



ADVANCED PAIN DISCOVERY PLATFORM

# APDP Conference Report

3rd Annual APDP Conference, 2025

ICC Wales, Newport, Wales



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## Letter from the Conference Chair, Dr Jennifer Davies

The Advanced Pain Discovery Platform (APDP) held its third Annual Conference at the International Conference Centre Wales in Newport on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025. I would like to thank all participants for creating such a vibrant, dynamic and productive event.



It was an honour to Chair this conference. I would like to pay particular thanks to the Organising Committee, who were integral in the planning and delivery of the event. In the initial stages of planning, the Organising Committee was led by Professor David Walsh, APDP Director until his retirement in spring 2025. I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank Professor Walsh, both for his contributions to the planning of this event and his substantial contributions to the APDP since its inception.

APDP is a consortium-based UK network resource that is breaking through the complexity of pain and revealing new treatment approaches to address a wide spectrum of chronic and debilitating clinical conditions. It comprises experts in clinical and laboratory aspects of pain, psychologists, sociologists, and data specialists, linked to key academic and commercial facilities across the UK and beyond. At the heart of the APDP are people with lived experience of chronic pain, ensuring that together we meet their urgent needs.

The conference was an opportunity for the full range of our community to come together, and I am delighted that so many members were able to participate. The event featured 11 oral presentations and 35 poster presentations from across the APDP, covering a wide range of disciplines and topics all working to better understand mechanisms of pain and improve treatments. Fifteen poster presenters had the opportunity to 'pitch' their poster to audience in a rapid-fire format, and did a fantastic job of communicating their work *and* sticking within the 1-minute time limit – well done all!

I am particularly proud that we were able to provide bursaries to support 11 individuals to attend the conference, reducing barriers to participation that can be particularly problematic for academics early in their careers and our members with lived experience of pain.

This report records the spectrum of impressive achievements and insights that we were able to showcase at the Conference. We were enthused to see the vibrancy of the APDP community, and hope that this report reflects this energy.



Dr Jennifer Davies

Chair of the third Annual Conference of the Advanced Pain Discovery Platform (APDP)

## SPEAKERS

**Professor Timothy Hales**, University of Dundee **Mediators of the impact of early life adversity on pain**

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**Professor Stuart Bevan**, King's College London **Antibodies and Post Covid Syndrome pain**

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**Professor Tony Pickering**, University of Bristol **SenseCheQ: the feasibility of home QST for the detection of Chemotherapy-Induced Peripheral Neuropathy**

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**Professor Gary Macfarlane**, University of Aberdeen **Reducing the burden of high impact chronic pain: the role of prevention**

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**Curie Freeborn**, APDP PPI Working Group **Embedding Lived Experience into Pain Research: Working Group Recommendations**

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**Professor Danielle van der Windt**, Keele University **Promises and pitfalls of using data from UK Biobank to investigate long-term transitions and causal pathways of high impact chronic pain (CHIPP)**

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**Professor Annina Schmid**, University of Oxford **Factors predicting the transition from acute to persistent pain in people with 'sciatica': initial results from the FORECAST study**

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**Professor David Andersson**, King's College London **Autoantibody-mediated chronic pain**

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**Dr Federico Dajas-Bailador**, University of Nottingham **Local control of nociception: insights from axon-centric cellular models**

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**Dr Mohammad Al-Amri**, Cardiff University **First Steps, Big Potential: What We have Learned So Far from Our Feasibility SPIN-VR Trial**

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**Professor Edmund Keogh**, University of Bath **CRIISP - update on psychosocial factor in pain**

