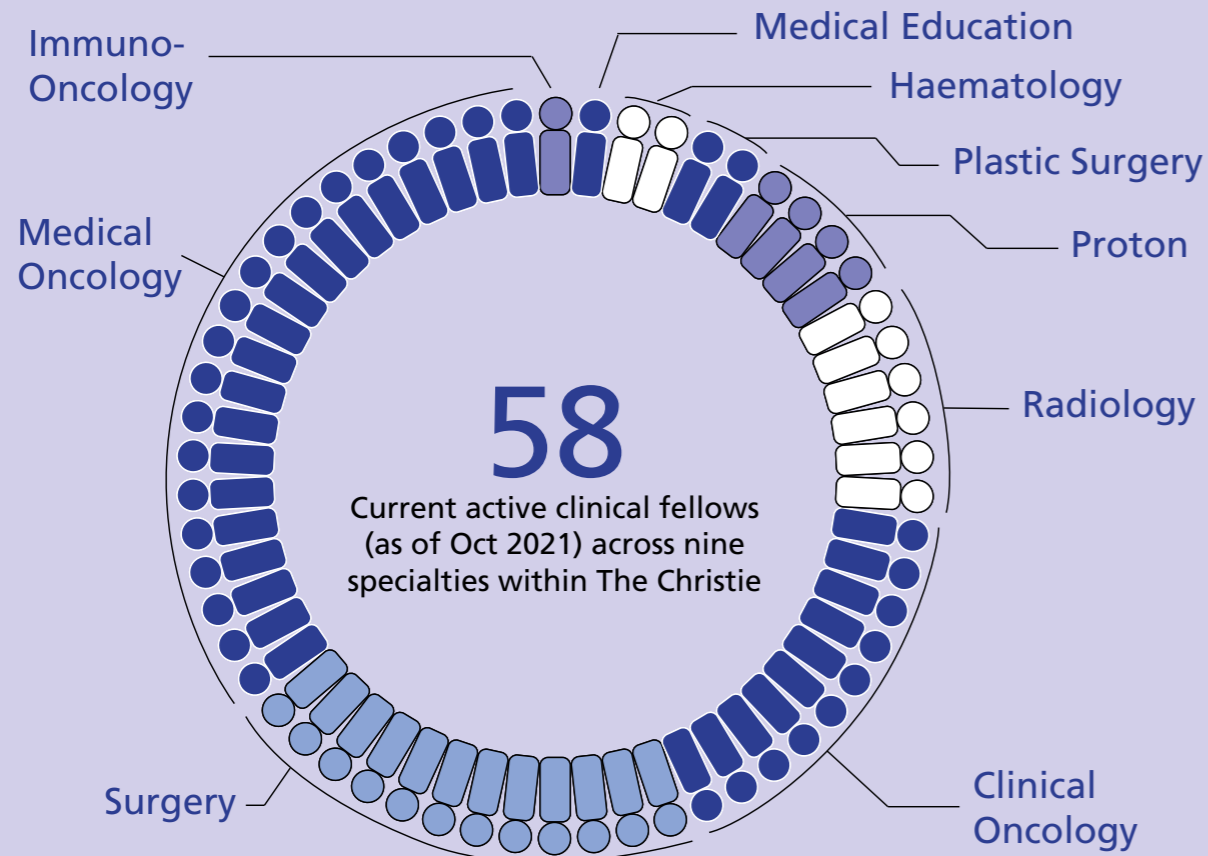
Joanne Forsyth



We are extremely proud to highlight and celebrate our fellows' successes in these regular newsletters - I would urge you to submit your own highlights and achievements, or those of your fellows if you are reading this as a supervisor, to our future newsletters which will be released regularly throughout the year. We are keen to hear from you all to capture all the great work that is going on within fellowships across the Trust and are very grateful to those who have contributed to this edition. Please send all future submission suggestions to: the-christie.fellowships@nhs.net

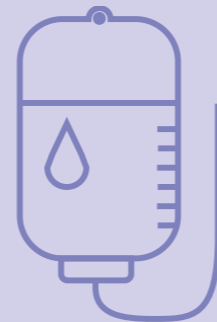
If you are reading this as a potential applicant considering a fellowship at The Christie, then I hope that the profiles and accomplishments included here give you an insight into what being a fellow in our organisation is like and encourage you to apply to our future opportunities!

