
Wellcome Trust - Medical Research Council
Cambridge Stem Cell Institute

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

ACTIVITY REPORT 2015 - 2016



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AT CSCI

ABOUT US

The Cambridge Stem Cell Institute (CSCI) is a world-leading centre for stem cell research. Our mission is to transform the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease through a deep understanding of how stem cells work.

ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

There is a lot of public interest in our work and we are committed to sharing our progress in accessible and inspiring ways. In early 2015, we consolidated these commitments in a clear Public Engagement Strategy, which guides our annual series of PE activities, known as the PE Programme.

This report provides a summary of PE Programme activities from June 2015 to June 2016. It has been a particularly busy period with lots of experimental events and the development of new resources. As we move into the 2016 - 2017 Programme, we will be able to use the lessons learnt to reach new audiences and start new conversations.





STRATEGY

VISION

We will foster a culture of science engagement by contributing to greater mutual trust between scientists and the public, by improving scientific literacy and by raising the aspirations of researchers and the public.

GOALS

- Provide regular and diverse opportunities for transparency, dialogue and collaboration between the public and our researchers.
- Professionalise researcher participation through tailored skills training, time allowance, recognition and reward.
- Increase our understanding of public views and interests, allowing us to be responsive and forward thinking when directing our research.
- Build our reputation as a trusted advisor and leading voice on stem cells, enabling the public to make informed judgements and decisions.

EVENTS OVERVIEW



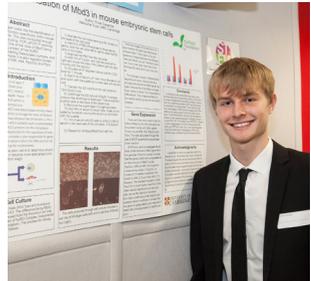
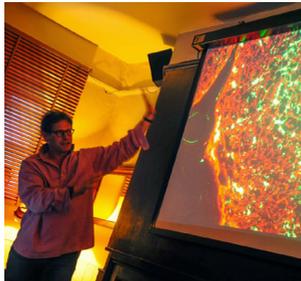
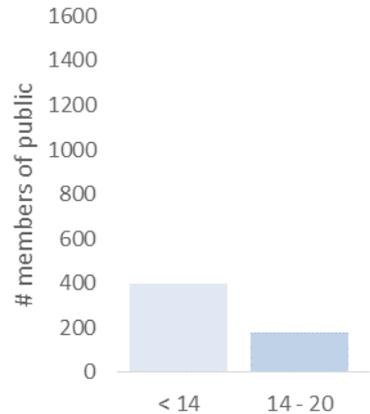
LITTLE & OFTEN

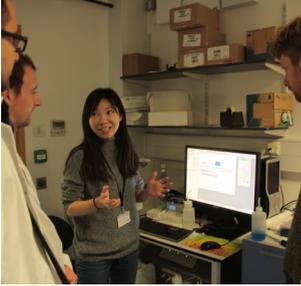
When it comes to engagement, we don't believe in 'one size fits all'. That's why in the past 12 months we have offered 18 different events & activities, including: tours, festival exhibits, interactive talks, work placements and a game jam; as well as 4 bespoke training opportunities.

In addition, researchers have taken part in more than 30 externally organised events in collaboration with charities, local community groups, Cambridge University and others.

Part of this process has been about evaluating and identifying what works well so that we use our resources effectively; scaling down some projects and developing others.

Audience





COMMUNITIES REACHED

In the last 12 months alone our researchers have interacted with and engaged approximately 3,000 people. This does not include those reached through the press, social media or enquiry responses.

Age

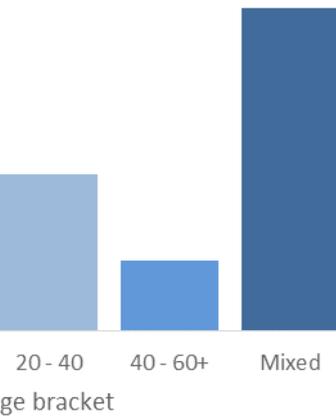


Chart 1

Chart 1 shows the primary age-group and approximate numbers reached at each of our public events. It shows that we struggle to reach young adults and highlights that most events need to cater for a range of different ages. Encouragingly, we are reaching working-age adults but other data suggests they are primarily from higher socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Further diversification of events for this group is needed.



RESEARCHER PARTICIPATION

At least 102 researchers have taken part in one or more Public Engagement events in the past 12 months. This represents approximately one third of our scientists. Of the 102 researchers involved, 38 participated in 2 events or more (and some as many as 7). It is likely that some information about participation is being under-reported. Improving administrative systems to capture this data is a priority for the next period.

Chart 2 shows participation distribution according to research position. It demonstrates that we have a very positive level of engagement and reporting amongst our Principal Investigators (PI) with 23 of 29 current PIs having taken part in one or more events. Equally, the numbers identify clear room for improvement in PhD student and Post Doc involvement, currently at approximately 28%.

