



Update on our plans for research



Charity Manager, Rosie Milsom

Up until the pandemic.....



- Lobbying the government.
- Met with DHSC (Prof Chris Whitty) to discuss co-funding a diagnostics project.
- Discussions on supporting case definition and core outcome set workshop.

After the pandemic hit



- Existing talks understandably slowed.
- We created our research strategy – focussing on improving diagnostics and treatment.
- Registered with AMRC.
- Recruited a scientific advisory committee.

Innovation Fund



- Annual fund awarding project grants of up to £50,000 towards innovative projects which address [our research priorities](#).
- Projects of up to 18 months.
- Aim is to help get ideas for pilot studies and proof of concepts off paper and in the lab.



Innovation Fund



- Launched in Jan 2021 and received 7 applications from across UK & Europe.
- Three projects shortlisted.
- First grant awarded to Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.



First funded project



- The project will aim to pilot a new test for Lyme disease using immuno-PCR technology (**iPCR**), a method that combines pathogen protein detection with DNA amplification.
- It will aim screen for multiple *Borrelia* species and diagnostic markers in a single assay.
- They will test against positive clinical samples to determine which of the antigens serves as the best markers for Lyme disease and should therefore be included in the more specific and accurate UK test.
- The marker under detection is an antigen, as opposed to antibodies, so should be able to tell us if infection is ongoing.

Other projects



- Potential to support a PhD study into the role of microbiome and leaky gut in chronic conditions such as ME, long Covid and Lyme – using patients of Dr Jack Lambert.

Q&A for Rosie Milsom

Attendee	Question
Janey Cringean	The new test sounds similar to the Leicester phage PCR test - how will it differ from that?
<p>The difference between the two is that the phage-PCR from Uni of Leicester will target the DNA whereas the immuno-PCR will be a highly sensitive antigen detection assay.</p> <p>Given that the development of novel diagnostics is a complicated process, we believe it's wise to look into a number of different methods, for a better chance of success. We are therefore providing seed funding to carry out feasibility and proof of principle for the immune-PCR test.</p>	
Dorothy & Pete	Test is for positive samples. What if I have a negative test result to the Lyme test at Southampton on nhs?
<p>The test is for antigens (ie parts of bacteria) rather than antibodies, which is what the NHS test detects. The project first has to validate any new test on samples that have tested positive for antibodies, to see which antigens are best to use – which ones reliably generate antibodies in UK patients. If this is successful then the aim would be to test on samples that were negative for antibodies to see if antigens can be detected.</p>	