The Christie International Fellowship Programme - At a Glance



~97,000

Over 97,000 chemotherapy treatments are delivered to patients each year.
One of nine UK Centres to offer Advanced CAR-T therapies
Mobile chemotherapy units provide treatment options at locations closer to patients' homes.

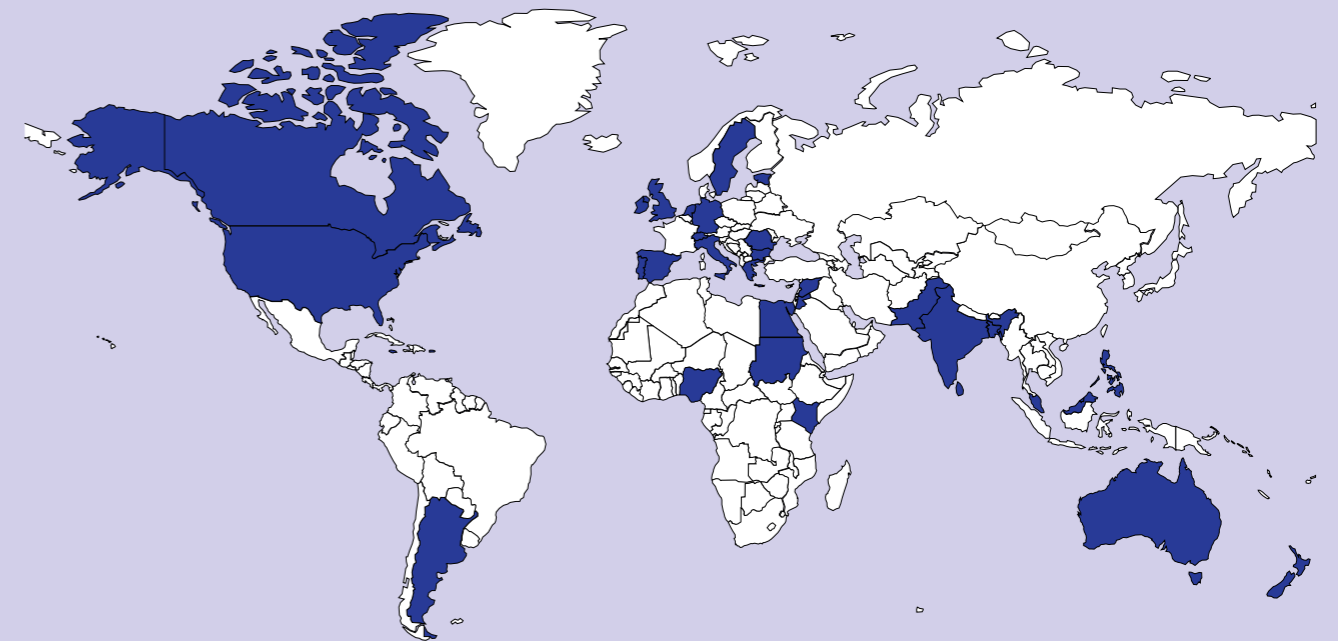


~87,000

Extensive radiotherapy facilities providing over 87,000 treatments each year in fields including: MR-Linac, Proton Beam Therapy, SABR, Adaptive Radiotherapy.
The Christie is one of only two sites worldwide to offer such advanced radiotherapy treatments.

We are International

Current and past Christie Fellows have come from across the globe to undertake a fellowship at The Christie, covering over 40 countries.



1st

The Christie was the first UK member audited and accredited as a Comprehensive Cancer Centre by the Organisation of European Cancer Institutes.

