Researchers working with industry:

Dr Stephen Renshaw – MRC Industry Fellowship Partnership Award holder with GSK, 2012-2013

The Department of Infection and Immunology, based within the Medical School and the Royal Hallamshire Hospital at the University of Sheffield, combines basic science and clinical research with a particular focus on innate immunity in Respiratory Medicine, Infectious Diseases, Renal Medicine, Rheumatology and Dermatology. These are areas of key interest to the pharmaceutical industry and many researchers have direct experience of interacting with companies.

Dr Stephen Renshaw, a Medical Research Council Senior Clinical Fellow, was recently awarded the first MRC Industry Fellowship Partnership Award (September 2012) to link work in his academic laboratory to drug development projects in a large industrial pharmaceutical company. This award allows him to continue his exciting research into new treatments for inflammatory and infectious disease in the Medical School and the MRC Centre for Developmental and Biomedical Genetics, while simultaneously helping to develop his engagement with the global healthcare company GlaxoSmithKline through sustained and high-level collaboration.

Medical research is driven by clinical problems and aims to ultimately deliver new therapies. However, to produce new therapeutics it is important to understand the approaches developed by the pharmaceutical industry that actually generate new drugs, as well as facilitating exchange of academic knowledge of novel approaches being developed in Universities with companies.

Dr Renshaw anticipates the Partnership Award will help him better understand how new drugs are selected and brought to market, and will stimulate collaborative, mutually beneficial research between his lab and GSK. The time that Dr. Renshaw spends at GSK over the coming year will help him “align our lab with Industry and ensure that pioneering approaches – such as our revolutionary work with zebra fish – are incorporated into drug discovery programmes to identify treatments which will benefit people with a wide range of conditions”. He intends to incorporate an industry component into future grant applications to enable milestone guided translational research.

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