Immunology News

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Immunology Excellence

Celebrating the achievements of our community

BSI Immunology Awards:
Get to know winners Dan Davis and Jessica Teeling

Growing impact:
New indexing metrics in our journals

Clinical history:
The evolution of clinical immunology

British Society for immunology
www.immunology.org

Welcome to the autumn issue of *Immunology News*!

This issue celebrates excellence in immunology – from recognising the achievements of our BSI Immunology Award winners, to the growing impact of our journals, and the early trailblazers of clinical immunology.

Since the BSI Immunology Awards ceremony in June, we've been getting to know some of the winners. You can find out about all the winners from this year on p7, and also read interviews with Professor Dan Davis on p23, and Professor Jessica Teeling on p27. Check out these articles for their experiences engaging with the public to help inform and educate about immunology.

You can also find out about some of the BSI's activities from the past three months, including our attendance at Parliamentary Links Day, the launch of our new Patient and Public Involvement Network, and our joint workshop with the International Veterinary Vaccinology Network (IVVN). And as always, you can find updates from our most recent BSI Forum and BSI-CIPN Steering Group meetings.

We have a lot to look forward to in the coming months, including the arrival of our new Chief Executive, BSI Congress, and the BSI-CIPN Conference. In this issue we've included plenty of information about how to make the most of these events and what you might need to know before attending.

As ever, do get in touch with your ideas for topics and items to include in future issues. We always love hearing from you.

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Contents

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VIEW FROM …

THE BSI PRESIDENT

Welcome to the autumn issue of *Immunology News*! We're getting excitingly close to BSI Congress 2025 and the BSI-CIPN Conference 2025, and I'm so looking forward to reuniting with old friends and meeting the newest generation of immunologists. As you'll see, this issue is packed full of information and advice about how to get the most out of these events, and what there is to look forward to.

This issue also contains some information on our incoming Chief Executive, Graham Blair. After months of careful recruitment and discussions with the BSI Trustees, I'm very pleased to welcome Graham to the BSI staff team – his first day will be 3 November 2025, and he will be joining us in Liverpool at BSI Congress in December, so do be sure to make him feel welcome. I'm sure you're all very curious to learn more about him, so keep an eye out in the winter issue for an interview with Graham, where we can all get to know more about our new Chief Executive.

This issue also celebrates successes from our community over the past few months, highlighting our 2025 BSI Immunology Award winners (p7), and getting to know two of our winners – Professor Dan Davis (p23) and Professor Jessica Teeling (p27) – in more depth. I've loved reading more about the inspiring work they do, and look forward to the upcoming interviews with other BSI Immunology Award winners in future issues.

I would also like to draw your attention to p9, where we explore the growing impact of the BSI journals portfolio. The increase in impact factors for both *Clinical & Experimental Immunology* and *Immunotherapy Advances* is a reflection of the hard work carried out by our Editors-in-Chief and Editorial Boards – and our authors, of course. I'm proud that we are able to offer a home to high-quality, impactful immunology research, and look forward to seeing our newest journal, *Discovery Immunology*, follow in their footsteps.

In addition to the all-hands-on-deck effort from the BSI staff team to prepare for BSI Congress and the BSI-CIPN Conference, you can find out about other projects we've been working on. On p10, find out about the launch of the BSI's Patient and Public Involvement Network; hear reflections from a member of the first cohort of our new in-person training for immunology nurses 'Foundational skills for immunology nursing' on p29; and find out more about our opportunity to bring immunology to the forefront of policymakers' minds at Parliamentary Links Day on p30.

On p21, Dr Aarnoud Huissoon gives a fascinating overview of the history of clinical immunology in the UK, not only showcasing our roots and the founding members of the research area, but also demonstrating how quickly immunology has developed to become a pivotal area of clinical practice. I'd highly recommend you make a cup of tea and dive in.

I hope you enjoy this issue. I look forward to seeing many of you in Liverpool soon.

Tracy Hussell
President, British Society for Immunology
Email: president@immunology.org

'We're getting excitingly close to BSI Congress 2025 and the BSI-CIPN Conference 2025, and I'm so looking forward to reuniting with old friends and meeting the newest generation of immunologists.'

SOCIETY NEWS

We're excited to announce Graham Blair as our new Chief Executive

The British Society for Immunology (BSI) is pleased to announce the appointment of Graham Blair as its new Chief Executive.

Graham will join the BSI from the Royal College of Anaesthetists, where he has worked since 2016 in a variety of roles, most recently as Director of Membership, Media and Development. He brings with him a wealth of leadership experience across the membership, education and health charity sectors, with a strong track record of delivering innovation, growth, member value and high-quality education and event programmes.

Commenting on his new role, Graham Blair said:
"It's a real privilege to be joining the British Society for Immunology as Chief Executive to support such a passionate and pioneering community. Immunology has never been more important, and I'm honoured to take on the responsibility of championing the profession, amplifying members' voices, and building on the Society's strong foundations.

"I'm looking forward to meeting many of you and working with the President, Trustees, members and staff team to continue to grow our impact and strengthen support for our community. Together, we'll ensure the BSI remains a vibrant home for learning and connection, where everyone feels welcome."

Professor Tracy Hussell, BSI President, said:
"Following a robust recruitment process, I am delighted to welcome Graham as the next Chief Executive of the British Society for Immunology. Graham has a wealth of experience in many aspects that are important to the BSI and its membership, including experience of income generation. He also values our strong community spirit.

"Now is an exciting time for immunology research and clinical application and the BSI is in a strong position to build on our current achievements. I look forward to working with Graham to bring his fresh vision and leadership to deliver on the BSI's mission of driving scientific discovery within immunology to make a positive impact on health."

Graham will join the BSI as Chief Executive from 3 November 2025 and is looking forward to meeting many members and partners at the BSI Congress in December. He succeeds Doug Brown, who has been the BSI's CEO for the last seven years and who, from September, takes up a new role as Chief Executive at the Royal Society of Biology. In the interim before Graham joins, the BSI will be jointly led by the current Senior Management Team working closely with the Board of Trustees to ensure continuity.

BSI Member Representative Forum: here to represent you

The BSI Member Representative Forum is the place where the voice of our membership is fed into our activities. Chaired by Professor Jim Brewer, the 18 elected members come from all sections of the Society's membership. Their role is to act as our 'think tank' on issues relating to education and careers, public engagement, policy and public affairs, and communications. The BSI Member Representative Forum aims to help the Society in implementing its strategic plan by providing a mechanism by which the views of the membership can be inputted into our activities.

Our June meeting took a focused approach to the BSI journals portfolio by first celebrating the new *Clinical & Experimental Immunology* and *Immunotherapy Advances* impact factors – which are now 3.8 and 4.9, respectively – and then exploring ways to raise the profile of the BSI journals and encourage submissions, particularly to *Discovery Immunology*. Several suggestions were raised, including linking the journals more closely with BSI events and Congress, and many members of Forum highlighted hot topics in their research areas.

Following this, the group discussed opportunities for the BSI to provide resources and information around career development – for members wanting to pursue careers both in and outside of academia. Many agreed that finding clear information about changing career paths and writing strong CVs can be challenging, and resources in these areas would be useful to many.

The meeting also saw the Forum wishing farewell and thank you to members who have come to the end of their term: Simone Cuff, Wales Representative, and Edoardo Prediletto, Early Career Representative. This was also the final Forum meeting for Dr Doug Brown, outgoing Chief Executive of the BSI. We look forward to welcoming Alexandra Dvorscek(Early Career Representative) and James McLaren (Wales Representative) to the September meeting.

Find out more

If you would like to raise any issues for your Member Representative Forum to discuss during a future meeting, please contact your relevant representative – you can find a list on our website at **www.immunology.org/forum**. Alternatively, you can email our Director of External Affairs, Jennie Evans, at **j.evans@immunology.org**.

SOCIETY NEWS

From lab bench to learned society: my internship at the BSI

Last year, Hannah Thompkins finished her PhD at the University of Manchester on the Wellcome Trust Immuno-Matrix in Complex Disease PhD programme. Hannah used the new Wellcome Trust Transition Fund grant, which aims to support PhD students in entering the world of employment, to join the BSI as an intern. Here, Hannah reflects on her experience during her PhD and internship.

My PhD was in immunology and focused on understanding how chitinase-like proteins influenced structural changes happening in the lung during allergy. My PhD journey, like many others, was turbulent with lots of ups and downs to say the least. From overcoming my PhD supervisor having to move university and ultimately having to change lab groups, to the highs of presenting my research at an international conference in Copenhagen. Regardless of how my PhD journey went, I was uncertain on whether a future career in academia was for me. The intricacies of academic relationships, uncertainties with grant funding and crippling imposter syndrome were things that laid on my mind heavily.

Exploring careers outside of traditional academia was something I'd always considered, especially working for a not-for-profit organisation or within the charity sector, but I had no idea where to begin. During my PhD I really enjoyed the volunteering, outreach and the science engagement opportunities that I'd sought out – so when the opportunity arose for me to undertake an internship in another sector, I snapped it up.

I've been involved with the BSI throughout my PhD: from attending local seminar series and regional meetings, to applying for a BSI travel grant to present at conferences, and of course, the legendary BSI Congress. Alongside the benefits of membership, I was genuinely inspired by the breadth of work carried out by the organisation and the impact it has not only on the immunology community but on the wider research ecosystem. The opportunity to work across departments, contribute to real projects, and put my skills to use in new ways made the BSI an ideal place for my internship.

One of the standout aspects of my internship was how flexible it was, being able to work across multiple teams, including External Affairs and Journals. This variety was something I'd really hoped for as it gave me the chance to understand how a small but impactful organisation operates, and to get a feel for how different departments interact to support the BSI's mission.

A few highlights of my time at the BSI include:

- Contributing to the BSI's policy and advocacy work through attending parliament for **Parliamentary Links Day** 2025, writing position statements for the **European Federation of Immunological Societies Vaccine Taskforce** and working with BSI-supported **patient and public involvement groups** PITCH, SIREN & STRAVINSKY. Learning how to tailor communication with different audiences, from researchers to healthcare workers to policymakers, and the role that strategic communication plays in influencing change.
- Supporting science communication initiatives including **Vaccine Engagement Day** (#CelebrateVaccines) and co-authoring the **Vaccinations During Pregnancy Guide**. Translating complex immunology topics into accessible formats for a broader audience was a great reminder of how powerful clear, engaging communication can be in bridging the gap between researchers and the wider public.
- Drawing on my researcher perspective, I supported the publishing team by creating an administrative checklist designed to help identify low-quality manuscripts during the initial stages of submission, improving the efficiency of the review process.

Each of these experiences gave me new perspectives on how scientific research is supported, communicated, and used in the real world, which is something I've developed a real passion for. Most of all, this experience reminded me that PhD-trained researchers bring a unique and valuable skillset to the table, one that's highly transferable outside the lab.

My internship at the BSI has been an incredibly valuable experience, both professionally and personally. It gave me the space to step outside of the academic bubble, explore new areas of work, and discover how my skills could be applied in ways I hadn't previously considered and with confidence. What stood out most was how invigorating it felt to contribute to meaningful work in a collaborative, mission-driven environment. It reaffirmed my interest in roles that support and advocate for the research community, but from a different angle.

