

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

# 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 human health through a deep understanding of stem cell biology.

## WHY ENGAGE?

Stem cell research has, and will continue to, impact large parts of society, and consequently receives a large amount of public interest and scrutiny. As research leaders in this area, we think it is important our scientists engage with a wide spectrum of public voices. We believe such encounters enhance the quality of the scientific questions we ask and help us build trust in research.

## ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

To ensure that public engagement remains a core part of our research culture, the Institute has developed a **Public Engagement Strategy**. The strategy directs our annual public engagement programme of centrally coordinated events, activities and training. It also lays out our strategic priorities, target communities and measures of success.

## LEADERSHIP TRANSITION



**Dr Rebecca Jones**  
Public Engagement  
Manager

In January 2017 the CSCI Public Engagement Officer, Philippa Russell, left the Institute after two years having established the public engagement programme.

Rebecca Jones took over in a newly established Public Engagement Manager role linked to the Institute's five-year Wellcome MRC Centre renewal. The team also expanded to include a part-time Public Engagement Assistant, Greg Palmer, who supports the delivery of the PE programme.

The Institute has also welcomed a new Research Strategy and Communications Manager, Abi Herrmann, whose remit will complement the delivery of Goals 3 and 4 of the current public engagement strategy.

# STRATEGY OVERVIEW

## VISION

To 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

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



Images from Sketchcrawl visit, 2017, © Susan Apps

## DATA

The data collected for this report covers 25 centrally coordinated events and activities, managed by the CSCI public engagement team, and 35 external engagement activities led by academic staff outside of the core programme, throughout 2017. The number of external PE activities is likely being under-reported to the central team and we are improving administrative systems to capture this data as a priority for 2018.

# GOVERNANCE

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

Our Steering Committee provides academic oversight of the CSCI public engagement programme and allows us to respond to the needs and the interests of our scientific community. The PESC meets four times a year to discuss current and future public engagement plans and pioneer ways to further embed public engagement at the Institute.

In 2017 the committee expanded to include two rotating senior PIs. In 2018, we will begin reporting to the CSCI Scientific Advisory Committee on a regular basis to encourage full integration of PE into core Institute activities.



**Dr David Kent**  
PE Champion  
Chair



**Prof Jenny Nichols**  
PI Rep  
Gleeson Building



**Dr Cédric Ghevaert**  
PI Rep  
Biomedical Campus



**Dr Thorsten Klampfl**  
Postdoc Rep  
Green Lab



**Julia Spindel**  
PhD Rep  
Reik Lab (Affiliate)



**Dr Helen Featherstone**  
External Rep  
Wellcome Mentor 2017



**Joann Leeding**  
External Rep  
THIS Institute



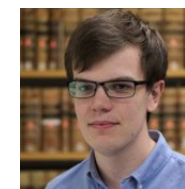
**Dr Hélène Doerflinger**  
External Rep  
The Gurdon Institute



**Dr Rebecca Jones**  
PE Manager  
Secretariat



**Dr Abi Herrmann**  
Research Comms  
Manager



**Greg Palmer**  
PE Assistant  
Minutes

# EVENTS OVERVIEW

When it comes to engagement, we believe in diversity and creativity. That's why in the past 12 months we have offered a selection of centrally coordinated events (Table 1) and supported researcher participation in a variety of externally organised events and activities.

**Table 1: Event highlights**

Month	Highlights
March	Cambridge Science Festival
April	Sketchcrawl
May	Cambridge Beer Festival
June	BRAINFest
June/July	Stem Cell Exchanges exhibition
Aug	LIYSF visit
Sept	Cherry Hinton Festival
Oct	Cherry Hinton Library (Robots)
Oct/Nov	Regenerator on tour
Various	'Variables' Science Comedy nights



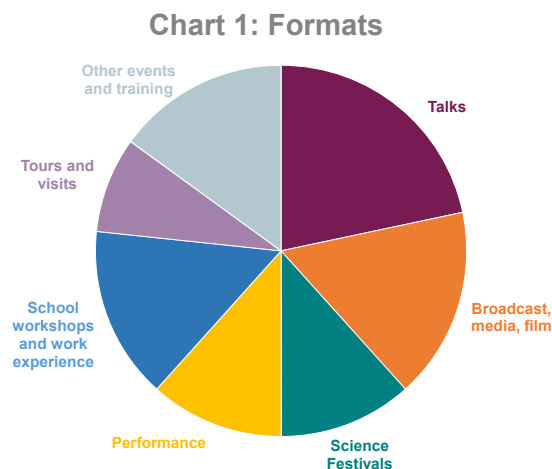
BRAINFEST, 2017

## PROJECT FORMATS

**Chart 1** shows the event formats adopted for our 2017 public engagement programme. We have diversified our programming by reaching well beyond typical science festival audiences and utilising new platforms such as exhibitions and performance.

