



Diagnoses ad curationes. Neuroimmunological disorders and therapeutics in 2016

Friday 26th February 2016.



Sean Pittock, MB, MMed Sci, M.D., is a consultant in the Department of Neurology and has a joint appointment in the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology. He holds the academic rank of professor of neurology, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine. He currently serves as director of the Neuroimmunology Laboratory and is the Marilyn A. Park and Moon S. Park, M.D., Director of the Center for Multiple Sclerosis and Autoimmune Neurology. He joined the staff of Mayo Clinic in 2005. In 2006, he set up the Autoimmune Neurology Clinic at the Mayo Clinic, the first dedicated Clinic of its type in the USA. This Clinic provides a multidisciplinary approach to the evaluation and treatment of patients with a broad range of autoimmune neurological disorders considered "rare orphan diseases". These disorders have often been misdiagnosed as untreatable neurodegenerative diseases; but are, in fact, responsive to immunotherapy and reversible. Dr Pittock's research is translational, and is focused on 1) the identification of novel biomarkers of autoimmune neurological diseases, 2) the clinical application of laboratory-based tests in diagnosis and outcome prediction for patients with autoimmune neurological disorders and 3) optimizing the clinical management of autoimmune neurological disorders. His recent work has focused on the diagnostic characteristics and immunotherapy outcomes of patients with autoimmune CNS demyelinating disorders (targets include aquaporin-4), dementias (target includes voltage-gated potassium channels), epilepsies (targets include NMDA receptors) and gastrointestinal dysmotility (targets include ganglionic acetylcholine receptors). This unique translational practice extending the laboratory's serologic findings directly to the bedside has allowed the creation of diagnostic decision trees which will optimize triaging of such patients for further phenotype analysis and biomarker discovery. He is also an educator in the field of autoimmune neurology and is actively involved in educational courses at both national (American Academy of Neurology, American Neurological Association) and international (World Congress of Neurology) meetings. His research is currently funded and supported by Mayo Clinic, NIH (R01), Alexion pharmaceuticals and the Guthy-Jackson Charitable Foundation.



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Oliver Tobin MB BCh BAO PhD is Assistant Professor of Neurology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. He has published widely in both clinical neuroimmunology and stroke. He works as a clinical neurologist and in the Department of Neuroimmunology, and has a particular interest in the following areas: multiple sclerosis, CLIPPERS, optic neuritis, transverse myelitis, neuromyelitis optica (Devic's disease) and autoimmune encephalitis.



Eoin Kavanagh is Professor of Neuroradiology at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital in Dublin. He trained in radiology at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital from 2000 to 2004, and then completed a fellowship in neuroradiology in Vancouver General Hospital from 2004 to 2005. This was followed by a fellowship in musculoskeletal radiology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Philadelphia from 2005 to 2006, and a consultant post as Staff Radiologist at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre from 2006 until 2007. Since 2007, he has worked as a Consultant Neuroradiologist at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, The Mater Private Hospital and Cappagh Hospital.

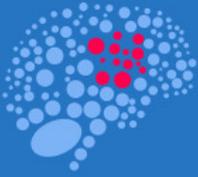


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Angela Vincent (Hon PhD Bergen) FRCPATH FMedSci FRS is Professor of Neuroimmunology in the University of Oxford. She qualified as a doctor in 1966 but after a year of residency decided to become a scientist and studied for a masters in Biochemistry at University College London. A series of opportunities led her into the field of myasthenia gravis and autoantibodies. She has since spent 40 years working on autoantibodies in neurological diseases, investigating their mechanisms with in vitro and in vivo techniques. She is also an Honorary Consultant in Immunology and runs the international Clinical Neuroimmunology service in Oxford, allowing her and colleagues to collaborate with neurologists worldwide. She was Head of Department of Clinical Neurology (2005-2008), served on the MRC (UK) Neurosciences and Mental Health Board (2004-2008), and was President of the International Society of Neuroimmunology (2001-2004). She was an Associate Editor of *Brain* (2004-2013). She has been given a number of awards and in 2011 she was elected FRS (Fellow of the Royal Society of London).



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Dr Christopher McGuigan is a Consultant Neurologist in St. Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin and Clinical Lecturer in the School of Medicine and Medical Science, University College Dublin, Ireland.

He obtained his medical degree from The Queen's University Belfast in 1996.

In 2000, he embarked on a three-year research fellowship under the supervision of Professor Michael Hutchinson on genetic and epidemiological aspects of multiple sclerosis in Ireland, and received several awards for his original research.

In 2007 he was appointed as a Consultant Neurologist with a specialist interest in Multiple Sclerosis at The West London Neuroscience Centre, Charing Cross Hospital and Clinical Senior Lecturer at Imperial College, London.

In September 2010 he returned to St Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland to a Consultant Neurology post with an academic interest in multiple sclerosis and neuroinflammation. In 2014 he was elected Dean of the Irish Institute of Clinical Neuroscience. He has published numerous peer reviewed papers and has co-written several book chapters relating to the management of multiple sclerosis.



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Sarosh Irani is a Consultant Neurologist and Clinician-Scientist at the University of Oxford. He has vast clinical and laboratory experience in the field of autoantibody-mediated diseases of the nervous system, in particular the central nervous system. He has studied the antigenic targets of autoantibodies in patients with encephalitis and epilepsies. In particular, his research has focused on LGI1, CASPR2 and the NMDA-receptor. In addition, he has been involved with projects examining autoantibodies against the GABA-receptor, glycine receptors and aquaporin-4.

With colleagues, he has phenotyped multiple patients with these disorders in great detail, and characterised their clinical responses to therapies. These findings have generated clinical features which correlate well with a high likelihood of an immunotherapy-responsive condition. They have also identified novel clinical descriptions of patients with immune-mediated cognitive, movement and seizure disorders. Of particular note, Dr. Irani and colleagues have described faciobrachial dystonic seizures as a novel autoimmune epilepsy syndrome which often responds better to immunotherapies than it does to conventional anti-epileptic drugs.

He is currently exploring new antigenic targets, methods to measure antibody levels, mechanisms of antibody action and novel therapeutic agents as part of a Wellcome Trust Intermediate Fellowship.



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Professor Mary D King FRCPI, FRCPCH, is a Consultant Paediatric Neurologist at Temple St., Children's University Hospital, the Rotunda Hospital and Beaumont Hospital, Dublin and is professor in paediatrics at University College Dublin School of Medicine & Medical Science, Ireland.

Professor King has produced over 120 publications in the field of paediatric neurology and is co-author of "A Handbook of Neurological Investigations in Children" (King & Stephenson, MacKeith Press London, 2009).

She is a member of several national and international professional societies and a regular reviewer of papers submitted for publication in various paediatric neurology Journals. Her main areas of research interest are neurogenetic and movement disorders and causation of neonatal encephalopathy and childhood disability.



Dr John McConville works as a Consultant Neurologist at Ulster Hospital, South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust. He has a particular interest, multiple publications and expertise in neuromuscular disorders, including myasthenia gravis and congenital myasthenia, and leads the Neuromuscular Service for adults and children in Belfast.