If you're unsure about your next step or have the chance to do an internship or PIP, I'd definitely recommend going for it. Whether you're ready to leave the lab or just curious about what else is out there, internships are a great, low-pressure way to explore, learn, and grow.

Dr Hannah Tompkins

SOCIETY NEWS

Celebrating immunology achievements at the BSI Immunology Awards 2025

The 2025 winners of the BSI Immunology Awards were announced on 18 June during an inspiring award ceremony at the Royal Society, London. Here, we celebrate the remarkable achievements of the winners and shortlisted candidates shaping the future of immunology.

The following awards receive nominations from the BSI membership and wider immunology community, to recognise and amplify the impact of the variety of activities carried out by our members. Nominations were submitted in February and March, and were then assessed and reviewed by the BSI nominations committee.

Congratulations to **Professor Richard Grencis**, University of Manchester, who was awarded the **BSI Research Excellence Award** in recognition of his pioneering work in mucosal and parasite immunology. His work on gastrointestinal helminth infection has shaped our understanding of how the immune system defends against parasite infections.

The **BSI Early Career Research Excellence Award, sponsored by Bio-Techne**, went to **Dr Elena Mitsi**, University of Oxford, for her work on infection and mucosal immunology. Elena's research has greatly advanced understanding of respiratory infections, informing new approaches to pneumococcal vaccine development and disease prevention.

The winner of the **BSI Outstanding Leadership Award**, sponsored by *Clinical & Experimental Immunology* was **Professor Clare Bryant**, University of Cambridge. Clare was recognised for her conception and management of the InflamaZoom community, which she established to support new PIs in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through her monthly webinar series, Clare not only created a forum for peer-to-peer support during a challenging time, she also promoted EDI principles and ensured representation of innate immune researchers across the globe.

This year, the **BSI Public Engagement Award** was awarded to **Professor Jessica Teeling**, University of Southampton, for her giant 'snakes and ladders' game, to raise awareness of risk factors for dementia. Since June 2022, Jessica has built an interdisciplinary team of researchers and artists to develop the game, and led 22 public engagement events, reaching over 10,000 people. You can find out more about Jessica and her work in our interview on pages 27–28. We would also like to extend our congratulations to **Erin-Claire Pallott**, University of Manchester, who received an honourable mention from the judging panel.

The **BSI Outstanding Team Award**, sponsored by *Immunotherapy Advances*, was awarded to **Southampton Antibody and Vaccine Group**, for their role in advancing cancer immunotherapy through groundbreaking work on therapeutic antibodies. Their research has directly impacted outcomes for patients with cancer. The group demonstrates cross-disciplinary approaches, extending beyond conventional wet-lab immunology into systems immunology, computational chemistry and structural biology.

Dr Ali Roghanian on behalf of Southampton Antibody and Vaccine Group

Professor Richard Grencis

Dr Elena Mitsi

Congratulations to **Dr Alan Hayes**, University of Edinburgh, who was awarded the **BSI Immunology Teaching Excellence Award** for his redesign of Edinburgh's Immunology Honours Programme, his passion for improving the student experience and incorporating the student voice in his teaching. Using innovative learning techniques such as gamification, immunology card games, pub quizzes and competitive learning environments, Alan encourages student engagement in their learning and fosters high levels of participation.

We would also like to extend our congratulations to **Dr Sarah Buchan**, Bournemouth University, who received an honourable mention from the judging panel.

This year's **BSI Diversity and Inclusion Award**, sponsored by *Discovery*

Dr Alan Hayes

Professor John Hammond

Professor Leonie Taams

Immunology, was awarded to two candidates: **Professor João Marcos Brandet**, Secretaria Estadual de Educação do Estado do Paraná and **Professor John Hammond**, The Pirbright Institute. João received the award for his pioneering work developing didactic tools, applications and games tailored for immunology students with autism, congenital disabilities and sensory impairments. By developing specialised resources in immunology that cater to students with diverse learning needs, he has played a key role in expanding accessibility to STEM education. John was recognised for his use of the Institute Development Fund to create the post of ED&I manager, to implement change and improve culture at his institution. Further to this, he created roles for two SAB members to interact directly with staff on ED&I matters, driving collective ownership for behaviours and actions among colleagues.

"What a night of immunology celebration!"

The following two awards are based on nominations from BSI committees and staff, and aim to recognise outstanding achievements of the BSI membership.

The **BSI Outstanding Ambassador for Immunology Award** was this year awarded to **Professor Daniel Davis**, Imperial College London, in recognition of his achievements in both academic and public engagement activities. His research uses super-resolution microscopy to study immune cell biology, and Dan has authored over 150 academic papers, collectively cited over 18,000 times. Dan often speaks at science, literary and music festivals, writes for national newspapers, and adeptly communicates immunology to the public on radio and TV. Dan has also authored four popular science books, which you can find out more about on pages 23–24.

And finally, congratulations to **Professor Leonie Taams**, King's College London, on being awarded the **Outstanding Contribution to the BSI Award**. Even prior to her appointment of Editor-in-Chief of *Clinical & Experimental Immunology* in 2016, Leonie has long been a supporter of the BSI. Under Leonie's leadership, the journal went from strength to strength, with her initiatives such as dedicating sections and introducing more section editors as well as editorial board members, highlighting her passion for the research publication process and how to improve the author's experience. She worked on over 4,500 submissions to the journal and introduced Review Series, a key part of the journal that continues to be successful and helps authors identify the scope and quality of *CEI*.

Thank you!

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to the BSI Immunology Awards this year, whether by sponsoring the event, submitting a nomination, sitting on a judging panel or the BSI Nominations Committee, or by attending the Awards Ceremony. It was a pleasure to come together and celebrate the achievements of our Award winners and colleagues. You truly made it a night to remember.

Don't forget to check out our interviews with Professor Dan Davis (pages 23–24) and Professor Jessica Teeling (pages 27–28). We will be including interviews with other Award winners in future issues of *Immunology News*.

SOCIETY NEWS

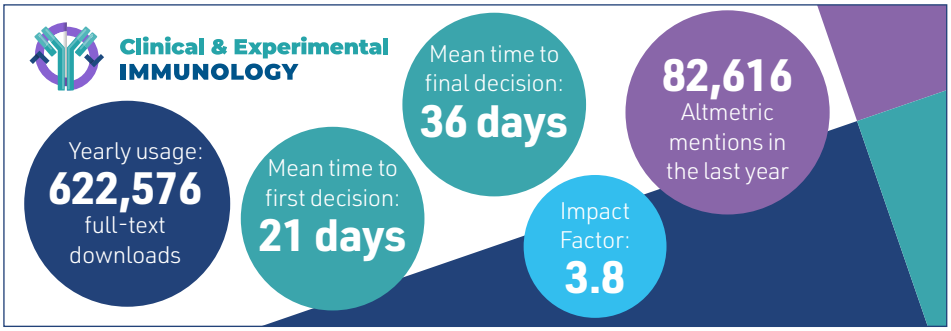
Celebrating the success of BSI journals in the 2025 Journal Citation Reports

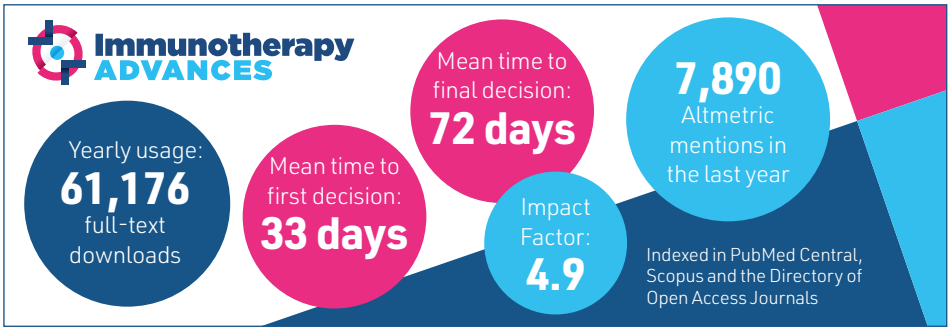
Each summer, the release of Clarivate's annual Journal Citation Reports brings a moment of reflection and recognition across the academic publishing world. Impact factors, though only one of several metrics used to evaluate journal performance, remain a significant indicator of influence and visibility. This year, we are delighted to share that two of the British Society for Immunology's journals, *Clinical & Experimental Immunology* (*CEI*) and *Immunotherapy Advances* (*ITA*) have seen notable increases in their impact factors, a reflection of their continued commitment to publishing timely, high-quality immunological research.

Impact factor milestones for *CEI* and *ITA*

We are proud to announce that *Immunotherapy Advances*, our open access journal dedicated to immunotherapy research, has achieved an impact factor of 4.9. This places *ITA* firmly in the first quartile of immunology journals, affirming its status as a leading voice in the field. Since its launch, *ITA* has established itself as a go-to platform for cutting-edge advances in immunotherapy, from cancer and autoimmune diseases to novel cellular and molecular interventions.

Meanwhile, *Clinical & Experimental Immunology*, a longstanding and respected cornerstone of the BSI journal portfolio, has reached an impact factor of 3.8, marking a significant increase from previous years. *CEI* now sits in the second quartile for immunology journals, underscoring its continued relevance and scholarly impact across the field. As a journal that spans both fundamental and translational immunology, *CEI* remains a trusted source for rigorous, impactful research.





These achievements are the result of outstanding leadership and community support. We extend our sincere thanks to Professor Tim Elliott, founding Editor-in-Chief of *Immunotherapy Advances*, and Professor Claudia Mauri, Editor-in-Chief of *Clinical & Experimental Immunology*. Their dedication, alongside the tireless work of their editorial teams, reviewers, authors and readers, has driven the continued success of these journals.

Discovery Immunology: building momentum

While *Discovery Immunology* (*DSI*), our newest journal, does not yet have an impact factor, it is making significant strides. The journal is now indexed in PubMed Central, a critical milestone that enhances visibility and accessibility. In 2024, *DSI* expanded its scope to include veterinary immunology, widening its reach and relevance across species and research disciplines. As *DSI* continues to attract high-quality submissions, we look forward to seeing its future metrics reflect the journal's growth and impact.

Beyond impact factors: broader metrics of success

While we celebrate this year's impact factors, we also recognise that they are just one piece of the puzzle. Journal performance is multifaceted, and other key metrics help illustrate the wider picture of reach, engagement and efficiency.

Looking ahead

The sustained growth of all three BSI journals is a testament to our vibrant immunology community and the shared commitment to advancing knowledge and improving health. These new metrics reinforce our collective goal: to publish rigorous, timely and impactful research that supports the immunology community and informs scientific progress. As we reflect on this year's successes, we also remain mindful of the broader context in which these metrics sit. We are proud of the contributions made by our community and are excited for the continued development of *Clinical & Experimental Immunology*, *Immunotherapy Advances*, and *Discovery Immunology* in the years ahead.

We thank our editorial teams, reviewers, authors and readers for their unwavering support. Here's to another year of excellence in immunological research.

SOCIETY NEWS

Our new Patient and Public Involvement Network

The BSI is establishing a Patient and Public Involvement Network to input into our projects and, potentially, our members' work too. The Network will build on experience to improve the work we do and ensure patients and the public feel heard. Involving patients and the public ensures our work is done in the best way for the people it affects most. Understanding individual lived experience can be incredibly valuable within immunology for shaping research questions, methodology, clinical guidelines and service provision as well as public information on topics such as vaccines.