Of our 'in person' events over 70% were in the Cambridgeshire region with 12% in locations across the UK, including Lincoln, York, and London.

Looking ahead, we plan to expand our portfolio to further engage our target communities, with an emphasis on location and new formats.

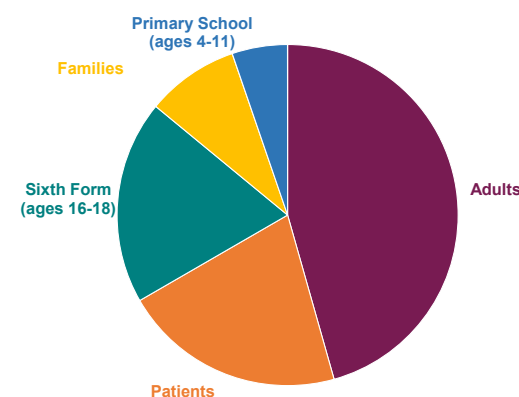


## COMMUNITIES REACHED

Over the last year our researchers have interacted with and engaged over 4,400 people. This does not include those reached through digital channels such as podcasts, films and social media.

**Chart 2** shows the primary target groups for our public engagement activities. New priority communities as outlined in our PE Strategy were (i) **'harder to reach' adults**, who currently have little access to science engagement, and (ii) **patient groups**, who can help us frame discussions around stem cell therapies.

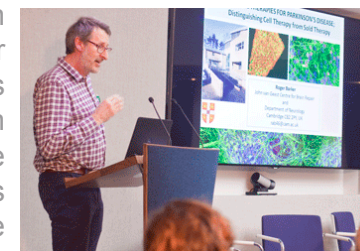
**Chart 2: Target publics**



Number of events aimed at target groups

It is clear we are targeting and reaching a general adult audience. However, whilst we have made efforts to broaden the demographics we engage with, such as beer festival patrons, we need to improve the data captured of these encounters and be more explicit in future targeting of events to widen engagement with more defined 'harder to reach' communities.

Likewise, we have been successful in targeting subsets of patients, and their relatives, through science café platforms such as SciBarHealth and laboratory open days. This has allowed us to discuss the clinical applications of our research in areas such as Parkinson's disease and Multiple Sclerosis.



Prof. Roger Barker speaking with patients

## LOOKING AHEAD

In 2018, all CSCI groups will be located on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, allowing us to expand the engagement we undertake with our target communities and facilitate new conversations and collaborations centred around our bespoke public space (p12).



# SEED FUND PROJECTS

To kick start creative engagement projects the Institute opens an annual call for our Public Engagement Seed Fund (funding up to £1k). The two projects we supported in 2017 were:

## 1. REGENERATOR - A STEM CELL BREW

**Target public:** 'Harder to reach' adults

**Project leads:** Tim Lohoff and Daniel Bode (Wellcome PhD programme)

**Venue and Date:** Cambridge Beer Festival, May 2017

**Reach:** Direct interaction ~150 adults, 500+ flyers and ~600L beer sales

**Project budget:** £1,000

### OVERVIEW

*Regenerator*, a CSCI 4.4% session ale, was developed in collaboration with local Cambridge brewery, Moonshine. The beer was launched at Cambridge Beer Festival in an effort to bring stem cell science to new 'harder to reach' groups. A team of 5 PhD students attended the Festival equipped with 'conversation starters' including pipette samples of the beer and were able to engage people in face to face discussions about stem cells and their future therapeutic potential.



### FEEDBACK

Festival goers remarked on how 'reassuring it was to hear from dedicated young scientists' with researchers benefiting from the challenge of framing their stem cell research in the context 'real world' questions, and personal anecdotes of disease.

### REGENERATOR ON TOUR

Following a successful launch, *Regenerator* went 'on tour' in Autumn 2017 across five Cambridgeshire pubs, accompanied by informal science cafés, comedy and stem-cell pub quizzes. We engaged an additional 230 people, a third of which had never been to a science event before.

