

## PRESS RELEASE - MONDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2011

### Bladder patients have hope of new treatment thanks to a grant to Newcastle University academics

Sufferers of a painful and debilitating bladder disease have new hope thanks to a major donation from a charity which could help scientists better understand their condition.

The Cystitis and Overactive Bladder Foundation (COB) is donating £20,000 to academics at Newcastle University who are investigating a little-known disorder known as Interstitial Cystitis (IC).

Most women have experienced the pain of cystitis, but for sufferers of IC the problem cannot be treated with a simple course of antibiotics. The disease, which affects an estimated 400,000 men and women in the UK, causes patients to feel constant pain in their bladder and they may pass water, often very urgently, up to 60 times a day. Drugs can help to manage the condition but there is no cure for IC, and patients can endure a lifetime of discomfort.

Scientists do not yet know why some people suffer with the disease, which can also cause inflammation and bleeding in the bladder, while others do not. But new research at the University of Newcastle may shed light on the problem.

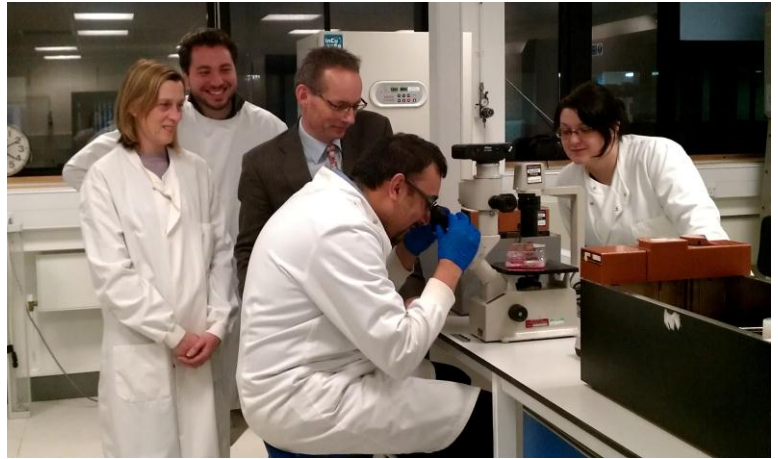
The £20,000 donation, released today, will help to fund research into the role of so-called ‘bug busting’ chemicals known as antimicrobial peptides in IC.

Bonnie Mottley, age 52 from Hertfordshire said she was pleased the COB Foundation was investing in new research into her condition. “Until now no urologist has been able explain why I have developed Interstitial Cystitis, but with this new research there is a light at the end of the tunnel for me and other sufferers. If scientists understand why I have developed this condition they may be able to find a cure and put an end to my pain. It would be fantastic to have my life back again,” she said.

Professor Robert Pickard, Professor of Urology and Dr Judith Hall who is leading the laboratory side of the research both at Newcastle University, are investigating the relative amounts of antimicrobial peptides (AMPs) in women with IC compared to those without painful bladder symptoms.

“We think that the way that antimicrobial peptides are activated in the bladder is not working correctly in people with Interstitial Cystitis,” said Dr Hall. “Our early results suggest these chemicals are being produced even where there is no bladder infection present, a bit like a trigger-happy soldier firing in the absence of an enemy.”

Professor Pickard added: “This may explain why so many patients describe their symptoms as being



similar to cystitis even though they have no infection. It would seem their bladders are behaving as if there is an infection, causing all the associated pain and misery, even though they are infection-free.”

Alison Irving, business manager and trustee of the COB Foundation, said the study was an exciting development in bladder research. “Our members often ask us how we are helping to promote research into the causes and possible cures of their disease. Now we can tell them that we have invested £20,000 of donors’ money in finding an answer.”

Mr Zaki Almallah, consultant urologist and member of the COB Foundation medical panel, said: “This research is one of the better chances we have of understanding the real cause of painful bladder syndromes. The early results are very exciting, and I will be following the study closely.”

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Notes to editors:

1. The Cystitis and Overactive Bladder Foundation is a registered charity (reg charity no: 1047714) which aims to provide the relief of sickness of people with all forms of cystitis and overactive bladder by providing information, support and guidance for the medical profession, patients and their families, and by supporting research into bladder disease.
2. The first £10,000 of the £20,000 donation has transferred to Newcastle University. The second payment will follow in 2012.