Hearing which symptoms impact individuals the most and how those symptoms affect their day-to-day life can change the way we think about an immune-related condition and the research questions we ask. Speaking to potential study participants about the number of site visits, the planned procedures or the information provided can help to create a study which more people will want to join and remain part of.

Involvement is increasingly being recognised as best practice and is often encouraged or even required by funders.

In the past, the BSI has been a PPI partner for a range of projects including the UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium, National Core Studies Immunity and the STRAVINSKY study. We will be taking this previous experience and all the lessons learned from it as we establish our new Network.

"Patient and public involvement (PPI) comprises research carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public, rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them. The word public can refer to patients, potential patients, carers and people who use health and social care services, people from organisations that represent people who use services as well as members of the public."

National Institute for Health and Care

Why we are establishing a Network

We want to improve the quality and impact of the work we do and to continue supporting our members and the wider immunology community in improving the quality of their research. We also believe that encountering broader perspectives will inform and inspire both BSI staff and our members. Beyond this, we want to ensure patients and the broader public feel heard by the professional immunology community especially in areas of research which impact them.

Who will be in the Network

The Network will initially be made up of 15 members who have a range of relationships with immunology. Recruitment was open to:

- individuals living with an immunodeficiency
- people with other conditions related to the immune system such as autoimmune conditions, cancer or asthma
- carers for those living with any of these conditions
- anyone with an interest in or connection to immunology.

Eligibility was deliberately kept broad so the Network will be able to input on a wide range of project topics and types.

Initially, membership will be for three years with another round of recruitment taking place after two years depending on the success of the Network.

How we will work with the Network

Network members will input into different aspects of the BSI's work such as public-facing information, relevant training programmes and events. The BSI will approach Network members with involvement opportunities and will select a smaller group of members to work on each project. Individual opportunities may include focus groups to discuss a particular project or requests for feedback on a resource or document.

Next steps for the Network

We plan to appoint members of the Network by October 2025 and will start working with the Network on BSI projects from November. Once the Network has been recruited, we will continue working with the members to refine how we work together.

Hana Ayoob
Patient and Public Involvement Manager
h.ayoob@immunology.org

Find out more

Do you have ideas of how you could work with our new PPI Network? Get in touch with us at involvement@immunology.org

SOCIETY NEWS

BSI Congress 2025

Monday 1 – Thursday 4 December 2025, ACC Liverpool, UK

Get ready… the UK's leading immunology conference is returning, and this year our destination is the dynamic city of Liverpool!

This year's Congress promises four days filled with inspiring lectures, interactive workshops and valuable networking sessions, all woven into a vibrant programme covering every corner of immunology. Connect with more than 1,500 fellow attendees from the UK and around the world while exploring pioneering research led by experts in the field. Take advantage of extensive opportunities to share ideas, make new connections and support your career development.

Plus, don't miss the ever-popular Congress party on Wednesday evening – a highlight in an exciting week dedicated to immunology breakthroughs from across the globe!

Dates for your diary

Early bird registration deadline:
Wednesday 22 October

Late breaking abstracts are still open – don't miss your chance to present your research to your peers!

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Yasmine Belkaid

President, Institut Pasteur, Paris

Professor Belkaid has made ground-breaking discoveries in microbiota, immunity and host–pathogen interactions.

18:00–19:00 GMT, 1 December 2025

5 reasons to submit an abstract:

1. Share your latest research and boost its reach
2. Gain recognition in the immunology community
3. Engage in friendly scientific debate
4. Start discussions that can lead to future collaborations
5. Compete for a £250 poster prize

Crèche

We're delighted to offer an onsite crèche at BSI Congress, providing safe and fun childcare for delegates' children of all ages at a subsidised rate. To help us make sure your little ones are well looked after, please register in advance to reserve their place.

BSI Congress for all

Ensuring that the BSI Congress is inclusive is extremely important to us. We are pleased to offer the BSI Congress Carers' Grant again at this year's Congress. This grant has been established for those who have caring responsibilities at home, whether this is looking after children or older members of the family, or those that need carers themselves. This grant scheme is intended to go towards the cost of the attendee's care arrangements during the time they are attending BSI Congress. More information at **www.immunology.org/membership/grants-prizes/bsi-congress-carers-grant**.

In addition to the onsite crèche, other provisions for delegates will include breastfeeding facilities, prayer and quiet rooms, and access for parents and carers.

©Shutterstock/Jeanette_Teare

Travel the greener way!

The BSI is pleased to offer a **15% discount with Avanti** for delegates travelling to BSI Congress 2025 in Liverpool via train. Choosing public transport not only helps reduce your environmental impact but also provides a convenient and affordable way to get to the event! Find out more at **www.bsicongress.com/event/a8f0a174-7556-460f-9b59-610a8fce7898/venue-travel-accommodation.**

Bright Sparks in Immunology

12:30–16:00 GMT, Monday 1 December

Our showcase of work from early career researchers in immunology.
Bright Sparks in Immunology provides PhD students and early career postdocs with experience of presenting their work to a large audience and debating immunology in a friendly atmosphere. This exciting event combines competition with excellent science and networking.

Programme highlights

Plenary sessions

Challenging humans: infections, vaccines and allergens

Recent advances in human genetics and human challenge studies are enabling the scientific study of immunity in people. Leading experts will share their experiences and progress in this evolving field

Is a cure possible to autoimmunity?

Technological advances in systems immunology and informatics provide new insights into therapeutic mechanisms in autoimmune disease. This session explores the frontiers of therapy, including biological and cell-based treatments, aiming for clinical and drug-free remission

What is hot in cancer immunology?

Cancer immunology continues to evolve with all immune system components now seen as treatment options. This session highlights recent discoveries and clinical advances addressing mechanisms of anti-tumour responses and treatment resistance in patients and models

Immunology in the balance

Immune responses protect against infection and cancer but can also cause harm if unregulated. This session discusses how innate and adaptive immunity is controlled to maintain effective and balanced responses

Innervating immunity advances at the neuro immune interface

New research at the intersection of neuroscience and immunology reveals how nervous and immune systems interact within the central nervous system and peripheral organs, highlighting opportunities for therapeutic intervention

Barrier bugs and breakdowns

Barrier sites such as skin, gut and lung are essential for protection against infection. This session presents research on how cells at these sites sense pathogens, manage immune responses, resolve inflammation and support healing while maintaining healthy microbiota

BSI Congress Party!

21:00 GMT, Wednesday 3 December

Our ever-popular Congress party will take place on Wednesday evening, featuring a live band to bring the energy and fun that our attendees love. It's the perfect opportunity to relax, celebrate and dance the night away, so don't forget to pack your dancing shoes!

Comments from last BSI Congress – don't miss out this year!

"The band was excellent." "Loved the live band!" "Brilliant night"

Exhibitors and sponsors

The generous contributions of our corporate sponsors enable us to offer our community another Congress to remember.

We're immensely grateful for their invaluable support and we'd like to encourage all our delegates to explore the exhibition centre and tap into the expertise of our wonderful exhibitors who can answer questions and provide hands-on demonstrations of the latest technologies and products.

Get the latest info

www.bsicongress.com

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@britsocimm.bsky.social

Join the conversation using **#BSI25**

If you have any questions, please email **congress@immunology.org**.

SOCIETY NEWS

BSI-CIPN Conference 2025

Monday 1 and Tuesday 2 December 2025, ACC Liverpool, UK

This two-day meeting is an essential event for doctors, scientists, nurses, pharmacists and trainees working within clinical immunology. The agenda will include important clinical and research topics related to the healthcare of patients with primary immunodeficiencies, as well as a wide range of other topics relevant to clinical immunology practice, covering the latest thinking around key medical, scientific, educational and management issues relevant to all those working in the field.

Register today to hear from leading experts in the field on the latest advances in clinical science and patient care, plus unique opportunities to network with peers and industry partners.

Hurry, early bird registration closes on **22 October!**

'Really good balance across research, immunology and allergy in the programme.'

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Michael Lenardo

National Institutes of Health (NIH), USA

British Society for Immunology

CIPN

Clinical Immunology Professional Network

Programme highlights:

- **Challenging humans: infections, vaccines and allergens**
- **Nucleic acid sensing by innate immune receptors**
- **Nursing parallel session**
- **Is a cure possible to autoimmunity?**

BSI Congress 2025 www.bsicongress.com (1–4 December) will take place alongside the BSI-CIPN Conference at ACC Liverpool. If you would like to attend both events you can obtain a 25% discount on the cost of the combined registration fees. Please contact cipn@immunology.org for details.

'Very good content of different speakers for immunodeficiency and management of patient care, evidence-based research content of immunological conditions.'

'Excellent networking. BSI has been such a positive collaboration for the clinical community. Excited about the future.'

Travel the greener way!

The BSI is pleased to offer a **15% discount** with Avanti for delegates attending the BSI-CIPN Conference 2025 in Liverpool. Further details can be found on the conference website. **https://bit.ly/4lvXDC4**

SOCIETY NEWS

Busy times at the BSI Clinical Immunology Professional Network (BSI-CIPN)

During the summer, the BSI-CIPN has kept real momentum going, and we have some exciting new projects moving ahead, as well as the regular business of the network.

The BSI-CIPN Steering Group met in May, ahead of summer, and once again had a packed agenda. They discussed the developing programme for the BSI-CIPN Conference coming up in December 2025, and even touched on early planning work for the conference in 2026. The group also reflected on the success of the recently launched BSI-CIPN Immunology Nursing Excellence Programme (visit **immunology.org/training/BSIImmunologyNursingExcellenceProgramme** for more details), which we are looking forward to taking forward. to continuing to build on as we bring new cohorts through. They discussed the BSI-CIPN membership, which has continued to grow in recent months, and talked through developments at a national level within the NHS.

The BSI-CIPN Steering Group continue to do an excellent job in leading and steering the BSI-CIPN, and help to keep the work of the network driving forward.

It has been a busy quarter for our BSI-CIPN Clinical Guidelines Special Interest Group, and we welcomed a new member to the trainee representative position – Dr Manisha Ahuja, Specialist Registrar, Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals & Associate Clinical Lecturer, Newcastle University.

We have also been busy convening the Writing Group for our new clinical guideline on Good syndrome, led by Dr David Lowe from the Royal Free. We're excited to start work on this important guideline, and the group is looking to adopt an inclusive approach to ensure we work with colleagues in other specialties and stakeholders from other relevant organisations to make the guideline as robust as possible.

We are also bringing together work to move ahead with our new clinical guideline on best practice for prescribing and monitoring Sirolimus for immune dysregulation in inborn errors of immunity, led by Fan Cheng from Great Ormond Street Hospital.

We continue to respond to NICE consultations and technology appraisals, and have submitted to a number of these over the last few months, including on garadacimab for preventing recurrent attacks of hereditary angioedema in people 12 years and over, and remibrutinib for chronic spontaneous urticaria inadequately controlled by H1-antihistamine.

July saw the publication of the new 10 Year Plan for Health, for which we submitted a consultation response on behalf of the BSI-CIPN last December. We read the plan with interest, and were pleased to see commitments around improving diagnostics and reference to rare diseases, a focus on integrated and patient-centred care and a commitment to longer-term planning within the NHS, as well as a renewed focus on data.