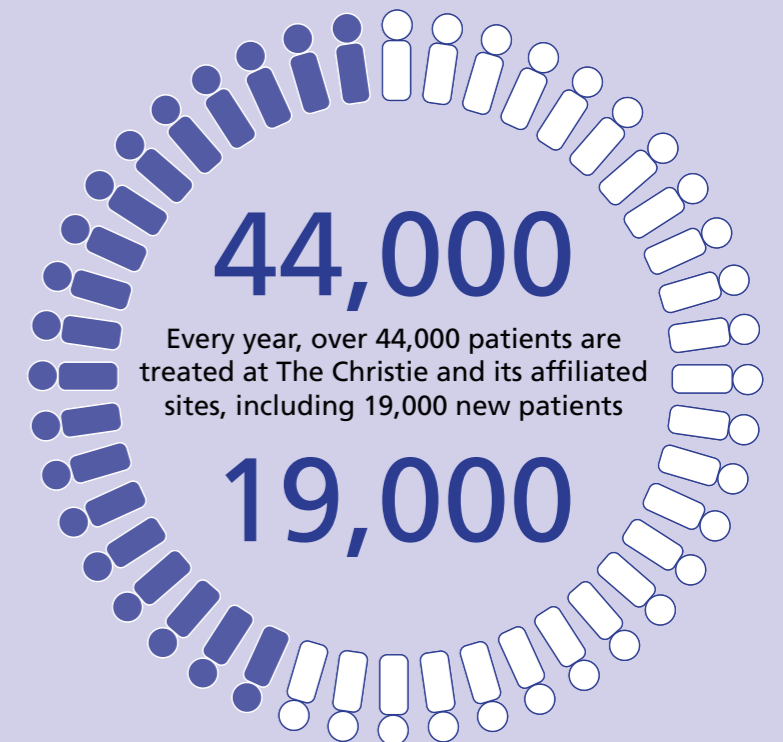
The Christie has been named as the most technologically advanced hospital outside of North America



44,000

Every year, over 44,000 patients are treated at The Christie and its affiliated sites, including 19,000 new patients

19,000



Fellow Profile

Dr Alexander Murphy, Clinical Fellow in Medical Oncology

What is your fellowship specialism and where were you based before joining The Christie?

Medical Oncology. I was previously working at The Crown Princess Mary Cancer Centre, Westmead Hospital in Sydney, Australia.

What attracted you to The Christie?

The Christie has an extraordinary international reputation for oncology training and leadership in oncology research, and the consultants are the giants of their fields. The location in Manchester is far more accessible, culturally exciting, more affordable and friendlier than London with great proximity to the beautiful geography of the Lake and Peak Districts and Snowdonia - if you can put up with a few more days of rain!

What have you enjoyed most about your fellowship?

I've most enjoyed working with a professional and welcoming clinical research team, and the support and guidance of the consultants within my team. The work culture is very team-based and has been the most supportive workplace I've ever worked in, which is so necessary during the challenging times of a pandemic!

What has been your biggest achievement?

Surviving lockdown alone in a foreign country! But also being able to achieve my personal academic and publication goals within 12 months despite the challenges of a pandemic. And I've been able to balance this with sight-seeing most of the UK!

Why did you volunteer as a fellow rep, and what is your role in the team?

I volunteered mostly out of self-interest, because I didn't have much of a social network after arriving in the UK and with lockdown. Hence my primary role has been to connect the fellows together through organising social events, as restrictions have eased. I think it's really important that a fellowship at The Christie is not just about your academic or clinical



career, but also developing networks and connections with your peers across the oncology spectrum. I've made plenty of friends!

What do you plan to do next?

I am returning to Australia (borders permitting) to work in a major Cancer Centre, utilising the knowledge and skills I've learnt from The Christie, particularly from my current tumour stream (gynaecology) and experience in clinical trials with a view to commencing a PhD thereafter.

Has your fellowship supported your career plans/professional development?

Most certainly! In a short period of time I have had a huge exposure to clinical trial management at all levels, developed my clinical knowledge within my tumour stream and worked on multiple projects and publications which have advanced my academic career. There are also so many opportunities to progress to further higher research from The Christie and links with the renowned University of Manchester.

What advice would you give to other fellows to make the most of their time at The Christie?

Take up every opportunity that comes your way, meet as many people as possible and enjoy yourself as much as you can!

Fellow Profile

Dr Aisha Mustapha, Clinical Fellow in Surgery

What is your fellowship specialism and where were you based before joining The Christie?

I am an Obstetrician/Gynaecologist working in the Gynaecologic Oncology Unit of Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria. I am also an academic lecturer at the affiliate Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.



What attracted you to The Christie?

My interest in Gynaecologic Oncology was my main attraction to seek out the International Fellowship Programme at The Christie, being the largest single-site comprehensive cancer centre in Europe. The practice of Gynaecologic Oncology has been personally rewarding and professionally fulfilling. I believed I would be able to improve my clinical skills and research experience here, as a formal training programme in Gynaecologic Oncology in Nigeria is still in progress.