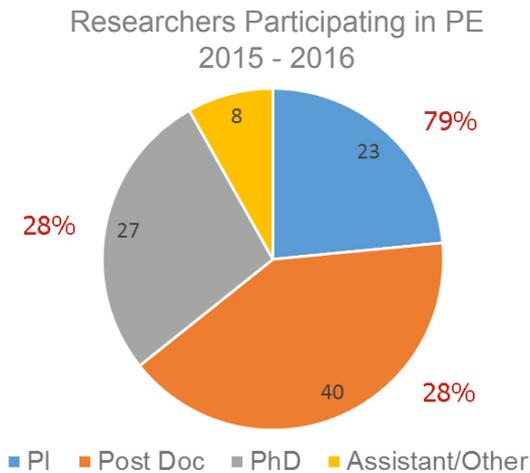


Chart 2

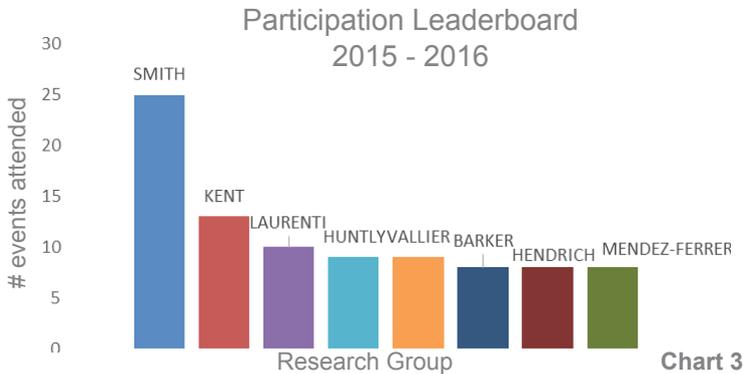
PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS

“I enjoyed watching young children be filled by wonder and excitement by things we do every day”

Emily Calderbank, Research Assistant

“I learned a lot about talking to the public and trying to focus on simple aspects of the research”

Ana Amaral, Post-Doc



Some of our research groups are particularly active. **Chart 3** shows the labs with the highest overall participation. Two relatively small and newly established labs, Kent and Laurenti, make the top rankings. This is encouraging as it implies that our junior PIs are already committed to engagement and are facilitating participation as part of their lab culture. It is also positive to see that fundamental as well as translational research is well represented as it can be more challenging for fundamental researchers to see the value of engagement. This ethos has been led by the Smith group and their commitment over a number of years.

RESEARCHER TRAINING

Specialist communication skills, confidence and experience are all required to deliver high quality engagement. We concentrate on offering as much ‘on the job’ training as possible through simple measures such as volunteer briefings and pairing novices with veterans during events. We also embed training in central processes such as the PhD programme induction, the annual retreat and other internal meetings. Our staff engagement series provides an informal opportunity for senior researchers to practice their engagement skills.

This year we also offered three formal training workshops:

- ‘Presenting Your Research’ Masterclass for Women in STEMM
- ‘Writing Science for the Public’ Workshop series
- ‘How to Create Inspiring Outreach Activities’, Let’s Talk Science

CASE STUDY: Game Lab

SUMMARY

Date: 24th & 25th October, 2015

Event: 48hr competitive game jam

Community: Young adults

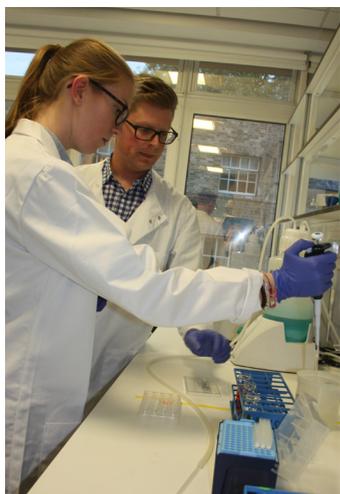
Reach: 20 public, 7 researchers

Funding: Smith Lab research grant & Microsoft Research sponsorship

Total cost: £2,313

AIMS

1. Provide jam participants with improved knowledge of stem cells
2. Improve researchers' abilities to simplify and visually represent their research.
3. Source ideas that can be developed into custom public engagement resources.
4. Encourage collaborations with developers and sponsors.
5. Inspire other research groups to consider public engagement and experimental formats.



THE EVENT

Game lab competitors were given a crash course in stem cell biology through a series of short talks and hands-on lab visits, delivered by researchers from the Smith lab.

They formed small teams and raced against the clock to create a game based on the theme 'Destiny & Decisions' in under 48 hours. Researchers were on-hand to help incorporate detailed science in realistic and original ways.

The weekend was an informal, collaborative and creative experience for all involved and led to great new ideas.