However, there are areas where we will need to continue to advocate for the government to go further, including on the clinical workforce – a key priority of the BSI-CIPN. We are continuing to develop our policy work in this area, and are building on recent work from our partners as well as analysing workforce data provided by NHS England to try and bring together a clearer picture of the current workforce challenges faced within the specialty.

Over the last few months, we have continued to develop our work to showcase research within clinical careers. The BSI team is carrying out interviews with volunteers across different professional groups from within the BSI-CIPN community to help shine a light on this important aspect of our members' work, and highlight the different ways research can be incorporated into clinical roles. Keep an eye out for more on this project soon.

Lastly, but by no means least, we have been planning (and getting underway) a second year of projects and activities within the BSI-CIPN Strategic Plan 2024–2027. We have lots of exciting projects on the agenda. Some are new, and some will build on the brilliant work that has been ongoing over the last year or more, including building on the fantastic BSI-CIPN Conference to establish it as the leading UK professional event within clinical immunology.

We look forward to working with all our members over the coming weeks and months, and as always – if you would like to get more involved in the work of the BSI-CIPN, don't hesitate to get in touch at **cipn@immmunology.org**.

> 'The BSI team is carrying out interviews with volunteers across different professional groups from within the BSI-CIPN community to help shine a light on this important aspect of our members' work.'

Optimising hereditary angioedema care: insights from a new white paper

KalVista organised and funded a meeting that led to this publication and paid honoraria to the authors. The authors had final editorial control.

As immunology clinicians and patient advocates, we recognise that hereditary angioedema (HAE) presents unique complexities. The impact of HAE varies significantly from person-to-person, requiring an individualised approach to treatment and management. While therapeutic advancements have been made, ensuring truly personalised and holistic management remains a significant undertaking. In line with the recently published NHS 10 Year Plan, which champions more proactive, people-centred care and integrated pathways, ensuring HAE patients receive this level of support will make a real difference.

As part of our efforts to improve HAE care, we collaborated on a white paper: Tackling Unmet Need in Hereditary Angioedema: Optimising care and treatment. This paper is a valuable clinical resource, dissecting the current UK HAE landscape, identifying critical gaps, and proposing a strategic roadmap for enhanced care.

Diagnostic journey

For HAE patients, the average time from symptom onset to confirmed diagnosis is 8.5 years. Diagnostic delays are often due to lack of recognition, and misdiagnosis can result in unnecessary interventions, impacting patients' quality of life.[1]

For the immunology community, this underscores a critical need for heightened awareness among primary care and non-immunology specialists. Early diagnosis is critical as fatalities predominantly occur in undiagnosed individuals.[1] To identify HAE, key investigations include testing C1 inhibitor levels and function, alongside complement C4 levels, in line with international guidelines.[2]

Towards patient-centred care

The evolution of HAE therapeutics has provided more prophylactic and on-demand treatments. However, a critical disconnect exists within the UK healthcare system. Current access criteria often prioritise attack frequency,[3] overlooking the individual variability in disease burden and its impact on quality of life. International guidelines increasingly advocate for a holistic assessment, considering not just attack numbers, but also attack severity, frequency and impact on patients.[3, 4]

A 'one-size-fits-all' approach fails to acknowledge the nuanced reality of living with HAE. For immunologists, achieving more personalised care means moving beyond purely symptomatic assessments to understand the patient's lived experience, fostering shared decision making and empowering self-management based on individual lifestyles and treatment preferences.

Addressing unmet needs

Delays in on-demand treatment can lead to longer, more severe attacks[5] and, even with effective preventative treatment strategies, attacks can occur. Specialist immunology centres have a vital role in disseminating knowledge about HAE recognition, diagnosis and management. As prompt treatment is essential for optimal patient outcomes, comprehensive self-administration training and addressing psychological barriers might be necessary for patients.

The white paper concludes with clear, actionable recommendations for transforming HAE care including to:

1. **Ensure patients have access to a range of HAE treatment options tailored to their individual needs** in personalised care plans. Ensure healthcare decision-makers are receptive to innovative treatments, and patients understand the importance of carrying and promptly using medication when appropriate.

2. **Increase patient and professional understanding of HAE** by providing training to healthcare professionals so they can recognise the signs and symptoms of the disease earlier.

3. **Improve the health system for rare diseases** by ensuring access to specialist centres across the UK and investing in robust data collection systems to gather, analyse, and share information across the NHS.

KalVista Pharmaceuticals

To read the white paper in full, please visit https://www.haeuk.org/news/unmet-needs-in-hae-treatment/.

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SOCIETY NEWS

Supporting veterinary vaccinology research

Supporting veterinary immunology research is a core part of the BSI's remit. Advocating for increased investment and support for veterinary immunology has been a central part of the BSI's policy work ever since 2021, when we published a joint report with the International Veterinary Vaccinology Network (IVVN), which provided recommendations on how the UK could maintain its leading role in veterinary vaccinology research.

New funding call

Given this background, it has been very pleasing to see one of the recommendations from this report – for strategic long-term investment in veterinary vaccinology research – come to fruition through a recent funding call. The call was developed jointly by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to provide £12.5 million to fund projects that aim to engineer next-generation veterinary vaccine technology platforms.

Addressing unmet veterinary vaccine needs

Animal vaccination plays a vital role in protecting UK and global health, wealth and security. Progress in veterinary vaccinology has underpinned significant advances in vaccines for both animals and humans, including in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Infectious diseases in livestock and wild animals pose a significant risk to food security and human health, both within the UK and beyond our borders, with new threats continually emerging. Worldwide, the cost of tackling these diseases adds up to many billions of dollars every year, with a disproportionate burden falling on low- and middle-income countries.

The UK has a rich legacy of cutting-edge veterinary vaccinology research, supported by our innovative biotechnology industry and leading role in global vaccine research networks. However, despite current progress, there are still some significant gaps that remain in our ability to produce new vaccines at pace. This funding call aims to help overcome this by supporting 'plug and play' veterinary vaccine platforms, leveraging transformative technologies, interdisciplinary approaches, and cross-sector partnerships, focusing on the entire platform technology pipeline from antigen discovery to delivery and underpinned by immunological understanding to address unmet veterinary vaccine needs.

Supporting applications

As this new funding has a focus on bringing together researchers and partners with diverse skills, the BSI agreed to collaborate with the IVVN to co-host an in-person workshop in Nottingham in June to support potential applicants. Working with colleagues from the BBSRC and Defra, the workshop aimed to:

- Bring together researchers from across disciplines and sectors (e.g. AI, structural biology, engineering biology, immunomics) to facilitate networking and knowledge exchange and the formation of new interdisciplinary research collaborations
- Allow participants to develop a richer understanding of the vaccine technology platform research in the UK and internationally
- Ensure the readiness of the veterinary vaccinology research and innovation community to generate successful applications for the funding call.

The event saw approximately 80 researchers from around the UK and from many different disciplines come together to learn more about the funding call, network and explore collaboration opportunities. The day started with presentations from research leaders, including Dr Michael Francis, Professor Gary Entrican, Dr Joanne Del Rosario and Professor Linda King, providing insightful and thought-provoking talks around different aspects of veterinary vaccinology research, including immunology, artificial intelligence and engineering biology.

The afternoon saw all participants take part in structured and informal networking sessions, which provided the opportunity for attendees to learn more about each other's expertise, exchange ideas and explore potential future collaborations.

Looking ahead

The energy in the room was palpable and we hope that the event helped to build lots of new connections that will result in successful applications to the grant call. Our thanks go to all the speakers, participants and colleagues from the funding bodies who helped to make the day such a success.

As the funding call is now closed, we await with anticipation the announcement of the successful projects which will no doubt harness expertise from across the bioscience community and beyond to catalyse innovation and research in this crucial area.

Jennie Evans
Director of External Affairs, BSI

Further information

- BSI/IVVN policy report from 2021 – 'Securing our future: The value of veterinary vaccines' **https://rb.gy/18aysu**
- BBSRC/Defra joint call – Engineer next generation veterinary vaccine technology platforms **https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/engineer-next-generation-veterinary-vaccine-technology-platforms/**

SOCIETY NEWS

BSI Congress 2025: welcome first-time Congress-goers

Heading to your first BSI Congress can feel exciting and a little overwhelming, so here's what you need to know to make the most of your week in Liverpool.

The venue: ACC Liverpool

This year's Congress will take place at ACC Liverpool, a modern and accessible events centre located on the city's iconic waterfront. The venue is well equipped, fully accessible and within easy reach of hotels, shops, dining and the city's main transport links. Liverpool Lime Street is the nearest major train station, and registered delegates can benefit from a 15% discount on train travel with Avanti West Coast, making public transport a convenient and greener way to get to the event.

Food and refreshments

Your registration includes refreshments throughout the Congress days, with tea and coffee breaks and lunch provided on site each day. If you have dietary requirements, be sure to indicate these during registration. There are also plenty of cafés and restaurants nearby if you want to explore the local food scene, with options to suit different tastes.

What to wear

Dress code is casual to smart casual – you'll see everything from jeans and jumpers to more business-like attire. Most importantly, wear comfortable shoes as you'll be moving between sessions, exhibitor stands and networking areas across a large venue.

Stay hydrated

Bring a reusable water bottle! Water refill stations are available throughout ACC Liverpool. Staying hydrated is important, especially during busy conference days.

Other practical tips

- You'll receive a delegate badge on arrival – wear it for access and networking
- A conference bag is provided, but you may want to bring a smaller bag for valuables
- If you're coming from abroad, remember to bring a UK plug adapter
- Bring a notebook, pen or device for taking notes during sessions
- December in Liverpool can be chilly and damp, so bring a warm, waterproof coat for travelling to and from the venue
- Don't hesitate to introduce yourself! Everyone is there to connect, whether it's your first Congress or your tenth

We hope you have a brilliant first Congress and enjoy everything both ACC Liverpool and the city have to offer.

Clinical immunology: reflecting on our legacy


David Webster and Ron Thompson, pioneers of UK Clinical Immunology

Immunology is quite a fringe speciality in clinical medicine, and many people, even doctors, are not sure what a clinical immunologist is or does. Indeed, the role itself can be quite variable.

Through laboratory work, we are involved in the diagnosis and monitoring of a broad range of clinical conditions across all of medicine. In clinical practice, virtually all immunologists see patients with inborn errors of immunity (mainly immunodeficiency), secondary immunodeficiency and specialist allergy. Beyond this there are many local arrangements for sole or joint care of other patients with immune-mediated conditions.

The 1940–60s is often described as the heyday of British immunology. During this time there was an outpouring of research laying the foundations of our current understanding of immunoglobulins, cellular immunity and complement function. The practice of clinical immunology arose from scientifically trained doctors who shared a fascination in the role of the immune system in disease. They drew on – and often led – the rapid advances in the understanding of the immune system in the 20th century. In this article, Dr Aarnoud Huissoon, Consultant Immunologist at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, explores the early history of clinical immunology.

Three men in a punt

In the 1930s, John Humphrey, John Squire and Philip Gell studied natural sciences together in Cambridge, before they went on to their clinical training at University College Hospital. These three scientists went on to become vital figures in the development of immunology.