What have you enjoyed most about your fellowship?

The clinical experience I have gained over these months has been the most enjoyable to me. I was able to participate in highly specialised open and minimal access surgeries for complex and rare gynaecologic cancers, improve my communication skills with colleagues and patients during oncologic surgical clerkship, and became more confident in pre-, intra-, post-operative and complications care. I have learnt from every professional here, it pleases me that I will be able to replicate some of these experiences in my practice back home.

What has been your biggest achievement?

My biggest achievement at The Christie was my personal and professional development which I believe will benefit my institution and patients back home, these are too numerous to mention. The experience and exposure I gathered is unquantifiable. I saw the Da Vinci Robot for the first time at The Christie and I was able to assist robotic surgeries soon after taking and passing the required modules. Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy (HIPEC) for ovarian cancer was just a terminology I saw in the books prior to my coming here.

While I initially felt robotic surgery and HIPEC were still out of reach, the upcoming African Medical Centre of Excellence (AMCE) project in Nigeria may make these a reality sooner than anticipated. There are many more simple, fascinating yet relevant skills I can immediately implement on my return.

What do you plan to do next?

I plan to return to my home country and implement what I have learnt to improve the standard of care we offer to our Gynaecologic cancer patients while ensuring continued collaborations with the wonderful network of professionals, colleagues, supervisors and administrators that I have met at The Christie to achieve this.

How has your fellowship supported your career plans/professional development?

My fellowship at such a reputable institution and having worked with renowned Gynaecologic Oncologists might in the future provide me with opportunities for a formal certifiable training programme in Gynaecologic Oncology and it also counts as an oncologic experience. The numerous teachings I attended at The Christie School of Oncology also helped with my continuous professional development.

What advice would you give to other fellows to make the most of their time at The Christie?

The time is short so make the best use of it. Start up a research project or audit very early, speak up and obtain support from colleagues if you are not getting exactly what you need from your fellowship. Have set goals with timelines. Network and collaborate.

Alumni Profile

Dr Christoph Oing

Where were you based before joining The Christie?

Before joining The Christie and the MCRC, I had just obtained my specialist degree in Internal Medicine, Haematology and Medical Oncology at the University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf, Germany. My clinical and research focus until then was DNA repair and treatment resistance in testicular cancer and prostate cancer.

What attracted you to The Christie?

Principally, the outstanding prostate cancer expertise of Prof. Robert Bristow, Director of the MCRC, and Senior Group Leader at the Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute (CRUK MI), and Prof. Silke Gillessen, at the time Chair in Genitourinary Oncology Systemic Therapy Research at The University of Manchester and The Christie, attracted me to explore research fellowship options in Manchester. Together we developed the outline for a competitive interventional translational research project to explore the role of tissue hypoxia and genomic instability in the development of bone metastases in prostate. To undertake my fellowship, I was awarded a competitive ESMO translational research fellowship.

Moreover, the unique structure of The Christie as Europe's largest single institution for highly multidisciplinary, specialised and centralised cancer care with outstanding opinion leaders in various fields of solid and haematological malignancies caught my attention and strengthened my ambitions to come to Manchester.

What did you enjoy most about your fellowship?

There are many things that I found were enjoyable. What I found most helpful and impressive was the quick and candid integration into the multi-professional translational and interdisciplinary clinical research teams at both the MCRC and The Christie, which are embedded into a highly inspiring research

environment comprising the MCRC, CRUK MI, The University of Manchester and The Christie. Quickly becoming an integral part of this environment with a close connection to my outstanding supervisors, Prof. Bristow, Prof. Gillessen and Dr Tony Elliott was just amazing and showed me once again how important networking beyond borders and comfort zones was for my personal professional career development. I have just found amazing mentors and to use Prof. Bristow's words: "Mentorship is life-long". Thank you so much!

What was your biggest achievement while at The Christie?

Together with my fellowship supervisor and mentor Prof. Bristow, I successfully developed a translational study to investigate the role of hypoxia and genomic instability in de novo bone metastatic prostate cancer, the HYPROGEN study. Together with my fellow post-doc Richard Rebello, my supervisor Prof. Bristow and international prostate cancer experts we collated the Nature Reviews Disease Primer article on prostate cancer, which was recently published in [2021](#).