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## POSTERS

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Elise Ajay</b> , Rebecca Okubadejo, Anna Sales, Anthony E. Pickering, James P. Dunham  | An experimental protocol for high-yield, single-unit resolution of the response to subcutaneous formalin in the rat saphenous nerve <i>in vivo</i>                         |
| University of Bristol   |  |
| <b>Jack Corbett</b> , Richard Hulse   | Hypoxia induced HIF1 $\alpha$ activity and it's potential connections to diabetic chronic pain   |
| Nottingham Trent University   |  |
| <b>Jessica Bates</b> , Mark Paul-Clark, Richard Hulse   | Immune driven changes to dorsal route ganglia environment in part drive chemotherapy-induced neuropathy onset  |
| Nottingham Trent University   |  |
| <b>Neave Smith</b> , Stephen Woodhams, Victoria Chapman, Gareth Hathway   | Systemic Morphine Administration in the Postnatal Period Alters Adult Spinal Pain Processing   |
| University of Nottingham  |  |
| <b>James Turnbull1</b> , Peter Gowler1, Asta Arendt-Tranholm1, Rakesh Jha2, David Onion1, Tony Kelly3, Afroditi Kouraki3, Paul Milns1, Sameer Gohir3, Susan Franks1, David Barrett2, Ana M. Valdes3, Victoria Chapman1  | Probing the transcriptomic basis of 17-HDHA mediated analgesia in osteoarthritis pain  |
| University of Nottingham  |  |
| Nicholas Shenker 1,3, Marco Vinicio Alban-Paccha1,2, Jimena Teran-Perez1, Andrew W. Horne4, George G. Malliaras2, and Christopher Geoffrey Woods5 On behalf of the ADVANTAGE consortium, <b>Marco Alban Paccha</b>  | ADVANTAGE: Advanced Discovery of Visceral Analgesics by Neuroimmune Targets and the Genetics of Extreme human phenotype: Study and Survey protocol and preliminary results |
| 1Department of Medicine, University of Cambridge, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ, UK.<br>2Electrical Engineering Division, Department of Engineering, University of Cambridge, 9 JJ Thompson Ave, Cambridge, CB3 0FA, UK. 3Rheumatology Research Unit, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ, UK. 4Centre for Reproductive Health, Institute of Regeneration and Repair, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, EH16 4UU, UK 5Department of Medical Genetics, Cambridge Institute for Medical Research, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK. |  |
| <b>Z. Rutter-Locher 1,2</b> , S. Norton 3, J. Taylor4, B. Menon1, T. Esterine3, R. Williams3, L.S. Taams 2, K. Bannister *4 & B.W. Kirkham *1   | Assessment of somatosensory function in recently diagnosed patients with inflammatory arthritis  |
| 1 Rheumatology Department, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust, London, United Kingdom 2 Dept Inflammation Biology, School of Immunology & Microbial Sciences, Faculty of Life Sciences and Medicine, King's College University, London, United Kingdom 3 Centre for Rheumatic Diseases, King's College London, London, United Kingdom 4 Department of Life Sciences, South Kensington Campus, Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom *K. Bannister and B. Kirkham were co-senior authors and contributed equally to this work  |  |
| Jo Reeves, <b>Geoff Cunningham</b> , Connor Thacker, Sam Hughes, Jen Davies   | Quantifying the impact of tonic pain on the adjustment of the nociceptive withdrawal reflex during walking   |
| Cardiff University  |  |

**Dr Harriet Taylor1), Dr Dhaneesha Senaratne1, Dr Bhushan Thakkar1, Professor Jacob George2, Professor Blair Smith1, Professor Lesley Colvin1**

1. Chronic Pain Research Group, Division of Population Health & Genomics, School of Medicine, University of Dundee, Dundee, UK  
2. Cardiovascular Research, School of Medicine, University of Dundee, Dundee, UK

**Denise Nistor**, Samuel Bird, Rose Evans, Mohammad Al-Amri  
Cardiff University

**Marin Dujmovic(1)**, Johannes Gausden (2), James Dunham (1), Elise Ajay (1), Bhushan Thakkar (3), Roger Whittaker (2), Lesley Colvin (3), Anthony O'Neill (2), Anthony Pickering (1)

(1) School of Physiology, Pharmacology and Neuroscience, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK, (2) School of Engineering, Newcastle University, Newcastle, UK, (3) Medical School, University of Dundee, Dundee, UK

**Johannes Gausden1**, Marin Dujmovic2, Nisla Maharjan2, Charlotte Burgess2, Alan Young3, Lesley Colvin4, Roger Whittaker1, James P Dunham2, Anthony O'Neill1, Anthony E Pickering2

1. Newcastle University, Newcastle, UK; 2. University of Bristol, Bristol, UK; 3. Patient partner; 4. University of Dundee, Dundee, UK

