Professor Paul Matthews to lead new UK Dementia Research Institute centre at Imperial College London

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Professor Paul Matthews (Fellow by Special Election at St Edmund Hall) is to lead the new multidisciplinary UK Dementia Research Institute (UK DRI) centre at Imperial College London. The UK DRI at Imperial will open later this year, initially based at Imperial College’s Hammersmith campus before moving to Imperial’s new White City campus in 2019.

Professor Matthews is the Edmund J. and Lily Safra Professor of Translational Neuroscience and Therapeutics and Head of the Division of Brain Sciences at Imperial College, as well as being a Visiting Professor at Oxford’s Nuffield Department of Clinical Neuroscience.

The UK DRI is being established through a joint £250 million investment into dementia research from the Medical Research Council and its charity partners, the Alzheimer’s Society and Alzheimer’s Research UK. Imperial College joins the University of Cambridge, Cardiff University, the University of Edinburgh, and King’s College London in hosting the centres which will form the new institute, with its headquarters at University College London. Established in response to the Government’s 2020 Challenge on Dementia, the DRI’s mission is to find new ways to diagnose, treat and prevent and care for people with dementias, a group of neurodegenerative disorders which includes Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and Huntington’s disease. The UK DRI intends to combine world-leading expertise across the spectrum of dementia research in its constituent centres in order to maximise the benefits arising from the cutting-edge facilities and expertise at each institution.

The new UK DRI centre at Imperial will include leading experts from the College’s Faculties
of Medicine, Engineering, and Natural Sciences. ?Our multidisciplinary approach will harness Imperial?s technology and data expertise to address the challenges posed by dementia,? said Professor Matthews. ?In doing so, we are attracting experts from different fields who have exciting new ideas and have not previously been involved in dementia research.? 

?This exciting new venture will help us understand disease-related brain changes in the context of the body?s health and exposures,? he added. ?Within the nationally and internationally networked environment of the institute, Imperial - along with the University of Oxford and other strong collaborating sites - can further champion our interest in addressing big problems through open, collaborative research.? 

Professor Bart De Strooper, Director of the UK DRI, said: ?We selected the centres based on innovative, excellent science, evidence of strong leadership, the alignment of goals with the institute as a whole, and the ability to grow and collaborate as the institute gathers pace. Imperial?s team presented not only an excellent and ambitious programme of work, but one that was different and creative, and drew on the university?s unique strengths. I can?t wait to see how Professor Matthews? vision and unparalleled knowledge in the role microglia play in other conditions brings new insights to dementia research.? 

Professor Matthews? research interests address the neuropathology and treatment of multiple sclerosis; and the role of neuroinflammatory mechanisms in neurodegeneration and in the application of 'Big Data' approaches for personalised medicine. Before moving to Imperial College, Professor Matthews was Director of the Oxford FMRIB Centre and Head of the Department of Clinical Neurology in Oxford.

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