## 2. STEM CELL EXCHANGES

**Target public:** Culturally active adults, families

**Venue and Date:** Michaelhouse café and online, June - July 2017

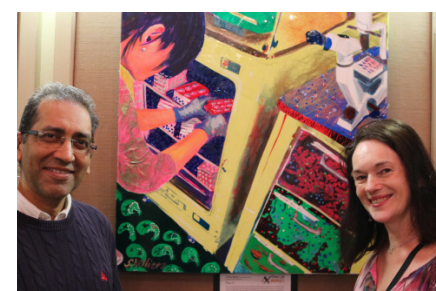
**Project leads:** Katie Tremble and Mariana Alves (Silva Lab)

**Reach:** Exhibition footfall ~4,000, Evening showcase 100, Podcasts 600 listens

**Project budget:** £500

### OVERVIEW

Eleven of our principal investigators were paired with local Cambridge artists to create artistic works that both challenged and celebrated the potential of stem cells. The resulting artworks were exhibited for a two



week run at a local community café in the centre of Cambridge as part of the MRC Festival of Medical Research. A finale event, featuring stem cell-inspired performance poetry brought the exhibition to dramatic close.

Alongside the exhibition a series of podcast interviews with participating artists and scientists allowed the

public to dig deeper into the motivations behind the research and the impact of these 'creative collisions'.

### PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

*'I really enjoyed the discussion with the artist; she helped me look at our research from a different angle.'*

Dr Elisa Laurenti, PI

*'My understanding of the application of the research has increased exponentially along with a sense of the lab's shared purpose and enthusiasm'*

Katherine Gravett, Artist

### DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

The Stem Cell Exchanges podcasts had over 600 listens in the first 4 months of being released, and around 150 people visited the podcast page on our website. Together there were nearly 20,000 impressions on twitter and 4,000 people reached on Facebook. Some podcasts did particularly well on social media – Ludovic Vallier's podcast got 114 engagements on Twitter, including retweets and likes.

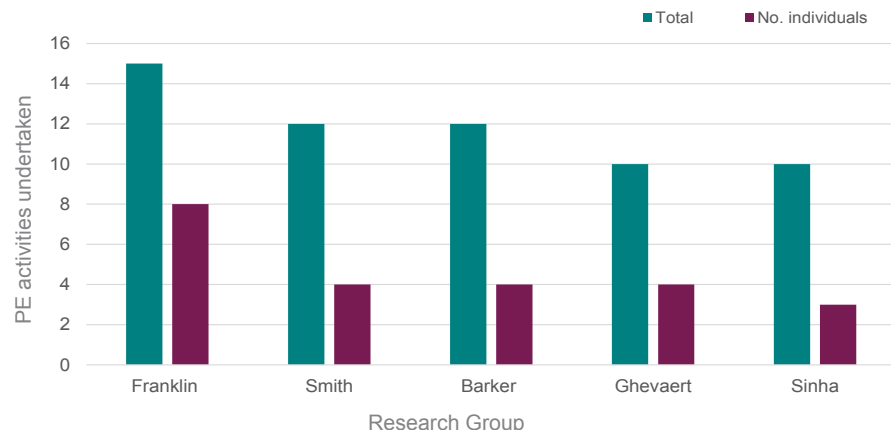
# RESEARCHER PARTICIPATION

From the data collected, researchers from 25 of the 29 labs at the Institute took part in some form of public engagement activity in the past 12 months. Of the researchers involved, nearly half participated in at least 2 events, with some as many as 9. This shows we have a core of very engaged staff and students, spread across the Institute, on which to build our public engagement agenda.

We also maintain a very strong commitment to engagement from our senior research staff, with **70%** Principal Investigators taking part in one or more engagement activities in the last 12 months. This is compared to **25%** of postgraduate students and **20%** of postdocs.

**Chart 3** shows the CSCI labs with the highest overall participation in public engagement. Our data shows that some groups rely on one or two very active ‘engagers’ whereas others have a wider spread across lab members.

**Chart 3: Top 5 Participation Leaderboard**



Our Wellcome - MRC 4 Year PhD programme warrants special recognition as 66% of students took part in public engagement during their first year of study, compared to just 25% of their peers. The course has adopted an embedded approach which mandates and supports contributions to PE. We will apply this learning to ensure students on other programmes can benefit in a similar way over the next period.

## PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS

*‘I was really surprised at the amount of great conversations I had with people who were keen to hear about our science as they enjoyed a pint in the sun! I felt a lot more comfortable approaching people with an opener like the stem cell beer.’*

**Jamie McGinn**, PhD  
Volunteer, Cambridge Beer Festival

*‘Taking part in the stem cell robot exhibit was an amazing experience. It made me more aware of the public appetite for stem cell research and how important it is that we provide clear and honest answers to their questions.’*

**Dr Pedro Madrigal**, PostDoc  
Volunteer, Cambridge Science Festival

## AWARDS

### VICE-CHANCELLOR’S AWARD FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH RESEARCH



Elisa with the Vice-Chancellor

Dr Elisa Laurenti won one of six prestigious University of Cambridge Awards for her pioneering Stem Cell Robots activity. Her collaborative engagement project was originally funded through a PE Seed Fund grant and engages the public with how stem cells make decisions. Elisa now has BBSRC funding to further develop the project.