Humphrey gravitated to immunology at an early stage in its clinical development. He led the Division of Immunology at the Medical Research Council's National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) in London. From there he mentored and advised many of the physicians who became the first wave of clinical immunologists. Among these was Geoffrey Asherson, a clinical researcher whose work included demonstration of tolerising doses of antigen and suppressor T cells. In 1971, David Webster, a young senior registrar, joined the NIHR and became one of the first trainees specifically appointed to the emerging specialty of immunology. Webster went on to lead the immunodeficiency research group and diagnosed and managed immunodeficiency at Northwick Park and later at the Royal Free Hospital.

Meanwhile, John Squire – physician, dermatologist and pathologist – was asked by the MRC to undertake research into the causes and treatment of occupational skin disorders in England's industrial heartland, Birmingham. Not content with such a modest brief, he quickly established a reputation as a multi-specialty busybody and was appointed by the University of Birmingham to set up their new Department of Experimental Pathology. He invited his friend Philip Gell to join him there, and the foundations of clinical immunology were in place.

Philip Gell's research after the war focused on contact dermatitis caused by chemicals in explosives. This led him to an interest in delayed hypersensitivity, later known to be cell-mediated immunity. As time went on, his interests widened, and his department in Birmingham produced world-leading research into how antigen recognition by antibodies and T cells differed, and evidence that B cells could be stimulated through immunoglobulins acting as receptors on the cell surface.

The first textbook of clinical immunology…

Together with Cambridge haematologist, Robin Coombs, Gell described four types of aberrant immune responses (or 'allergies' as they termed them), coining the Gell and Coombs classification of hypersensitivity that is still widely taught today. In 1963 they published what was probably the first and certainly the most influential book to underpin what would become a new specialty: *Clinical Aspects of Immunology*. This text brought together the current understanding of immune mechanisms of disease, including immunity to infectious disease, autoimmunity and atopic allergy. For the first time, protocols for immunology laboratory diagnostic methods sat alongside descriptions of disease pathogenesis and treatment.

…and the first NHS immunologist

In London around this time, junior doctor, Ronald Thompson, became interested in immunology through recent discoveries in autoimmunity, and wrote a paper on rheumatoid factor in patients who had suffered heart attacks. He was advised by John Humphrey that he might develop

his interest by working with Philip Gell in Birmingham. He soon started work in the department, learning the techniques for autoantibody testing and complement measurement.

While Thompson was learning his trade, five miles away in East Birmingham Hospital virologist, Tim Flewett, was struggling with requests for immunological advice. Squire and other clinical researchers at the university were also physicians at this general hospital which specialised in infectious diseases. Flewett persuaded the local health board to create a post for a specialist in immunology, and in 1969, Ron Thompson was appointed as the first immunologist in the NHS.

Starting with only a technician and a secretary, Thompson went on to create the model of clinical immunology practice that is still recognisable today. He was the first to bring the immunology diagnostic repertoire together into one laboratory, where previously individual research departments would provide a few tests according to their own interests and expertise. He reviewed patients with recurrent or unusual infections alongside well-known infectious diseases expert, Alastair Geddes, and immunoglobulin and other emerging immunological therapies were prescribed from his clinic.

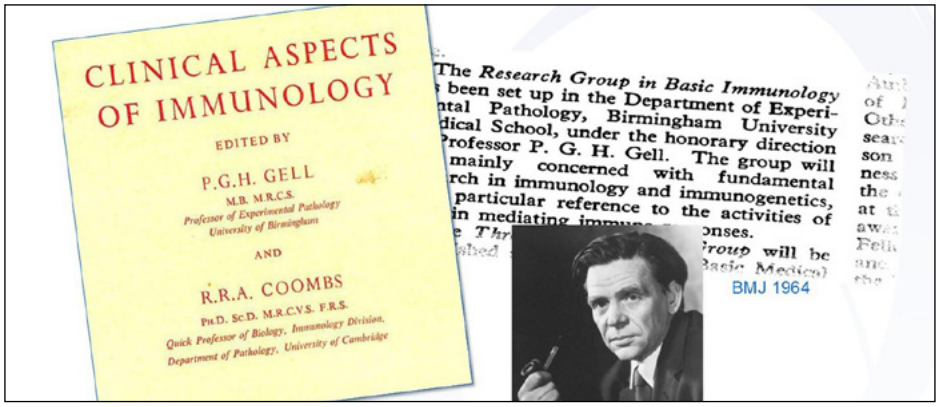
Measuring the immune system

As time went on, new techniques such as gel precipitation, electrophoresis and immunofluorescence enabling measurement and quantitation of autoantibodies were developed, and the clinical relevance of the immune system uncovered. In Cambridge, Robin Coombs showed that haemolytic anaemia was caused by an autoantibody, which could also cause haemolysis *in vitro*. Jack Pepys in London used immunoprecipitation to show that certain lung diseases were associated with antibodies to fungal proteins and other organic dusts. Deborah Doniach and Ivan Roitt demonstrated the first tissue-specific autoantibodies (thyroid and parietal cell) using immunofluorescence. John Holborrow and Gerald Johnson then used this technique to show autoantibodies against smooth muscle in liver disease and also antinuclear antibodies, which could be used to diagnose systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) (in place of the more laborious LE test).

‘NEQAS (National External Quality Assessment Service) for immunology began in the 1980s. Blood samples were sent to all participating laboratories and the collated results were circulated so that each laboratory could compare its performance to others.’

Clinical demand for these tests followed and these were initially performed alongside other biochemistry, haematology and microbiology analyses. Immunology laboratories emerged often where there was an associated university department where the required technical expertise existed to perform these increasingly specialised manual tests.

As more laboratories introduced immunology tests, there was inevitably wide variation in the quality of the results. For immunoglobulins and some other proteins, the WHO in Lausanne (headed by David Rowe, from Squire's laboratory in Birmingham) had developed standards. For many years the Protein Reference Unit (laboratories in London, Sheffield, Birmingham and Cardiff) provided the reference standard for immunochemistry and related assays. But for many other subjective and interpretative tests, no standards were available. The introduction of external quality control was an important step to ensure that test results for antinuclear or gliadin antibodies, for example, gave similar results no matter where they were tested. NEQAS (National External Quality Assessment Service) for immunology began in the 1980s. Blood samples were sent to all participating laboratories and the collated results were circulated so that each laboratory could compare its performance to others. Outliers were encouraged to re-examine their practices to identify causes for this. Clinical Pathology Accreditation Ltd was formed in 1992 by a number of UK pathology organisations to ensure consistency in laboratory practice. These exemplars of good clinical practice have been adopted widely across the globe.



Clinical immunology professional Societies – from BSI and back again

In 1956, Humphrey, along with other prominent immunologists, founded the British Society for Immunology. Eight years earlier, in 1948, Frankland set up the British Allergy Society, the forerunner of the BSACI. While there were clear overlaps with the interests of these two Societies, there was a need to represent the activities of the growing clinical immunology community. And so Gavin Spickett became the first chair of the UK Primary Immunodeficiency Network (UKPIN), which held its inaugural meeting at East Birmingham Hospital in 2000.

UKPIN went on to hold bi-annual meetings and, importantly, developed a set of standards against which centres managing immunodeficiency patients could self-assess their performance and facilities, and apply for peer accreditation. Keen to recapture the clinical fraternity, the BSI also set up a clinical immunology subgroup, which organised clinical content at the BSI Congress. But immunologists found themselves stretched between many different relatively small representative organisations, each with its own officers and meetings. Thus, in 2023, the formal merger of UKPIN into the BSI occurred, to form the BSI Clinical Immunology Professional Network (BSI-CIPN). Like UKPIN before it, this intended to cater not only for medically qualified immunologists, but also the nursing and scientific members of our departments. So, from John Humphrey’s original founding intentions for the Society, clinical immunology has come home again.

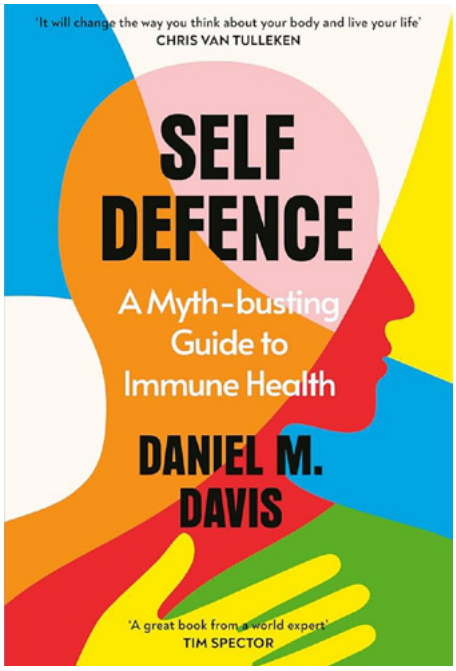
By **Dr Aarnoud Huissoon**,
Consultant Immunologist,
University Hospitals
Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

BSI Outstanding Ambassador for Immunology Award:

interview with Professor Dan Davis

Our Outstanding Ambassador for Immunology Award recognises and celebrates the contribution and impact of an individual who has been an outstanding ambassador for immunology in the UK, using their network and influence to champion the immunology sector. This year, it was awarded to Professor Daniel Davis, Imperial College London, in recognition of his achievements in both academic and public engagement activities.

With the recent publication of his fourth book, *Self Defence*, Dan's work shines a light on how immunology can influence our health, demystify the science behind many diet and lifestyle claims, and helps his audiences understand just how complex our biological systems really are.



We spoke to Dan about his journey in science communication, what he's learned about writing for the public, and what the award means to him.

I wanted to start by saying congratulations on your book. What is it that inspires you to write?

The core job of being a scientist, and trying to understand how the human immune system works, requires you to repeat lots of experiments, think about the controls, think about alternative explanations and about nuances in the way in which the technique works. That's a lot of focus on the nitty gritty details of what it is exactly you're doing, which is always going to be a small fragment of the whole picture.

So, for me, one of the important reasons for me to write is to give myself the opportunity to step back and try to take stock of the whole thing. The whole human endeavour that we're on to try to understand the immune system, to think about what that means for our lives, for making new kinds of medicines, and how we understand the human body itself – all these kinds of bigger picture issues.

But there are also quite a few other reasons, too. My very first book was actually about the MHC system. For me, there's a really profound message within the MHC system. It's the most diverse gene of all human genes. It's a wonderful, fundamental reason why we are all so different. We are most diverse in our immune system. So, my first book was really written because I thought that studying the details of the immune system provides a fundamental window into human diversity, if you like.

And there are many other things that have come up while I've been writing popular science books. I've really enjoyed interviewing people. Because this is a human endeavour. So, for the first few books I've interviewed well over 100 scientists.

‘Once I dug into all the experiments that people have done it was surprising just how unclear the actual experiments really are.’

What skills have you had to lean on to fit towards different audiences?

When writing a research article, you are trying to make the experiment itself very clear so that other people can understand very precisely what you did in that experiment, and then you are trying to fit that into the context of prior work as well as thinking about what it might mean for future research. It's quite a formulaic process; you're writing an introduction, your results, some discussion, and then all the methods in detail. When you're writing a book, all of that is out of the window, and I suppose you're looking on a much broader canvas as to where we're at with immunology and thinking much more about what is really interesting to a very general audience.

How long did the research and writing process take for Self Defence?