Moreover, together with my clinical research supervisor, Prof. Gillessen, our exceptional colleagues from the Urology and Histopathology Departments at The Christie (Dr Arie Parnham, Dr Vijay Sangar and Dr Pedro Oliveira), and the MCRC (Dr Mick Brown) I was a co-founder of the newly established Manchester Penile Cancer Research initiative, which has become a highly active group in this rare disease setting.

What are you doing now?

After my return to my home institution, the University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf in Germany, I took on the lead for the Medical Oncology Sarcoma Unit and got awarded a German Cancer Aid fellowship to build my own lab group to focus on the role of DNA repair alterations in prostate cancer. The fellowship helped me substantially to set this up through a close collaboration with the Manchester team.



With the exceptional support of my fellowship supervisor, I still follow up on research projects on prostate and penile cancers initiated at the MCRC and The Christie and hold an honorary research fellow contract with the University of Manchester.

How did your fellowship support your career plans/professional development?

The fellowship clearly influenced my future career planning. I very much enjoyed working in the highly interdisciplinary and multi-professional environment of the different GU research teams, I felt valued and quickly integrated into the teams. I appreciated the centralised care and clinical research orientation at The Christie.

My fellowship experiences in clinical research and specialised cancer care in the UK together with the appreciation of the work of clinical scientists in general made me apply for a new post offered at the Newcastle University and their Early Phase Clinical Trials Unit. Fortunately, I was offered the post and I will return to the UK at the start of 2022 to start working in Newcastle with the vision to establish a Northern England research collaboration together with the MCRC. I will follow up on research in the field of prostate cancer and DNA repair alterations and have the opportunity to become an expert

clinical academic in drug discovery and early phase trials, both which are at the core of innovative oncology research.

I believe this would have not happened without my ESMO fellowship at the MCRC and The Christie.

What advice would you give to other fellows to make the most of their time at The Christie?

Introduce yourself to the amazing teams of clinicians and the clinical research units in your area of expertise and/or interest as well as the extremely supportive team of the MCRC biobank located at The Christie and respective research groups at the CRUK MI and the MCRC. Try to extend your network and I'm sure you will find lots of amazing and enthusiastic clinicians, researchers and various options to join ongoing research and to develop your own ambitious research projects whilst in Manchester. Ensure to establish fruitful collaborations thereafter to further support your professional career as an oncology expert clinician and/or successful cancer researcher.

Alumni Profile

Dr Fabio Gomes

What was your fellowship specialism and where were you based before joining The Christie?

Medical Oncologist, from Lisbon, Portugal.

What attracted you to The Christie?

I was keen on having international experience in a large cancer centre to develop my clinical skills in a different setting, as well as to develop a clinical research project. I had been at The Christie before for a couple of months during my training as an international visitor and I enjoyed my experience. So, in 2016 attracted by this previous positive experience and the long history of research in this centre, I applied to start my fellowship in Medical Oncology.

What did you enjoy most about your fellowship?

The opportunities I was given to build my own path and to grow my ideas via turning them into projects, from audits to quality improvement and research projects. I also had the opportunity to work across multiple teams as a Medical Oncology fellow (melanoma team, lung cancer team, experimental cancer medicine team and the patient-centred research team). But apart from professional achievements, I am grateful for the good friendships that were created in the process, particularly with other international fellows at a similar turning point in their careers and lives.

What was your biggest achievement while at The Christie?

My biggest achievement as a fellow was developing and implementing a clinical research study of my own design focusing on senior adults with cancer undergoing immunotherapy. This was an unmet need and the first study designed specifically in this setting, which subsequently opened the doors to many other collaborations in a field I am passionate about. But another key achievement that resulted from my dedication as a fellow was progressing in my career into a more senior role within The Christie.



What are you doing now?

In 2020, I started a consultant job at The Christie, working now with the lung cancer team and the patient-centred research team. In 2021, I was appointed as the new Director of Clinical Outcomes for the trust which will allow me to shape the data and clinical outcomes strategy for the next 5 years which is a highly exciting role.

What advice would you give to other fellows to make the most of their time at The Christie?

I would encourage fellows to dream big and find opportunities to develop their areas of interest, but also to build friendships and truly enjoy their time as a fellow!

To find out more about observerships, please visit [The Christie School of Oncology Observerships and Visitors website](#).