FEEDBACK & EVALUATION

As an animator it was really fun to see the personalities behind stem cell research, which is initially a daunting subject for a complete outsider. Tuzer and Stan would light up whenever they talked about what they do, so I learnt a bunch because they were fun.”

“ The staff were so lovely and helpful and taught us so much that we were able to convert into what we do.”

We evaluated this event against our original strategic aims and concluded that it had been a highly successful pilot project - fully achieving aims 1, 3 and 4 and partially achieving aims 2 and 5. The level of engagement from non-researcher participants in particular was beyond our expectations and allowed for great creativity. We have secured funding to run a larger-scale, repeat event where we will focus on increasing the number of CSCI researchers taking part and will provide more opportunities for them to learn from participants.

THE GAME: Cellbound

After the event, the winning developers worked in close collaboration with a team of CSCI researchers to refine their ideas and accurately embed real science in their game - ‘Cellbound’. We were able to dedicate some funding to develop a fully functioning prototype, which we now use at live public events such as the stem cell pop-up exhibit. We aim to make the game accessible on a public gaming platform in the near future.



PROGRAMME FINANCES

Thanks to the Provision for Public Engagement grant provided by the Wellcome Trust, we have a core programme budget of **£10,554** per year in addition to staff costs for one full-time Public Engagement Officer. In the last period, we were able to boost the programme budget with an additional **£33,462** raised from grants and sponsorship.

2015 - 2016 Public Engagement Additional Income: Grants, Sponsorship & Shared Costs		
Source of Funds	Purpose	Amount
Cambridge University/ISSF	Contribution to Screenhouse Masterclass (shared event)	£5,233.2
Wellcome Trust	Contribution to Natural History Museum costs	£315
HEIF 5 / Clinical School	Patient videos & pop-up patient engagement	£19,000
AGS Group	Contribution to Game Lab	£1,321
Microsoft Research	Sponsorship of Game Lab event	£1,000
Graduate School of Life Sciences	Training workshop for GMLS researchers	£700
MRC	Festival Game Lab (postponed)	£3,350
Royal Society Partnership Grant	What Am I Made Of? Project (Received by school)	£1,155.76
Babraham Institute	Contribution to Science Festival talks (shared event)	£462.2
Gurdon Institute	Contribution to Science Festival talks (shared event)	£462.2
Sanger Institute	Contribution to Science Festival talks (shared event)	£462.2
ADDITIONAL INCOME:		£33,461.56

Table 1

Our total spending over the 12 months was **£27,018**, with comparable costs for event management and resource development. With the PE programme now well established, the carried-over budget will allow us to invest in strategic, large-scale events in the coming period.

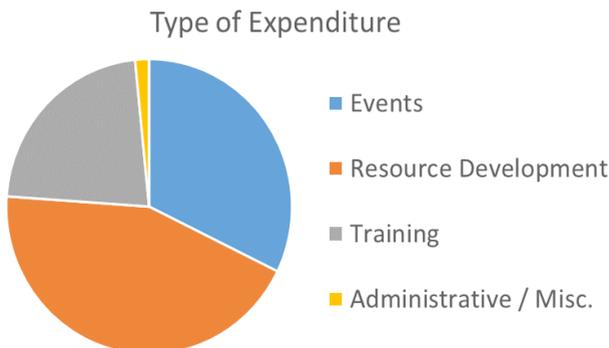


Chart 4

PROGRAMME EXPANSION

CSCI receives core funding from the Wellcome Trust and the MRC, which is reviewed every 5 years. In June 2016, the PE Programme was assessed as part of this review and we were invited to present a full proposal for the next quinquennium; 2017 - 2022.

This coincided with the first year of implementation of the Programme, meaning that we were in a good position to evaluate our progress and to set ambitious targets for growth.



During the next core period, all members of the CSCI will come together in a bespoke new building. This presents a significant opportunity to enhance our on-site public engagement, which is currently limited by being spread across multiple sites that were not designed with the public in mind. Capitalising on our new location at the heart of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus to reach our two new target communities - patients and hard to reach adults - was central to our renewal proposal.

In summary, the proposal included:

- Increase in core funding from £10,554p.a. to £21,000p.a.
- Increased commitment to raise additional funding; +55%
- Continued funding for a full-time PE Officer, Grade 7/8
- Two new part-time PE positions:
 - 1 x 50% PE Event Administrator, Grad 4, from 2017
 - 1 x 50% PE Content Officer, Grade 4, from 2019
- £60,000 investment in public exhibits & resources for the new building

A decision on the allocation of public engagement funding is expected in October 2016.

For further information on our PE Programme, please contact: scipeo@stemcells.cam.ac.uk

You can find out more about our latest events on our website: www.stemcells.cam.ac.uk and on Facebook & Twitter [@SCICambridge](https://twitter.com/SCICambridge)

Compiled 30.7.2016