Each book I write is about three years. I'm working in the university as well. So, it's not like I'm working all the time for three years on it. But I do tend to write fairly slowly and I do tend to try my best to think deeply as I'm going along, both in terms of the writing itself and the thing I'm trying to write about, and it just does all happen quite slowly, but that's an enjoyable part of it for me. I don't mind if it takes me two years, three years, four years, it doesn't really matter.

During the research and writing process for this book, was there anything that surprised you?

I think that the most surprising thing about what I learned about immune health is that it's very easy to pick up books or see things on social media that are telling you to do this or that. And I never really knew where a lot of that came from. Once I dug into all the experiments that people have done it was surprising just how unclear the actual experiments really are. There's a lot of experiments that show the importance of something, but they don't lead to declarative health advice. And yet, somehow, a lot of these experiments get twisted into very quick declarative sound bites, guidance and advice.

You were very recently awarded the 2025 BSI Outstanding Ambassador for Immunology Award. How did it feel to receive that recognition?

It's lovely to win an award. Especially because at the outset, one of the things I was very worried about for writing popular science was what my peers would think. I was worried that other scientists would think I was wasting time or doing something that's a bit of a fringe activity and not very important.

This award is the culmination of the journey in the sense that it is true that other scientists think it's OK. The fact that there even is an award for science communication is really wonderful because I think 20 years ago it was a slightly frowned upon activity among the high echelons of academic science, and I think more and more that how we engage with the public has become of ever-increasing importance.

The fact there is an award is wonderful. I mean the fact that I got it is great. But I also think that there is a really big swell of activity in science communication and immunology. So, in any of these awards, I always think that there's a lot of people out there who are being very brave and doing really courageous things in communicating science and also deserve recognition.

What advice would you give to immunologists who were considering trying their hand at science communication?

I suppose there are two things to say. One is, depending on what it is you want to do, it's very important to find someone who's doing that and ask them how they got into it. If you want to write a book, then ask someone who's written a book about what it takes. How do they do it? Someone who's been through that process will have a lot of simple advice that will make it a lot easier. The second bit of advice, is maybe kind of slightly contrary to that, which is that everyone is very much on their own journey, and there is actually no right or wrong way to do any of these things.

Interview by **Laura Cox**

‘there are many other things that have come up while I've been writing popular science books. I've really enjoyed interviewing people. Because this is a human endeavour.’

BSI Immune Therapies Summit

Accelerating the next generation of immune therapies across diseases

Hosted by the British Society for Immunology

BSI Immune Therapies Summit 2026

Save the date!

Monday 18 to Tuesday 19 May 2026, Cambridge, UK

Following the success of the 2024 Summit, which brought together over 140 leaders from across industry, academia and clinical research, we are delighted to announce the return of the BSI Immune Therapies Summit in May 2026.

This cross-sector meeting provides a rare opportunity for experts working across different disease areas to come together and discuss the latest developments and future challenges in immune therapies. Attendees at last year's event described it as "inspiring", "invaluable for making new connections" and praised the breadth of discussion bridging autoimmune diseases and cancer.

The 2026 Summit will once again be hosted at Hinxton Hall Conference Centre in Cambridge, providing the perfect setting for collaboration and networking. With internationally recognised speakers, interactive sessions and cross-disease discussions, this is an exceptional opportunity to exchange insights, spark new collaborations and help shape the next generation of immunotherapy research for patient benefit.

Who should attend?

The BSI Immune Therapies Summit is aimed at senior leaders from industrial, academic and clinical research settings who are passionate about accelerating immune therapy development and building their cross-sector networks in this field.

Who should attend?

At this event you can...

- Explore unparalleled and varied networking opportunities with sector leaders from industry, academia and health fields
- Listen to cutting-edge talks and discussions from top international experts
- Take part in holistic, cross-disease discussions on the latest developments across the spectrum of immunotherapy research
- Contribute to dynamic focus sessions

Registration will open soon – stay tuned for updates!

Find out more

More information will be shared soon on our website.

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Discovery IMMUNOLOGY

ADVANCES IN VETERINARY IMMUNOLOGY

Led by Professor Jayne Hope, The Roslin Institute, UK

This collection welcomes original research and reviews on a broad range of topics in veterinary immunology, including the structure and function of the immune system in veterinary species, comparative immunology across species, and the activation and regulation of immune responses for disease control, such as vaccine delivery systems.

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British Society for immunology

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

BSI Public Engagement Award: interview with Professor Jessica Teeling

Our Public Engagement Award acknowledges and rewards immunologists who show a strong commitment to engaging with the public about immunology and have carried out exceptional outreach work to inform, enthuse and engage the public. This year, it has been awarded to Jessica Teeling, Professor of Experimental Neuroimmunology at the University of Southampton.

With the phrase 'prevention is better than cure' in mind, Jessica and her team applied for a BSI Communication and Engagement Grant from the British Society for Immunology to generate a giant 'snakes and ladders' game, where players learn about lifestyle choices that prevent (ladder) or increase (snake) the risk of dementia, with a particular focus on the role of the immune system in this process.

We spoke to Jessica about the substantial impact she has made on the perception of dementia and its risk factors, the challenges and opportunities in public engagement and what this award means to her.

Congratulations again on winning the BSI Public Engagement Award! What did it mean to you to win this award?

That's a lovely question, because it meant a lot. Public engagement often feels like a solo effort, but this project was very much a team endeavour. Winning an award for something so personal and potentially impactful (dementia and brain health) was such an honour. We've had genuinely meaningful conversations with people outside of academia, which has been incredibly rewarding. It also brought together a really diverse group, including clinicians, nurses, students and researchers. So, to have all that collaborative effort recognised, and to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from both the public and colleagues, felt like a real validation of all the hard work we've put in.

What inspired this project and how did the idea first come about?

We'd been involved in public engagement for a while through the BSI Wessex Immunology Group, taking part in science festivals and local outreach. Then I came across a landmark paper showing that 45% of dementia risk is linked to modifiable lifestyle factors. Given our research into dementia and inflammation, that really stood out to me. I thought, this is all connected to the immune system. It felt like a great opportunity to raise awareness about that link, and gamification seemed like a fun and effective way to start those conversations.

How did the game help you engage people in conversations about brain health?

We wanted to share important information without sounding condescending or overwhelming. With the game, people land on a snake or ladder and reflect on what that means for them, in their own time. It opens up the conversation naturally. We don't just talk about risk factors either; about half of the messages are positive, highlighting protective behaviours. That really seems to resonate, and people are often proud to say, "Oh, I do that!"

Originally, it was called Snakes and Ladders for Dementia, but based on feedback, we renamed it Snakes and Letters for a Healthy Brain. It's more positive and inclusive, and the tips apply to overall health too. We even avoided using the word 'dementia' on the game board itself to keep it flexible for wider use.

> 'We don't just talk about risk factors either; about half of the messages are positive, highlighting protective behaviours.'

‘Older participants were sometimes hesitant at first, thinking it was too late to make a difference. But after playing, many were surprised to learn there are things they can still do to protect brain health.’

It’s easy to think of dementia as only affecting older people, but your game seems to engage a wide range of age groups. Was that something you planned for?

I’m really glad you asked, because thinking about your audience is key to having an impact. We initially aimed the game at people in mid-life, when brain health starts to feel more relevant. But at early events, we saw that it appealed to all ages. Young kids just enjoy playing, and while they do, we’re able to chat with their parents. We’ve had 10-year-olds who were genuinely curious about brain health, and the game helped start great conversations.

Older participants were sometimes hesitant at first, thinking it was too late to make a difference. But after playing, many were surprised to learn there are things they can still do to protect brain health, which made the experience meaningful for them too.

What were some of the biggest challenges you faced, and how did you overcome them?

Time has definitely been one of the biggest challenges – public engagement is incredibly rewarding, but it does take a lot of time. In the first year, we said yes to every opportunity, which helped build momentum. But to keep it going, we built up a pool of volunteers (mostly PhD students) to share the load.

Measuring impact has also been tricky. We created a digital version of the game to track participation, and one simple but effective tool was a colour-coded lever asking people to rate their perceived dementia risk before and after playing. About 80% of participants changed their perception, often realising they were doing better than they thought.

Reaching people with dementia and their carers was another challenge. Some felt it was too late for them. But by working closely with community support groups and adapting the game for smaller, more personal settings, we’ve found more inclusive ways to engage.

Is there a particular interaction or moment that felt especially rewarding during this engagement work?

One moment that really stood out was at a crowdfunding event, where I spoke with a woman from an Asian background about her father’s stroke and later dementia. She’d never realised there were modifiable risk factors. Her son later told me she had never asked a question about anything like this before, but now she felt confident and curious. That was incredibly rewarding! We also had some great media coverage, including a BBC radio piece and a local TV segment. One interview took place while playing the game, which turned out to be a brilliant way to get the message across naturally and meaningfully.

(l-r) Past award winner Dr Viki Male, Professor Jessica Teeling and BSI Chief Executive Dr Doug Brown

What advice would you give to other immunologists who want to get started with public engagement?

Just give it a go. Start small – maybe try out an idea at a local event, a departmental open day, or a university science festival. You don’t need to begin with something huge. You can also try and work with someone with similar interests to help share the workload.

Then apply for funding, especially through the BSI. Even a small budget can help you create props or 3D materials that really bring your message to life. The BSI application process itself is also useful, as it gets you thinking about your audience, your aims, and how to evaluate your activity. It’s a great way to start planning your project.

At our university, we even include outreach in a master’s module, helping students build confidence by linking engagement with their research. If you’ve got an idea, develop it and try it out – it’s worth it!

How has the BSI supported your work in public engagement?

The initial BSI grant to develop our 3×3 metre game board was what got everything started. But the support went far beyond funding. Every time we shared something on social media, the BSI helped amplify it, and you even featured the project in *Immunology News*, which was a great way to reach other immunologists.

We also had the chance to showcase our work at the BSI Congress, and even the small things, like prizes and giveaways, really helped. Overall, the encouragement and positivity from the BSI made a huge difference. We couldn’t have done it without you!

Interview by **Madeline Crouch**

FUTURE FOCUS

Foundational skills for immunology

In June 2025, we held our first in-person training day of the BSI Immunology Nursing Excellence Programme. Mapped against the BSI-CIPN Competency Framework for Immunology Nursing, this programme has been specifically developed to support immunology nurses working in both adult and paediatric immunology nursing – and practicing nurses with an interest in specialising in immunology – in developing their expertise in immunology and patient care.

Led by senior nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and clinical immunology professionals, the day covered the science of the immune system, immunodeficiency and pathology, clinical investigations and the psychological aspects of immunodeficiency in a friendly, collaborative format. Opportunities for immunology nurses to connect in-person are rare, and this course aims to provide a valuable opportunity for information sharing and networking. Here, Vanessa Mozo, of the Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, reflects on her experience of the course.

Delegates at the first ever BSI Immunology Nursing Excellence Programme training day

When I first saw this course advertised, I instantly signed up for it without thinking. I have been practicing nursing for more than 20 years now and have never come across a course for immunology, neither in-house nor at any universities.

Before I started the course, I was new to the service and never had any experience with immunology. Although immunology was touched on during my university years, at that time I wasn't sure what sort of nursing care would be rendered to a patient with immunology issues.

