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MANCHESTER RESEARCH TEAM TO LEAD THE WORLD

The University of Manchester has formed arguably the most powerful research group in the world to tackle a problem that is largely unrecognised yet affects millions of people each year.

Globally and annually, over 300 million people suffer from serious fungal infections, resulting in 1,350,000 deaths – many of which are unavoidable.

Most serious fungal infections are 'hidden', occurring as a consequence of other health problems such as asthma, AIDS, cancer or organ transplants. Delays or missed diagnosis often lead to death, serious chronic illness or blindness.

Now, the newly formed multidisciplinary Manchester Fungal Infection Group (MFIG) hopes to make a difference with the recruitment of three leading experts from Edinburgh and London.

Professor Nick Read will move from Edinburgh University and lead the group, while Dr Elaine Bignell from Imperial College, London, has been appointed as a Reader, and Dr Mike Bromley as a lecturer. Manchester senior lecturers, Dr Paul Bowyer and Peter Warn will also join the MFIG and will work alongside the already thriving research and teaching teams of Professors David Denning and Malcolm Richardson, and Dr Riina Richardson, to form this pioneering Group.

Professor Nick Read is an internationally renowned fungal cell biologist with over 30 years of research experience and has pioneered the use of advanced live-cell imaging techniques with many fungi, including human pathogens.

He says: "The opportunity to develop cutting edge multidisciplinary science in the relatively neglected but extremely important topic of fungal infection will be internationally unique and I am very excited to be able to join and lead this team of talented scientists in Manchester."

The focus of the MFIG going forward is developing a profound understanding of the biology of the mechanistic basis of *Aspergillus** fungal infection, identifying new antifungal drugs and human genetic risk profiling.

Professor Ian Jacobs, the University's Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences adds: "The combination of strong medical leadership, exemplified by the National Aspergillosis Centre, and internationally

competitive science which these new appointments bring, is exactly what the new Faculty's strategy has focused on. We anticipate real and accelerated progress in this challenging clinical area over the coming years."

For more information please contact Susan Osborne, Director of Communications, The Goodwork Organisation, on 07826 229208

Notes to Editors:

**Aspergillus* is a species of fungus (mould). Several different types occur widely in the environment. They invade and colonise vegetable matter, especially when wet and/or rotting. The organisms grow to produce tiny filaments, or fibres, and reproduce by making tiny spores.

Nick Read is an internationally renowned fungal cell biologist and has pioneered the use of advanced live-cell imaging techniques with many fungi, including human pathogens. His current research interests are primarily focused on calcium signaling during fungal pathogenesis and on antifungal peptides.

Elaine Bignell has made unparalleled contributions to our understanding of life-threatening fungal infections of the lung, caused by *Aspergillus*, with highly innovative molecular approaches.

Mike Bromley has discovered several new potential antifungal drug targets, which are critically important as azole resistance emerges throughout the world, and new antifungal drugs are urgently required.

Manchester already hosts the National Aspergillosis Centre, the Mycology Reference Centre Manchester, the *Aspergillus* Website and a flourishing translational research group. Several spinout companies have emerged from the group including F2G (Denning and Bromley), Myconostica (Denning), Euprotec (Warn), Genon (Bromley) and Alergenetica (Bowyer).

For further information, also see:

www.life-worldwide.org

www.aspergillus.org.uk

www.nationalaspergillosiscentre.org.uk/