**Georgia Clay (1-5)**, Stevie Vanhegan (6), Caroline Abbott (7), Fiona Moffatt (1,8), Kirsty Bannister (9), Thomas Graven-Nielsen (10), David A Walsh (1-4,11), Stephanie L Smith (1-4)

1. Pain Centre Versus Arthritis, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom. 2. Advanced Pain Discovery Platform, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom. 3. NIHR Biomedical Research Centre University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom. 4. Academic Rheumatology, Academic Unit of Injury, Recovery and Inflammation Science, School of Medicine, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. 5. School of Psychology, Sport Science, and Wellbeing, University of Lincoln, Lincoln, United Kingdom. 6. Independent consultant, Nottingham, United Kingdom. 7. Independent consultant, St Albans, United Kingdom. 8. School of Health Sciences, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. 9. Central Modulation of Pain, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, United Kingdom. 10. Center for Neuroplasticity and Pain (CNAP), Department of Health Science and Technology, Faculty of Medicine, Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark. 11. Pain Centre Versus Arthritis, Advanced Pain Discovery Platform and NIHR Biomedical Research Centre, Academic Rheumatology, Academic Unit of Injury, Recovery and Inflammation Science, School of Medicine, University of Nottingham and Honorary Consultant, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Sutton in Ashfield, United Kingdom.

**Smith, S.L1-4**, Georgopoulos, V1-4, Ifesemen, O1-4, James, R5, Ferguson, E1-5,6, Wakefield, R.J7-9, Wilson, D1,10, Buckley, P10, Platts, D11, Ledbury, S11, Choy, E12, Pickles, T13, Rutter-Locher, Z14-15, Kirkham, B15, McWilliams, D1-4, Walsh, D.A1-4,10

**The impact of hypertension on sensory thresholds in adults living with chronic pain: a Pilot Study.**

**Pain Pressure Thresholds in Knee Osteoarthritis: An Observational Study of Influencing Factors**

**SenseCheQ: New frontiers in self-administered Quantitative Sensory Testing**

**SenseCheQ: Optimising Vibration Sensory Testing for reliable use by patients in their Home Environment**

**Acceptability and feasibility of the Assessing Central Aspects of Pain (AsCent) study: a qualitative approach**

**Explaining pain variance in Rheumatoid Arthritis: Central Aspects of Pain (CAP) and Central Sensitisation Inventory short form**

1 Pain Centre Versus Arthritis, University of Nottingham; 2 Advanced Pain Discovery Platform, University of Nottingham; 3 NIHR Biomedical Research Centre, University of Nottingham; 4 Academic Rheumatology, Academic Unit of Injury, Recovery and Inflammation Sciences, School of Medicine, University of Nottingham; 5 School of Psychology, University of Nottingham; 6 NIHR Blood and Transplant Research Unit in Donor Health and Behaviour, University of Cambridge; 7 Leeds Institute of Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Medicine, University of Leeds; 8 NIHR Leeds Biomedical Research Centre, University of Leeds; 9 Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust Hospitals Trust; 10 Rheumatology, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust; 11 Independent consultant, Nottingham; 12 School of Medicine, Cardiff University; 13 Centre for Trials Research, Cardiff University; 14 Rheumatology Department, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust; 15 School of Immunology and Microbial Sciences, Faculty of Life Sciences and Medicine, Kings College London.

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**Laura Carter**, Emily Ford, Amanda Lillywhite, Emma Fisher, Christopher Eccleston & Edmund Keogh

University of Bath, CRIISP

**LUCY RIDGWAY**1, Soraya Koushesh1, Mohamed Tachraout2, Fay Probert3, Kathryn R Martin4,5, Whitney Scott6,7, Geert Crombez8, Christine Price9, Claire Robinson9, Brigitte Tampin10,11,12, Marco Barbero13, Stuart Clare1,2, Jeremy Fairbank14, Georgios Baskozos1, Annina B Schmid1,2