Alumni Achievement

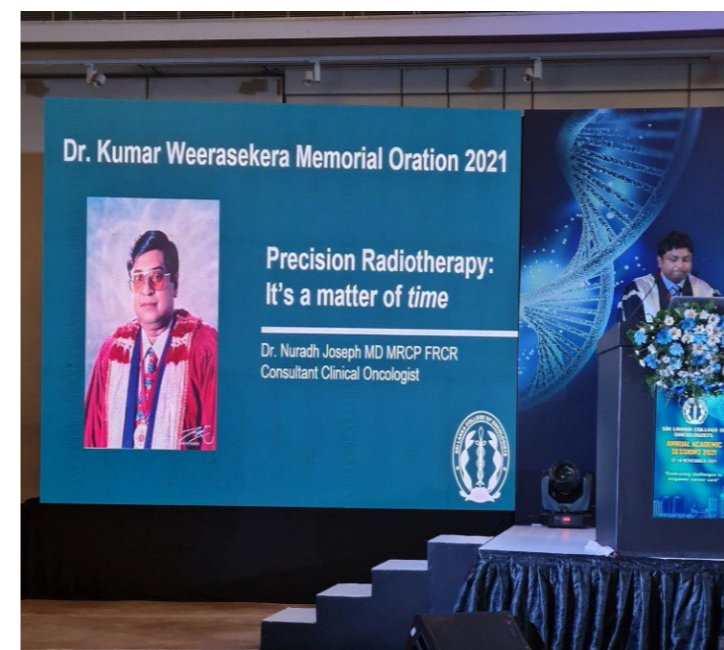
Dr Nuradh Joseph

The Dr Kumar Weerasekera Memorial Oration is delivered at the annual meeting of the Sri Lanka College of Oncologists (SLCO) and is awarded to a Clinical Oncologist from Sri Lanka or abroad in recognition of their significant contribution to cancer research.

This year it was awarded to Dr Nuradh Joseph, Consultant Oncologist, at the Teaching Hospital of Batticaloa for his work on novel fractionation strategies in hypoxic tumours. He is the youngest ever recipient to have been awarded this prestigious oration named after the Founding President of the SLCO.

Dr Joseph worked as a Clinical Research Fellow in Uro-Oncology at The Christie from 2015-16 under supervision of Prof. Ananya Choudhury. He has since been collaborating extensively with Prof. Choudhury's group in areas such as adoption of hypoxia modification with Carbogen and the work related to fractionation for which he was awarded this oration.

Nuradh's fellowship was generously funded through The Christie Charity.

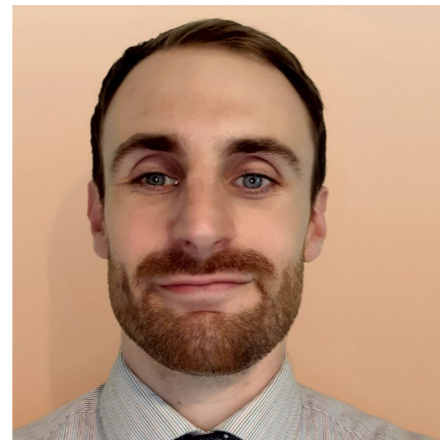


Nuradh presenting at the SLCO in 2021



Recent Fellow Achievements

Dr Simon Gray, HPB/NET Clinical Research Fellow, has been accepted to deliver an oral presentation at the annual UKINET Conference. The oral presentation is a case report intended to educate on potential challenges of managing patients with neuroendocrine neoplasms. The case described covers management with chemotherapy, surgery and radiotherapy and how broad the MDT sometimes needs to be to manage such patients. Simon will also be looking at 'de-differentiation' in neuroendocrine neoplasms, whereby a tumour can become more high-grade over time.



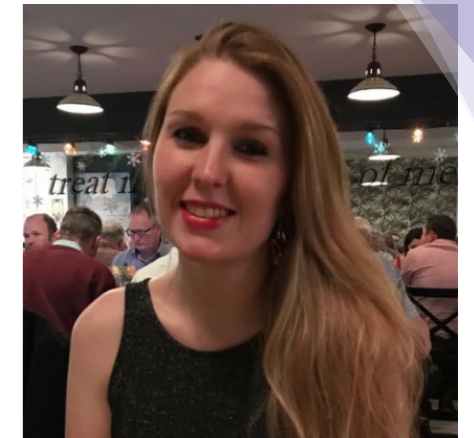
Dr William Croxford, SABR Clinical Oncology Fellow, has delivered talks at the Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) Learning Live 2021 Conference in October 2021. The first was with a colleague at Leeds Cancer Centre on Liver SABR for Trainees and the second at the Proton Cyclotron Trust Symposium. He also had his poster accepted to be presented at the UK SABR Consortium Conference in November 2021 on 'Development of a planning MRI pathway for primary HCC liver SABR'.