When I attended the first day, I was so excited. The topics are very catchy. I might say that the topics were appropriate for us in a sense, as we are not new to nursing, but we are what you might call 'green apples' when it comes to immunology. The topics were sort of basic, with many participants able to share their experiences, which was great for me because I understand things more and remember them through examples and discussions. The speakers were very engaging and really encouraged us to talk and participate with the discussion and topics.

One major benefit during the session came from more experienced colleagues sharing how their centres work, along with their knowledge and experience when it comes to certain topics and cases. With a mixture of different stages and experiences of participants in the immunology world, there were no questions that couldn't be answered by someone in the room. We were able to discuss and compare paediatric and adult cases. Our nursing colleagues have both heartbreaking and heartwarming stories to tell regarding their work, how they support their patients, how they do transitions and how they communicate with different centres.

The way they explained how their team works, the communication and coordination, I think is helpful for smaller teams on how to potentially adopt some of these techniques to run their service in the future.

The varied discussions really showed how complicated immunology is, and at the same time how fulfilling and full of 'action' working in this field can be. It was also nice to learn how my nursing colleagues deliver their service. We were able to share different strategies and ideas to apply in the future.

When one of the speakers mentioned involving GPs, this made me think that immunology is not just for specialist hospitals, it can be in the community too. It was very helpful to learn how we can work with GPs for the benefit of our patients from such an enthusiastic speaker with experience in this area. I changed my perspective of how I view immunology patients – instead of being specialist cases who need specialist care. This just shows that if we focus on details we can achieve good results and better service.

Finally, it was interesting to hear how colleagues deliver their service and approach it in different ways. It's nice to hear that some of them have their own team to run the service as our team is only a small team. It was really interesting to experience and be involved in this course. Now, here I am ready to explore and learn and see what it can offer and contribute to my nursing career. I am very fortunate to have a supportive team that supports us with our nursing journey. I am lucky to have been introduced to this group which helped open my eyes to and look further and understand this other side of science.

Vanessa Mozo,
Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

The BSI Immunology Nursing Excellence Programme is funded through the provision of educational grants from BioCryst, CSL Behring, Pharming and Takeda. These organisations have neither influenced nor contributed to the content of the project or any of its associated activities.

Taking immunology to Westminster: BSI at Links Day 2025

BSI representatives at Parliamentary Links Day

On Wednesday 18 June, the British Society for Immunology (BSI) was pleased to attend Parliamentary Links Day 2025 at Portcullis House, Westminster. Organised annually by the Royal Society of Biology (RSB) on behalf of the UK's science and technology community, Links Day is the largest science-focused event in Parliament's calendar. It offers a valuable opportunity to bring together scientists, MPs, peers, learned societies and policy professionals – all with a shared aim: to ensure that science has a central role in shaping public life and policy.

This year's event adopted a refreshed and more flexible format, with a new drop-in structure that encouraged informal conversations and cross-sector networking. Alongside this, attendees heard from an inspiring line-up of speakers. The programme featured remarks from RSB Chief Executive Dr Mark Downs, physicist and science communicator Dr Jess Wade, and Dame Chi Onwurah MP, Chair of the Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee. While there was no formal theme, a consistent message came through: science must be central to building a secure, inclusive and sustainable future for the UK.

Science, inclusion and impact

A highlight of the day was the keynote address from Dr Jess Wade, who gave a compelling speech about the intersections of research, policy and inclusion. She emphasised the need for long-term investment in scientific infrastructure and spotlighted the importance of accessible STEM education and career pathways. Her talk served as a timely reminder that building a diverse and well-supported scientific workforce is not only the right thing to do, but that it's essential for driving research excellence and national innovation.

Parliamentarians were well represented throughout the day. Among those in attendance were Dame Chi Onwurah, Afzal Khan, Jeff Smith, Josh MacAlister and Ben Goldsborough, as well as staff from several MPs' offices. Members of parliamentary committees, such as Kate Anderson (Science and Technology Committee), and members of the House of Lords, including Viscount Stansgate and Lord Rooker, also took part. Conversations were often informal but highly impactful, cementing the value that Links Day provides. The event gives the scientific community a direct channel to share expertise with those shaping national priorities.

Immunology in the national conversation

For the BSI, taking part in Links Day is a key part of our mission to ensure immunology is visible, valued and represented in policy decisions. Until recent years, immunology has often been low in the list of priorities for policymakers, but the Covid-19 pandemic threw immunology into the spotlight, and its role in safeguarding health and wellbeing has never been clearer. From developing vaccines and novel treatments to strengthening infectious disease response and understanding chronic illness, immunology is fundamental to public health. It is also a major contributor to the UK's life sciences sector, and a driver of innovation, jobs and economic growth.
Our participation at Links Day 2025 provided a vital opportunity to engage MPs on these issues. The BSI delegation included CEO Doug Brown, Director of External Affairs, Jennie Evans, and intern Hannah Tompkins, alongside three members of our Member Representative Forum: George Robinson and Hannah Bradford (Early Career Representatives), and Chidi Ubachukwu (PhD Representative). This diverse team brought together a broad cross-section of experience – from early career researchers to senior leadership – to represent the immunology community. Throughout the day, our team held constructive conversations with Parliamentarians about how best to support the future of immunology in the UK. Key topics included the importance of sustained research funding, improved career development and skills pathways, and the need for joined-up, long-term science policy that supports both discovery and application. These discussions helped reinforce that immunology is not just a scientific discipline, it is a vital tool in improving lives, reducing health inequalities and preparing for future health challenges.

Keeping immunology on the agenda

Parliamentary Links Day continues to be one of the most significant opportunities in the UK's science-policy calendar. In a changing world where complex health and societal challenges demand evidence-based solutions, events like this are critical for fostering dialogue and collaboration. They ensure science, and scientists, remain close to decision-making.
For the BSI, Links Day is an important moment to advocate for immunology and the people who power it. Looking ahead, we remain committed to strengthening relationships with policymakers, building cross-sector partnerships, and ensuring immunology stays at the forefront of discussions that shape the UK's scientific and societal future.

Hannah Tompkins, BSI intern

Congratulations

This is the section of the magazine where we celebrate the achievements of our members. Our congratulations to all who are mentioned here.

2025 Immunology Rising Stars

We are proud to announce that BSI members **Dr George Robinson** and **Dr Matthew Sinton** have both been selected as 2025 Immunology Rising Stars by the International Union of Immunological Societies. Their outstanding research was showcased at the International Congress of Immunology in Vienna in August. We warmly congratulate them on this well-deserved recognition.


Dr George Robinson


Dr Matthew Sinton

BSI Career Enhancing Grant

Congratulations to all those successful in the latest round of our grants.

- **Anais Makos**, Keele University at Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital – Investigating the potential of thyTreg extracellular vesicles as allogeneic therapy for autoimmune conditions (TREAT-AC)
- **Dr Emilio Vozza**, University of Cambridge – Defining the role of neutrophil innate immune training in inflammatory disease
- **Dr Jessica White**, Queen's University Belfast – Autofluorescence-based purification and characterisation of neural cell populations
- **Josh Hamilton**, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine – Exploring epigenetic reprogramming in the bronchial epithelium following viral infection
- **Dr Yavuz Yazicioglu**, University of Cambridge – Unravelling PHGDH RNA-binding dynamics in T cells

BSI Communication and Engagement Grant

- **Dr Rachel Hindmarsh**, University of Oxford – Women and vaccination: opening conversations in Oxford
- **Dr Jill Johnson**, Aston University – Synapse – Bringing immunology and young people together

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Grant

- **Dr Shahd Elamin**, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust – Bridging the gap in dermatological immunology research

Distinguished Veterinary Immunologist Award

Many congratulations to **Professor Gary Entrican** who was awarded the Distinguished Veterinary Immunologist Award at the recent International Veterinary Immunology Symposium. Gary received this award in recognition of his immense contribution to the veterinary immunology community including his outstanding research, with a focus on infection biology, and his dedication to training and mentoring the next generation of researchers.

Sally Ward awarded international prize

Congratulations to **Professor Sally Ward** for receiving international recognition for breakthroughs in antibody therapies. Sally received the highly prestigious International Society of Molecular Recognition Award in Affinity Technology for her pioneering work in antibody engineering, directly leading to several antibody-based therapies for autoimmunity and infectious diseases.

Lister Institute of Preventative Medicine 2025

We are delighted to share that two of our members have been honoured with the Lister Prize for their outstanding work.

Dr Fränze Progatzky – University of Oxford
Dr James Thaventhiran – University of Cambridge

Professor Robin May appointed Interim Chief Scientific Officer at UKHSA

Many congratulations to BSI member **Professor Robin May** on his appointment as Interim Chief Scientific Officer at the UK Health Security Agency, starting this September. Robin brings a wealth of experience in tackling public health threats, having previously served as Chief Scientific Adviser at the Food Standards Agency. He will continue his role as Professor of Infectious Disease at the University of Birmingham. We wish him every success in this important new role.

Professor Daniel M. Davis awarded MBE for services to science communication

Many congratulations to **Professor Daniel M. Davis** on being awarded an MBE for services to science communication. Dan has made an outstanding contribution to public understanding of immunology through his engaging books, media work and public talks. His ability to make complex science accessible and inspiring is a true asset to our field, and this honour is a well-deserved recognition of his dedication and impact.

We would love to hear from you about your achievements.

Have you or a colleague recently received grant funding, passed your PhD viva or accepted a new appointment? If so, let us know by emailing media@immunology.org.

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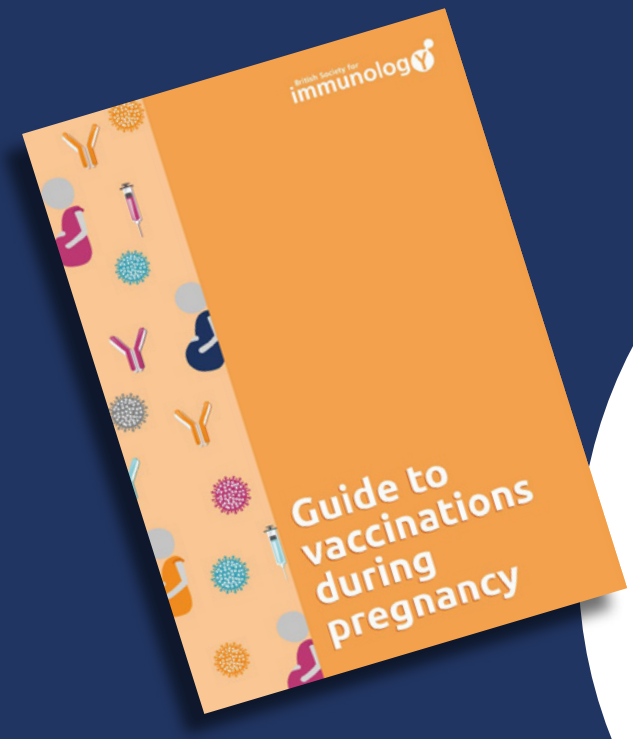

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British Society for immunology

BSI Congress 2025:
Regional and Affinity Group sessions

Explore an exciting range of sessions at this year's BSI Congress, delivered by the BSI Regional and Affinity Groups. Spanning everything from foundational immunology to cutting-edge clinical applications, these sessions highlight the depth and diversity of our field. The full BSI Congress programme can be viewed at **www.bsicongress.com**.

