

Chronic Cough

in Focus

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We are now well into 2018 and would like to give you a quick catch up on where we are up to.

Wellcome Trust Investigator Funding

Starting from January 2018, Prof Jacky Smith has been awarded a prestigious Wellcome Investigator in Science Award, a total of just over £3million research funding, over the next 5 years. The funding will support studies to better understand the role of a chemical known as ATP in causing chronic cough.

In many people with chronic coughing we think the nerves controlling cough are overactive and this may be caused by ATP in the airways. This idea comes from recent studies showing that a treatment (Af-219/MK-7264) that blocks the effect of ATP on nerves improved cough by 75% in chronic cough of unknown cause. Not everyone responded to the treatment though, and we don't know whether this new treatment might work in all types of cough, such as in asthma, smoking related lung conditions, lung fibrosis or other lung diseases.

This research aims to

1. Understand more about why this new treatment works in some people
2. Develop tests that would tell a doctor which patients and which types of coughs might respond best to new treatments,
3. Work out what sort of other new treatments might help to treat cough and other symptoms due to ATP or over-active airway nerves.

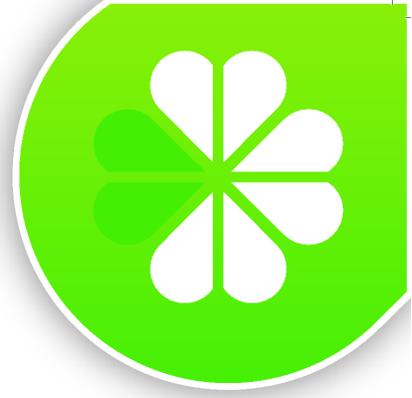
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Combat My Cough



It's been another successful year for Combat My Cough. Each year we like to try something new and this year was no exception. Taking into account the feedback from last year we decided to hold the event in the evening here at Wythenshawe Hospital, bringing a new feel and atmosphere.

This opened up the opportunity for new faces to see behind the scenes of our research whilst still welcoming guests from previous years. These changes were well received and were thought by many to be a refreshing change from previous years.



This year we saw the return of our much loved workshops bringing five never before seen activities. These included trying your hand at cough counting, seeing how heart rate is related to cough and tips and tricks to cope with chronic cough. The workshops were a hit with our guests and went down better than ever before with more interaction and engagement.



We introduced forums to this year's event giving our guests a chance to talk in small groups with subject specialists. These forums included "Speech Language Therapy" by Jemma Haines, an introduction to Jemma's specialty and her upcoming study, and "Show Me the Money" by our Public and Patient Involvement team, exploring research priorities from a patient's point of view.



Special thanks go out to Dr Bashar Al-Shekly who kindly stepped in to do our yearly round up talk in Professor Jacky Smith's absence. We would also like to thank Caroline Turner who went through great effort to put together a fantastic workshop which was loved by all.



From everyone at the Cough Research Team we would like to thank you for your attendance and we look forward to seeing you next year.





Upcoming study: oRChiD

Cough is a common feature of a variety of different chest conditions and is often associated with a worse quality of life.

Research has shown that there are lots of receptors in the lungs that can trigger cough. We think that excessive coughing can be caused by these “cough receptors” working abnormally or being too sensitive. However we believe that different cough receptors are affected in different conditions.

In oRChiD, our up and coming study, we will ask volunteers with a variety of different conditions to do a selection of cough challenges. Each cough challenge will target a different cough receptor. Therefore we will be able to work out which cough receptor is affected in each condition.

The conditions we are interested in are;

Chronic cough

Asthma

COPD

Lung fibrosis

We will also need healthy volunteers to assess the healthy response to our cough challenges.

If you have one of the above conditions or wish to be a healthy volunteer, you may be eligible to take part in oRChiD. The study involves a series of investigations including cough challenges, breathing tests and questionnaires. You would be asked to attend the hospital for a total of 6 visits, though you will be reimbursed for your travel and time.

If you'd like to know more about the study and what taking part involves, feel free to contact us on 0161

Upcoming study: Volcano 2

VOLCANO-2 is a research study we are currently running examining the efficacy of a study drug called orvepitant. Because chronic refractory cough can be caused by the airways becoming oversensitive, it is hoped that orvepitant will help reduce the need to cough. Orvepitant is a once-daily tablet and will be compared with a placebo. The purpose of the VOLCANO-2 Study is to see if orvepitant reduces the need to cough. The study will also test the safety of orvepitant, and how the drug is absorbed and used within the body.

The VOLCANO-2 Study will last for up to 18 weeks. If you take part you will be randomized into 1 of 4 treatment groups – 3 groups will receive different doses of orvepitant and 1 group will receive a placebo.

To be eligible to take part you must be generally healthy, 18 years or older and suffer from chronic cough. There are some specific criteria you must meet but we could check most of these on the phone with you.