Dr Julie-Anne Scott, Clinical Research Fellow in Experimental Cancer Medicine Team, has recently been appointed as NIHR Associate Principal Investigator (PI) on the CUP-COMP trial (a comparison of tissue and liquid biomarkers in Carcinoma Unknown Primary). As the first Associate PI within the R&I Division Julie-Anne will work alongside Dr Natalie Cook (PI) in overseeing trial activities such as recruitment of patients, protocol amendments and database management. She will also be involved in promoting awareness of the study and will participate in research meetings and molecular tumour boards.



Dr Cathryn Crockett, Lung Cancer Clinical Research Fellow, has had the opportunity to co-author seven papers accepted for publication – five as first author. She has had five posters accepted at national and international conferences including BTOG and the MR-Linac Consortium Meeting and delivered a joint oral presentation alongside a physicist colleague at the latter meeting too. In addition, Cathryn helped to facilitate the clinical implementation of thoracic radiotherapy on the MR-Linac at The Christie, with the first patient in the UK being treated in July 2021. Cathryn has recently been successfully appointed as one of the Trainee Editorial Board Members for the journal Clinical Oncology.



Dr Neethu Billy Graham Mariam, IMT1, won first prize amongst the trainee abstracts at British Uro-Oncology Group in September 2021 and presented at 2021 ESMO congress on 'Ethnicity and socioeconomic deprivation in early phase clinical trials in a UK tertiary referral centre'. Dr Mariam was a recent Education Fellow in Medical Education at The Christie.



Dr Roseanna Wheatley, HPB Clinical Research Fellow, had a review article titled 'Potential influence of the microbiome environment in patients with biliary tract cancer and implications for therapy' accepted for publication in the British Journal of Cancer.



Fellow Representatives

We have a team of three fellow representatives who meet with the fellowship team regularly to provide feedback and discuss developments to the programme. They also sit on The Christie International Fellowship Board, advocating for their peers, shaping the fellowship teaching programme and organising regular social activities for fellows to meet and catch up with one another.



Dr Cathryn Crockett
cathryn.crockett@nhs.net



Dr Roseanna Wheatley
roseanna.wheatley@nhs.net



Dr Michelle Li
michelle.li3@nhs.net

Michelle has recently joined the fellow representatives team, we include a few words from her below.

"I am excited to join the team as a fellow representative. I recently moved from locked down Melbourne, Australia to Manchester to start as a Clinical Fellow in Proton Therapy at The Christie. I completed my radiation oncology training at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and attained a Master of Public Health during that time. I have a strong interest in education and advocating for trainees, and I look forward to helping to organise social events and working with the medical education team to make the fellowship programme even better."

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Alexander Murphy for all of his prior work as fellow representative and wish him the best in his future career as he heads back to Australia.

Upcoming Events

Fellows are invited to fortnightly teaching sessions, facilitated by a range of subject experts. Invites to these events are shared directly with all fellows with instructions on how to get involved.

Monday 13th December 2021, 4-5pm
Christmas Quiz
Delivered by: Fellow Representatives

Monday 10th January 2022, 4-5pm
Hypoxia Biomarkers
Delivered by: Dr Tim Smith

Wednesday 26th January 2022, 4-5pm
Hot research topics in breast cancer radiotherapy
Delivered by: Dr Carmel Anandadas

Monday 7th February 2022, 4-5pm
Hot research topics in head and neck cancer
Delivered by: Dr Andrew McPartlin

Monday 21st February 2022, 4-5pm
Abstract writing and poster presentation
Delivered by: Dr Angela Lamarca

Monday 7th March 2022, 4-5pm
Educational research opportunities
Delivered by: Dr Ganesh Radhakrishna

Monday 21st March 2022, 4-5pm
Early phase clinical trial design
Delivered by: Dr Natalie Cook



The Christie School of Oncology

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