Organising group(s)	Session title
2 December 2025, 11:00–12:45 GMT	
BSI Inflammation Affinity Group	Innate immune cell death: mechanisms and therapeutic perspectives
BSI Autoimmunity Affinity Group	Precision immuno-medicine for autoimmune disease: selecting the right treatment for the right patient
BSI London Immunology Group / the Society for Mucosal Immunology	The ins and outs of mucosal immunology – part 1
2 December 2025, 14:15–16:00 GMT	
BSI London Immunology Group	AI-driven insights into immune responses: vaccines, infections and disease
BSI Teaching Affinity Group	Catalysing change: improved science teaching through public engagement
BSI Inflammation Affinity Group / BSI Yorkshire Immunology Group	Sex differences in immunity and inflammation
BSI London Immunology Group / the Society for Mucosal Immunology	The ins and outs of mucosal immunology – part 2
BSI Midlands Immunology Group	The role of extracellular vesicles in immune cross talk
3 December 2025, 11:00–12:45 GMT	
BSI Edinburgh / Comparative & Veterinary / West of Scotland Immunology Groups	Animal models for human health
BSI Tumour Immunology Affinity Group / Ulster Immunology Group	Inflammation in cancer: from epigenetics to microenvironment – part 1
BSI Neuroimmunology Group / Wessex Immunology Group	Neuroimmunology across the body – part 1
3 December 2025, 14:15–16:00 GMT	
BSI Tumour Immunology Affinity Group / Ulster Immunology Group	Inflammation in cancer: from epigenetics to microenvironment – part 2
BSI Neuroimmunology Group / Wessex Immunology Group	Neuroimmunology across the body – part 2
BSI Ulster Immunology Group	Innate sensing at barrier sites
BSI Tayside Immunology Group	What's going on in the germinal centre?
4 December 2025, 11:00–12:45 GMT	
BSI Ulster Immunology Group	Cell to cell communication in antigen presentation
BSI Greater Manchester / Edinburgh Immunology Groups	Ecoimmunology: the immune system in context
BSI Inflammation Affinity Group	Inflammation and beyond: unravelling macrophage function in health and disease
BSI Immunometabolism Affinity Group	Metabolism meets immunity

Immune Update

The BSI journals

A round-up of new research published in the British Society for Immunology's official journals written by ECR board members of *Immunotherapy Advances* and *Clinical & Experimental Immunology*. Members benefit from discounted publication fees and have access to these journals free of charge at **www.immunology.org/journals.**

Clinical & Experimental Immunology

Proteomic analysis reveals dysregulation of peripheral blood neutrophils in MS patients

In this study, the authors investigate the characterisation of neutrophils, innate immune cells, and their contribution to the pathology of multiple sclerosis (MS). While the role of adaptive immunity, particularly T-cell responses, in MS has been extensively studied, the involvement of innate immune cells remains less well understood. Using proteomic analysis, the researchers examined neutrophils from patients with MS and healthy controls, identifying significant dysregulation in protein expression.

Notably, MS neutrophils exhibited a marked increase in granule protein content compared with healthy donor cells, with primary granule proteins elevated by an average of 280% and secondary granule proteins by 154%. Interestingly, there was no significant difference in tertiary granule contents between the groups, with the exception of MMP9. The increase opposes what authors would have hypothesised as due to increased activation, increased degranulation and therefore lower abundance of granule proteins. The results instead suggest that neutrophils in MS may have altered granule composition and degranulation dynamics.

Additionally, differences were observed in MAVS (mitochondrial antiviral-signalling protein) pathway signalling, including reduced activity in key metabolic pathways such as glycolysis, mitochondrial fatty acid oxidation and glycogen breakdown. Functionally, MS neutrophils were also found to be impaired in their ability to suppress T-cell activation, particularly in regulating CD161 expression, a marker associated with Th17 differentiation.

These findings point to significant neutrophil dysregulation in MS, with potential implications for maladaptive T-cell responses and disease progression. The study highlights the need for further investigation, particularly in larger patient cohorts, to better understand the role of neutrophils in MS pathogenesis.

Smith *et al*. 2025 *Clinical & Experimental Immunology* **219** uxae115, https://doi.org/10.1093/cei/uxae115

Immunotherapy Advances

Bispecific T-cell engagers for the recruitment of T cells in solid tumours

T-cell-based immunotherapies were a breakthrough within the field of cancer treatment. Immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICIs) have been effective for a variety of cancers but remain ineffective in limiting immune responses in advanced tumours. In this review, authors explore several immunotherapies that have been developed to redirect T cells to cold tumours, including CAR-T cells and T-cell-engaging bispecific antibodies – most notably bispecific T-cell engagers (BiTEs). BiTEs engage with T cells via the CD3 subunit, meaning they can crosslink tumour cells and T cells independently of MHC or co-stimulatory molecules. Thus, BiTE binding activates T cells leading to cell lysis via the release of perforin and granzymes.

This review highlights promising evidence where modern BiTEs have overcome limitations such as Fc toxicity and immunogenicity. Despite the success seen in haematological malignancies, there are still challenges in the treatment of solid tumours such as their short half-lives, off-target toxicities and the complexities of the TMEs. As we begin to understand the actions of BiTEs in greater detail, recent clinical trials see them used in combination with CAR-T cells and ICIs. This is an exciting space to watch in developing cancer treatments as solutions to improve BiTEs are ongoing.

Dewaele & Fernandes 2025 *Immunotherapy Advances* **5** ltae005 https://doi.org/10.1093/immadv/ltae005

Discovery Immunology

CD28 and TCR differentially impact naïve and memory T-cell responses

In this article, authors investigate how CD28 co-stimulation and TCR signalling independently and jointly influence activation, division and function of human naïve and memory CD4$^+$ T cells using a series of *in vitro* stimulation assays. The study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of how naïve and memory T cells differentially use CD28 and TCR signalling, which will be crucial for designing targeted immune interventions.

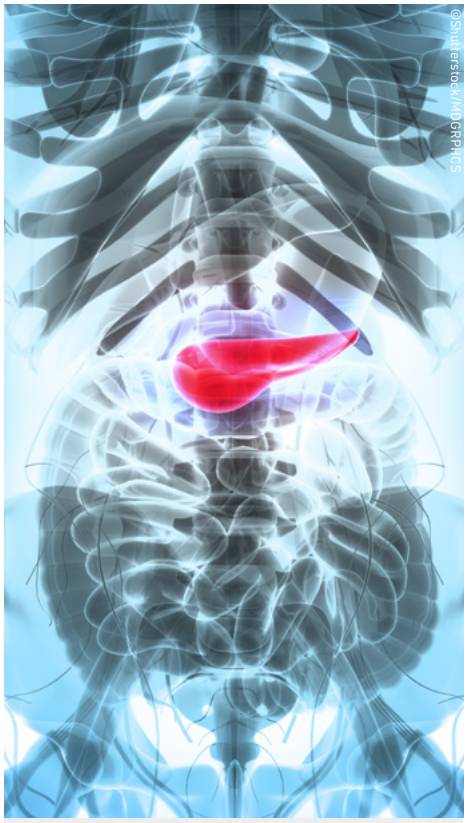
This study challenges the long-standing belief that only naïve T cells rely heavily on CD28 for activation. Instead, the researchers found that memory T cells are highly responsive to CD28 signals, which help drive their sustained division and effector functions, even when TCR signals are weak. These findings suggest that the balance between TCR and CD28 signals – not just their presence – shapes how T cells respond.

Understanding this balance could improve how we fine-tune immune responses in therapies for cancer, autoimmunity and transplantation, by more precisely targeting the pathways that control different types of T cells.

Williams *et al*. 2025 *Discovery Immunology* **4** kyaf006. https://doi.org/10.1093/discim/kyaf006

Around the journals

A summary of some of the latest papers from the world of immunology.



Integrated analysis of polytranscriptomics reveals TNFSF ligand genes in pancreatic cancer prognosis and immune regulation

Pancreatic cancer is highly resistant to immunotherapy, largely due to its immunosuppressive tumour environment. This study examined TNF superfamily ligands, which regulate immune responses, and identified two immune subtypes of pancreatic cancer.

One subtype showed stronger immune activation and better prognosis. Notably, the gene TNFSF4 was linked to increased infiltration of immune cells, including CD4 and CD8 T cells. However, high TNFSF4 expression also predicted poorer response to immune checkpoint blockade, suggesting a role in immune evasion. In contrast, patients with low TNFSF4 expression were more likely to benefit from immunotherapy.

These findings highlight TNFSF4 as a potential biomarker for guiding treatment decisions and improving personalised immunotherapy approaches in pancreatic cancer.

Deng *et al.* 2025 *BMC Immunology* **26**
DOI: 10.1186/s12865-025-00733-4

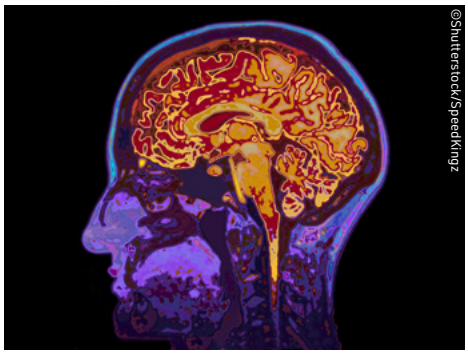
The unexpected role of nurse shark pancreas as a secondary lymphoid organ

To better understand how adaptive immune surveillance operates in vertebrates lacking lymph nodes, this study investigated the immune function of the nurse shark (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) pancreas.

The authors reveal that the pancreas contains organised lymphoid structures resembling secondary lymphoid organs (SLOs), including B-cell follicles spatially distinct from exocrine and endocrine tissue. These follicles display hallmarks of antigen-specific B-cell selection and immunoglobulin production following immunisation. Notably, they are also present in unimmunised animals, indicating a constitutive role. Additionally, clusters of proliferating, AID-expressing γδ T cells suggest active T-cell receptor diversification, potentially supporting mucosal immunity. These findings challenge the long-standing view that the spleen is the sole SLO in cartilaginous fish and suggest a broader, distributed immune strategy in species lacking lymphatic architecture. The study offers new insights into the evolution of vertebrate immunity and raises the possibility that additional, as-yet-unrecognised SLOs exist across jawed vertebrate lineages.

Hill & Dooley 2025 *The Journal of Immunology* **214** 1493–1503

Meningeal immunity: anatomy, function and neonatal unique features



Scientists are beginning to uncover the vital – but still mysterious – role of the meninges, the protective layers surrounding the brain, in supporting brain health. In this review, authors show that far from being passive barriers, the meninges are home to a unique set of immune cells that help regulate brain functions like cognition, behaviour and immune surveillance. They also act as a frontline defence against infection and inflammation, which can impact brain activity and increase the risk of injury.

In newborns, this system is still developing and much remains unknown about how meningeal immune cells function in early life. Infections during this critical window may influence the long-term immune landscape of the brain and even affect neurodevelopment. To fully understand these effects, researchers call for deeper investigation into how neonatal meningeal immunity responds to infection. By combining traditional lab tools with cutting-edge technologies like single-cell sequencing and spatial imaging, scientists hope to unlock new ways to protect the developing brain – potentially leading to innovative treatments that prevent or reduce long-term neurological issues caused by early-life infections.

Lorga & Andrade 2025 *European Journal of Immunology* **55** e51618

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