

Sheila Sherlock Travelling Bursary, 2011.

Report on visits to Toulouse, February and June 2011: Dr Harry Dalton

I have made 2 visits to Toulouse since I was awarded the Sheila Sherlock Travelling Fellowship for 2011. The specific purpose of these visits was to discuss and develop an outline phase 2 HEV vaccine study in high risk groups such as transplant recipients and patients with chronic liver disease. During these visits I met with Prof Jacques Izopet and colleagues in his team including the relevant virologists and clinicians from Toulouse University and associated hospitals. These face-to face meetings were important as they helped build a working team, encouraged trust and produced friendships that hopefully will last a professional lifetime.

In between the above visits, we have exchanged emails and developed the HEV vaccine study protocol via an interactive process. The study outline has progressed significantly, and the full outline protocol is enclosed. We are still waiting for some statistical advice, and then we will submit it as an outline application to the Chinese Government to determine if they would be willing to fund this study.

In addition to the above, during the course of our discussions, my colleagues in Toulouse and I decided to write a major review on HEV. We approached the Lancet with an outline proposal. The Lancet subsequently commissioned us to write a 'seminar' paper of 5,000 words. This was submitted for peer review last week, a copy of the paper is enclosed. Please note we have acknowledged the support of the Royal College of Physicians in this paper (page 13).

During my visits to Toulouse, and subsequently, we also completed a paper on HEV seroprevalence in Toulouse that we have been collaborating on. This has been accepted for publication in Emerging Infectious Diseases, and will be published shortly. We acknowledged the support of the Royal College of Physicians in this paper as well.

I would like to thank the College for their support by awarding me the Sheila Sherlock Travelling Bursary. I found the trips to Toulouse scientifically, professionally and culturally very rewarding. It has helped me create a significant research collaboration with my colleagues in Toulouse, and has already produced two publications in a high impact journals.

Harry Dalton, September 2011

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