

Your Support

GS has grown since its launch in 2006, and now consists of three projects the Scottish Family Health Study (SFHS), Genetic Health in the 21st Century (21CGH) and the Donor DNA Databank (3D), totalling 30,000 volunteers.

We value your continued involvement and would like you to consider helping further by allowing the samples to become available for international research collaborations. For more information please see the enclosed letter and information sheet.

Thank you from the GS team. You can read more about the management team on page 2 of this newsletter or visit www.generationscotland.org

Any comments or further information? Please e-mail us at info@generationscotland.org or call 0131 651 1071.

GS Symposium Promotes SFHS



Prof. Blair H. Smith, University of Dundee

Over 125 scientists from around the UK and the US recently met in Glasgow to discuss the valuable research resources available as a result of your support. The one day symposium titled "Generation Scotland: What can Bioresources do for research, development and innovation?" attracted guests and speakers from Academia, Industry and the National Health Service, and effectively launched the Scottish Family Health Study (SFHS) to a wider scientific audience. National and International speakers gave presentations on aspects of their genetic-based research, some involving SFHS data. Professor Blair H. Smith (pictured) who led SFHS gave a comprehensive and engaging overview of the study and how the data is being used to investigate chronic pain.



Dr Sally John, Pfizer Inc.

Dr Shona Kerr, who chairs the GS Access Committee which oversees applications to use GS resources, said, "We have had a very positive response from researchers who are keen to collaborate with us and utilise GS resources for research to develop our understanding of the genetic basis of common diseases. To date, the majority of applications to use GS have come from academic groups but it is important to encourage industry to invest their considerable resources to make the most of SFHS data and samples to help develop drugs and to understand and diagnose disease."

Dr Iain McWilliam from Arrayjet Ltd said, "The meeting today has been fabulous... It was good to see the breadth of different projects that are being undertaken by the various groups linking into the GS resources and a good teaser for what is to come over the next few years."

As a result of the meeting GS has already had five more applications to use the resource, pushing the total requests over the 100 mark. We aim to build on the success of this event with a similar event in 2013 with a greater focus on attracting top quality UK and international scientists and commercial companies.

The GS Team

During recruitment to SFHS, GS employed around 100 staff across Scotland and you will have spoken to some of them on the phone or in the clinics. Because of their extensive efforts GS now has 30,000 sets of samples and data which we make available for medical research.

To manage this task we have a team of 5 staff, based in Edinburgh to keep GS samples and data safe, manage access by researchers and work with them to conduct high quality research. They are supported by colleagues in Universities across Scotland.



The team is led by Chief Operations Officer Pamela Linksted who has extensive experience of managing large genetic studies. Dr Shona Kerr oversees the GS Access Committee and laboratory management. Archie Campbell manages storage and release of GS data. Dr Robin Morton and Melissa Foster oversee communications, commercial engagement and general administration.

How you are helping scientists research health and disease

Thanks to you, one of more than 24,000 participants of the Scottish Family Health Study, we are helping scientists in their research across a broad range of common health conditions, which include cardiovascular disease, stroke, dementia, depression and swine flu.

The INTERSTROKE study is one example of the important research that is being done. This study is looking at the risk factors of stroke, a major contributor to global health problems. This is a large international project, to which GS has made a significant contribution by helping to recruit 130 volunteers from SFHS to act as controls. GS is extremely grateful for the continued commitment of SFHS participants which allows us to contribute to this important international research into stroke. Studies like this are improving our understanding of disease and how it can be treated.

Pamela Linksted, GS Chief Operations Officer, said "We have had over 100 requests to use GS samples and data from all over the UK. One recent study found that two genetic variants known to be associated with Alzheimer's disease, are also associated with a form of severe depression, particularly

among women. Another study has involved linking study data with NHS routine data to look at risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Such studies show the tremendous value of SFHS."

GS is increasingly recognised as a valuable partner for large genetic studies. Several of these studies are led by the world renowned Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in Cambridge and MRC Human Genetics Unit in Edinburgh, contributing to the analysis of over 11,000 DNA samples from SFHS participants in 2012. These projects will investigate the genetic contribution to lung function, obesity and mental health and constitute quantum changes in the use of GS for genomic research.

Looking to the future, GS is working with the not-for-profit company Roslin Cells Ltd to use cutting edge laboratory techniques to make stem cell lines from blood. The aim is to develop cell lines that can be used in the development of advanced therapies to treat, for example, blood disorders or Parkinson's Disease. GS will be writing to a number of SFHS participants later this year to seek volunteers for the study.



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