If you'd like to know more about the study and what taking part involves, feel free to contact us on 0161 291 5388. We are recruiting now.



Study results: MEMOsa study

Chronic cough is a troublesome condition that can really affect patient's quality of life. One of the best medicines we have for it is low dose morphine sulphate. This is a pain relief medicine that has been shown to improve cough in some patients based on a study in 2007.

We wanted to find out exactly how morphine works for our patients, and at the same time, prove it does work to improve cough.

Our theory is that people with chronic cough get abnormal sensations in their throats. Most chronic cough sufferers describe it as an "irritation" or "tickle". We think that morphine helps reduce these abnormal sensations and thus reduces cough.

We recruited 22 volunteers who take morphine for their chronic cough in to the MEMOsa study. The volunteers kindly came off their own morphine and went through two treatment periods; one week on morphine and one week with a dummy medicine (placebo). Neither the staff nor volunteers knew what order the medicines were given in.

Results showed that when taking morphine, our volunteers coughed 72% less per day! They also felt better and rated their cough lower on a scale.

When we looked at throat sensations, we saw that irritation and tickle both went down with morphine compared to the dummy medicine.

We think that morphine works by reducing these sensations, which drive chronic cough.

We hope to present our findings at national and international meetings soon.

Finally, I would like to thank all the amazing volunteers who took part in MEMOsa, we would not be able to carry out this work without your help. Thanks again!

Dr Bashar Al-Shekilly

The RelAxCough Study

It's all go in the cough team at the minute, and we're looking for volunteers to help with our ongoing studies! We're currently testing a drug called AX-8 in the RelAxCough study, a short study with only 5 visits over 6 weeks. The drug is related to cooling compounds, such as menthol, which may reduce cough in cases where the nerves regulating the cough reflex are more sensitive than normal, such as in chronic cough.

We're looking to see if AX-8 can reduce the number of times in a day that people cough, measured by our cough monitors, and the feeling associated with cough, such as a tickle in the throat.

We're looking for 15 suitable volunteers, who are relatively healthy with little or no smoking history, and are happy to come off any cough medications they are currently taking for the duration of the study. The study visits involve a couple of long days at the unit (around 6 hours), filling in questionnaires and wearing a cough monitor. If you are interested in taking part call 0161 291 5388 and ask about the RelAx study.



Tips and Tricks

Avoid chocolate, it's a cough trigger.

'Vocal Zone' Pastilles:
Take one before bed.

Olive leaf extracts boosts immunity to help ward off colds.

'Biotene' toothpaste and mouthwash is designed to help combat a dry mouth and is SLS-free.

Drinking hot water soothes the back of the throat – Add lemon and Manuka honey.

Changing my toothpaste helped stop my cough after brushing – look for brands free of SLS.

'Gin-Gin' Ginger sweets.

Ginger tea and chamomile tea can help ease sore throats and post nasal drip.

Use cough sweets to keep swallowing (not for everyone as it depends on your trigger).

A medicinal whiskey and ginger helps!

Avoid areas of high traffic jams (congested crossroads always make me cough)

Chronic cough can be stressful! Mindfulness meditation can be helpful. Courses run online and at the Manchester Buddhist Centre.

The worry I might get a cold – makes me anxious. Having cold prevention drinks/ regimes helps me.

BTS

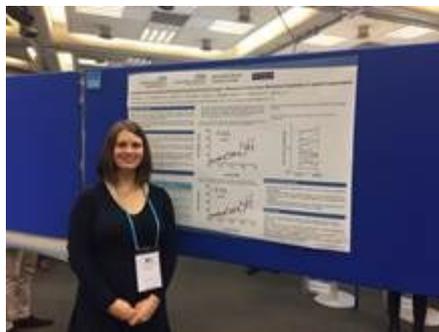
The winter British Thoracic Society meeting is one of the most prestigious respiratory scientific meetings worldwide. It is held annually in London and allows professionals to discuss their work and research in areas that matter.

This year, four members of the Manchester Foundation Trust cough team presented their work to interested audiences. Bashar Al-Shekly, Jemma Haines, Joanne Mitchell and Yieng Huong all received positive feedback for their research.

Professor Jacky Smith also led the first ever cough specialist advisory group (SAG) meeting. This group of cough specialists aim to highlight the importance of this condition to the masses. Thanks to the efforts of Professor Smith and her peers, chronic cough now has a dedicated workforce in this this meeting, just like Asthma or COPD. With this in place, we can focus on improving education and treatment plans in chronic cough for the future.

Finally, we are delighted to announce that our collaborators at Imperial College London, Dr Michael Wortley and Dr Sara Bonvini, received the Early Career Investigator Award for their outstanding work in basic science.

Congratulations to them and the whole team!



Get in Touch

You can contact us via:

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