

## A Scottish Genetics Research Network

One of GS's goals is to create networking opportunities for members of the genetics community in Scotland. Examples include the ScotGEN Genetics Education project and the Pharmacogenetics Symposium (held in 2006). GS has recently been involved in discussions about the establishment of a Scottish Genetics Research Network (SRGN), which aims to promote communication, collaboration and technology transfer between scientists and clinicians who are interested in genetics.

This initiative is a direct response to the Scottish Executive's Review of Genetics, chaired by Sir Kenneth Calman, which recommended establishing a Genetics network based on the Scottish Stem Cell Network (SSCN) model. A workshop to discuss the SRGN was held in November 2007 and this will be followed up by a proposal for the organization of the new Network. For more information please e-mail [robin.morton@sgrn.co.uk](mailto:robin.morton@sgrn.co.uk) or visit [www.sgrn.co.uk](http://www.sgrn.co.uk) to register your interest.

We welcome your comments, suggestions or contributions. You can contact us by e-mail at [news@generationscotland.org](mailto:news@generationscotland.org) or call 0131 537 2472.

## Biomarkers battling chronic disease

As Scotland's population ages, chronic illnesses such as cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease will become an increasing burden on healthcare resources. Genetic studies can help tell us which individuals are at increased risk of a given disease, but they can't determine when symptoms will first start, or how rapidly the condition will worsen. The ability to diagnose a disease at the earliest possible stage will open up a whole new area of medical technology concerned with developing novel ways to prevent and treat common chronic conditions.

Generation Scotland scientists, led by Prof. Anna Dominiczak at the University of Glasgow, have secured a Strategic Research Development Grant of £2m from

the Scottish Funding Council for the discovery of new biomarkers in chronic disease. The biomarkers in question are proteins whose levels increase or decrease as a disease starts or progresses.

The identification and characterisation of suitable proteins requires the use of cutting-edge technology such as high resolution capillary electrophoresis and high mass accuracy tandem mass spectrometry. The long-term goal of the project is to develop robust tests that accurately determine disease status and to integrate the proteomic data with genetic information from the Generation Scotland Scottish Family Health Study. This dual approach could potentially revolutionise the management of chronic disease.

## Health Minister launches ScotGEN

As the use of genetic information in medicine increases, so does the need for healthcare professionals to have a sound knowledge of clinical genetics. The aim of ScotGEN is to help fulfil the requirement for high quality resources for use in genetics education.



the Scottish Executive through Generation Scotland to develop a collection of freely available genetics education materials.

ScotGEN was officially launched in Edinburgh on 28th November 2007 at a one-day conference which was opened by Health Minister Nicola Sturgeon. For more information about ScotGEN, log on to [www.scotgen.org.uk](http://www.scotgen.org.uk).

ScotGEN started in 2005 as a network of healthcare professionals, university academics and computer scientists who were involved in teaching genetics. In 2006, ScotGEN received funding totalling £150,000 from the