1.Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, University of Oxford, Oxford, Oxfordshire, UK 2.Wellcome Centre for Integrative Neuroimaging, University of Oxford, Oxford, Oxfordshire, UK 3.Department of Chemistry, University of Oxford, Oxford, Oxfordshire, UK 4.Academic Primary Care, Institute of Applied Health Sciences, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK 5.Aberdeen Centre for Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Health, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK 6.Health Psychology Section, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, London, UK 7. INPUT Pain Management Unit, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK 8.Department of Experimental Clinical and Health Psychology, University of Ghent, Gent, Belgium 9.Patient partner FORECAST study, Oxford University, Oxford, UK 10.Department of Physiotherapy, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Perth, Western Australia, Australia 11.Curtin School of Allied Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia, Australia 12.Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, University of Applied Sciences, Osnabrueck, Germany 13.Rehabilitation Research Laboratory 2rLab, Department of Business Economics Health and Social Care, University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland, Manno, Ticino, Switzerland 14.Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences, University of Oxford, Oxford, Oxfordshire, UK

(CSI-9) questionnaires compared, together with inflammation and QST.

Refining a self-report measure of Pain Stickiness within a large online sample of adults with Chronic Pain

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The Forecast Study: Longitudinal Results from baseline to 3 month follow up

**Laura Carter**, Emily Ford, Amanda Lillywhite, Emma Fisher, Christopher Eccleston and Edmund Keogh

University of Bath, CRIISP

**SAMUEL R D HIPKISS<sup>1</sup>**, Victoria Collard<sup>1</sup>, Stefania D'Angelo<sup>3</sup>, Beate Ehrhardt<sup>1</sup>, Amber Guest, Edmund Keogh<sup>1</sup>, Laura O Lisboa<sup>1</sup>, Elaine Wainwright<sup>1,2</sup>, Tom Barry<sup>1</sup>

1: Consortium to Research Individual, Interpersonal, and Social Influences in Pain (CRIISP), Centre for Pain Research, University of Bath. 2: Aberdeen Centre for Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Health (Epidemiology Group), School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, University of Aberdeen, UK. 3: MRC Lifecourse Epidemiology Centre, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK.

**Payam Amini 1**, Emma Parry 1, Milica Bucknall 1, Claire Burton 1, Barbara Nicholl 2, Danielle van der Windt 1 (on behalf of the CHIPP team)

1 Primary Care Centre Versus Arthritis, School of Medicine, Keele University, Staffordshire, UK. 2 School of Health and Wellbeing, University of Glasgow, UK

**VICTORIA COLLARD**, Sarah Gazder, Anna Gibby, Laura Oporto Lisboa, Beate Ehrhardt, Charlotte Woolley, Annick De Paepe, Emma Fisher, Geert Crombez, Edmund Keogh, Christopher Eccleston

CHIPP; Centre for Pain Research, University of Bath; Institute for Mathematical Innovation, University of Bath; Centre for Epidemiology, Versus Arthritis, University of Manchester; Ghent Health Psychology Lab, Ghent University

**Alexandria Andrayas**, Amanda Ly, Hannah Sallis, Diego Vitali, Beate Ehrhardt, Laura Oporto Lisboa, Edmund Keogh, Rebecca Pearson

University of Bristol

**Dr Rachel Reid-McCann**, Professor Omero Poli-Neto, Dr Kate Stein, Dr Sharon Dixon, Emma Cox, Dr Lydia Coxon, Professor Mina Fazel, Dr MaryAnn Noonan, Dr Gemma C Sharp, Professor Krina Zondervan, Professor Katy Vincent

University of Oxford; University of São Paulo; University of York; University of Bristol; Endometriosis UK; 4M Consortium

**Samantha Stone** and Rachael Gooberman-Hill

Bristol Medical School, University of Bristol. CRIISP

**Samantha Stone<sup>1</sup>**; Elaine Wainwright<sup>2,3</sup>; Guest, A4; Cara Ghiglieri<sup>2</sup>; Anica Zeyen<sup>5</sup>; Rachael Gooberman-Hill<sup>1</sup>.

University of Bristol<sup>1</sup>; Aberdeen Centre for Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Health (Epidemiology Group), School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, University of Aberdeen, UK<sup>2</sup>; Centre for Pain Research, University of Bath, UK<sup>3</sup>; Chief Scientist Group, