BSMT Virtual Conference 11-14 May 2021
Covid 19 - The Infection Challenging the World
Speakers' profiles

Dr Michael Head

Michael Head began his career with a BSc in Biomedical Sciences at the University of Portsmouth and spent 11 years at UCL in the Centre for Infectious Disease Epidemiology and the Farr Institute for Health Informatics. Since 2015, he has been a Senior Research Fellow in Global Health at the University of Southampton with research interests in investments analyses, global health, health systems and digital health, with a public health focus on neglected tropical diseases (including scabies and onchocerciasis) and pneumonia.

Professor Jon Deeks

Jon Deeks is Professor of Biostatistics and leads the Biostatistics, Evidence Synthesis and Test Evaluation Research Group in the University of Birmingham. He trained as a medical statistician and has followed a career which has given him broad experience across health research through working as a statistical collaborator on a variety of health research projects. His major methodological contributions have been made in the fields of evidence synthesis and his current major focus is in test evaluation. Jon is the senior methodologist on numerous primary evaluations and systematic reviews of medical tests, leads the Cochrane Collaboration's test evaluation activities and advises the WHO on test evaluation methods. He has recently been much in the news commenting on the evaluation of tests to diagnose COVID-19 and in particular the performance of LFTs in populations with a low prevalence of COVID-19.

Dr Catherine Moore

Catherine Moore is a Consultant Clinical Scientist for Public Health Wales based in the Wales Specialist Reference Centre. She has over 25 years of experience and provides clinical advice as part of the Welsh National virology service. Her specialist expertise is in the development and implementation of molecular diagnostic assays. She is a lead scientist for respiratory virus diagnosis and works closely with health protection teams to facilitate management of outbreaks and epidemics of viral infections in Wales. She recently received an MBE for her role in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Wales. She was recently appointed Editor in Chief for the Journal of Clinical Virology.

Professor Alan McNally

Alan McNally is a Professor in Microbial Genomics in the Institute of Microbiology and Infection at the University of Birmingham. He works primarily on the evolutionary genomics of pathogenesis and antimicrobial resistance in bacterial pathogens.   During the COVID-19 outbreak, Alan was seconded to the Milton Keynes Lighthouse Lab as Infectious Disease lead at the Government's first flagship COVID-19 testing facility. Launched on 9 April 2020, the Milton Keynes Lighthouse Lab was the first of three Government 'mega-labs' to be set-up across the UK, vastly increasing testing capacity and allowing tens of thousands more patient samples to be processed each day.

Professor Jonathan Edgeworth

Jonathan Edgeworth is Consultant Microbiologist and Honorary Professor in Clinical Infectious Diseases at Guys and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. His main focus is conducting research to provide evidence in helping control antimicrobial resistance and healthcare-associated infections, particularly by improving the speed and utility of infectious diseases diagnostics. These studies primarily involve patients and patient samples (observational/surveillance studies, interventional clinical trials and diagnostic evaluation studies). His talk in May will cover the clinical and research experience gained during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Professor Nick Loman

Nick Loman, Professor of Microbial Genomics and Bioinformatics in the Institute for Microbiology and Infection at the University of Birmingham will be focusing on this subject. Nick spends much of his time tracking and implementing developments in new sequencing technologies with the aim of applying them to the direct diagnosis of infectious disease and detection of antibiotic resistance genes. Many will remember his exciting talk at the BSMT Annual Scientific Conference in 2016 where he spoke on his work in the Ebola outbreak in West Africa 2014-16 using Oxford Nanopore sequencing. At the webinar in May, he will be describing his work on the CLIMB COVID-19 project, led by the University of Birmingham and Cardiff University. CLIMB COVID-19 is a big data project currently supporting the COVID-19 Genomics Consortium (COG-UK) set up to deliver large scale, rapid sequencing of SARS-COV-2 and enabling it to process and store genomic data on a global scale.

Dr Timothy Rawson

Tim Rawson is a NIHR Academic Clinical Fellow in Infectious Diseases and Medical Microbiology. He is a research member of the Health Protection Research Unit for HCAI and AMR, run by Professor Alison Holmes at Imperial College London. He completed his PhD in 2018 working between the departments of Medicine, Bio-engineering, and Chemistry. His research interests encompass precision use of antimicrobial agents focusing on antimicrobial stewardship, biosensor technology, antimicrobial dose optimisation, and machine learning. Most recently he has been involved in understanding the role of bacterial and fungal infection in COVID-19 and its potential impact on the problem of antimicrobial resistance.

Professor Sheena Cruickshank

Sheena Cruickshank is an immunologist and Professor in Biomedical Sciences and Public Engagement at the University of Manchester. She researches how immune responses of the gut commence with infection and/or inflammation to give rise to conditions such as IBD. Her experiments make use of infectious models, including *Toxoplasma gondii* and *Trichuris muris*, to understand immunity regulation in the skin and gut. In 2017 Sheena won the Northwest BioNow award for her test for the management and assessment of IBD. She has also worked extensively on science communication, a field which has become particularly important in the last year or so with COVID-19 and in particular the public response to vaccines.