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Meeting Summary

Difficulties With and Solutions to Pathologists' Engagement with Research: *Actions Emerging from the NCRI Task Force Report*

This workshop was held on **Friday 3rd July 2009** at the Mercure Holland House Hotel **Cardiff**, as a satellite meeting of Cardiff Pathology 2009. This event was hosted by onCore UK on behalf of all sponsors – onCore UK, the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI), the British Division of the International Academy of Pathology and the Pathological Society.

The ability to conduct high quality translational research, an area identified as a national priority, is dependent on effective cooperation and collaboration between pathologists and researchers. Pathologists are required to provide specialist expertise and access to well characterised, high quality human biological samples. Despite many new opportunities to advance the understanding of disease and improve the diagnosis and treatment of patients, there have been reports of severe shortages of academic pathology expertise and of increasing difficulties in engaging service pathologists in research. In response to this, the NCRI established a Task Force to explore the issues and identify areas where action is required. While the Task Force was set up initially to respond to problems in cancer research, the issues affect other areas of medical research and the proposed solutions are expected to have benefits beyond the field of cancer.

The Workshop was based on the work of the NCRI Task Force, highlighted its recommendations and provided insight into how some of the recommendations are being converted into actions. It was attended by around 40 delegates who were pathologists, scientists or otherwise involved in research that involves pathology.

The workshop was introduced by Dr Rebecca Stratford of the NCRI, who provided background to the NCRI and how it works to enhance cancer research. Following this Professor David Levison, as Chair of the Task Force on Pathology & Research, provided an overview of the work of the Task Force, its broad ranging observations, recommendations and anticipated actions. Dr Brian Clark then spoke about a survey done by onCore UK that assessed views on the strictness and complexity of the regulatory and governance environment for research involving pathology, the impact this had on individuals' willingness to be research active and the effectiveness of available guidance to help investigators work within the regulatory and governance environment.

Dr Nalin Thakker of the National Research Ethics Service outlined the intended policy and procedure for approval of diagnostic pathology archives as resources for research. Professor Simon Herrington, representing the Pathological Society, presented his views on enhancing the participation of pathologists in research by communication and education. Lastly, Dr Ian Barnes, the National Clinical Director for Pathology at the Department of Health (England) outlined his intentions to support work to improve opportunities for research in the context of routine pathology service delivery. The workshop was concluded by a lively open discussion between delegates and presenters.