Stem cell robots

## RESEARCHER TRAINING

Specialist communication skills, confidence and experience are all required to deliver high quality engagement. This year we branched out to offer training workshops in the expanding field of **science comedy**. As part of this programme we gave two of our researchers a ‘train the trainer’ session to allow them to teach others. The result; seven comedy gigs, over 450 comedy fans, featuring the best of CSCI talent.



Dr Morya Lawrence,  
[Annual Report 11](#)

**Science Comedy training**, May and Sept 2017  
Trainer: Stanley Strawbridge (PhD, Smith Lab)

# PROGRAMME FINANCES

## CORE FUNDING

This was the last year that our public engagement programme required support from the Wellcome Provision for Public Engagement (2014 - 2018).

The provision provided a programme budget of £10,000 per year in addition to staff costs for one full-time Public Engagement Officer. From 1 July 2017 we moved across to the new five-year Wellcome MRC renewal stream with an expanded programme and increased core budget of £21,000 per year. The renewal also included:

- Increased commitment to raise additional funding; (55%)
- Continued funding for a full-time PE Manager Grade 7/8
- 50% PE Event Administrator, Grade 5
- £60,000 investment in engagement plans for new building

## ADDITIONAL INCOME

Due to our planned move to the new core renewal we did not require large amounts of additional fundraising in this reporting period, but still raised over **£5,000** extra towards our activities (Table 3).

**Table 3: Public Engagement Additional Income**

Source of Funds	Purpose	Amount
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
MRC	Festival of Medical Research	£1,500
BBSRC	Elisa Laurenti Pathway to Impact - Stem Cell Robots II	£2,625
<b>ADDITIONAL INCOME:</b>		<b>£5,512.50</b>

# PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Our public engagement programme is under frequent internal monitoring and review. Data is collected on all of our activities through our public engagement database and is reported to key internal and external stakeholders in our annual report. This approach is complimented by a series of qualitative evaluations including surveys, observations and interviews which allow us to reflect and improve on individual projects as they develop.

## SUCCESSES

- New stars; PE Seed Fund projects
- Identification and expansion of successful formats (e.g. Science comedy)
- First attempts made to engage ‘harder to reach adult’ groups
- Expansion of Public Engagement Steering Committee to include Principal Investigator representation
- University-level recognition of PE success; Elisa Laurenti
- Growth of plans for new building (p12)
- Transition within central PE team

## AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Diversify public engagement formats - experiment!
- Enhance engagement in wider Cambridgeshire region
- Grow national and international profile (incl. online)
- Target patient engagement (incl. building launch)
- Increase participation amongst PhDs and Postdoc community
- Collaborate with Institute colleagues to coordinate expansion of policy engagement and digital communication channels.
- Improve data capture for researcher-led engagement activities beyond core programme



## NEW WELLCOME MENTOR

Dr Kerry Leslie will be working with the public engagement team throughout 2018 to reassess the Institute’s strategic goals and fine tune our engagement priorities ahead of a mid-term review in 2019. Kerry is the former head of Public Engagement at RCUK.

# NEW BUILDING



In summer 2018 the CSCI will be moving into our new building on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, along with two other research Institutes: the Cambridge Institute of Therapeutic Immunology and Infectious Disease and the Milner Therapeutics Institute

For the first time the CSCI will have all of its researchers under one roof and will benefit from purpose built public space including an internal exhibition area, lecture hall and café and permanent art installation outside in the garden. Together with our building partners and neighbours we hope to use these spaces to reach new audiences, particularly patient groups and 'harder to reach' adults.

## VISION FOR THE NEW BUILDING

1. To provide a unique public space on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus for the public to engage with contemporary biomedical research.
2. To develop a comprehensive and evolving programme to allow different public groups to learn about and engage with research and its potential applications
3. To work collaboratively with the public and with key strategic partners to embed engagement in the fabric of the new building.
4. To become a recognised pioneer of engagement locally and nationally.



For further information on our public engagement programme, please contact: [scipe@stemcells.cam.ac.uk](mailto:scipe@stemcells.cam.ac.uk)

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

March 2018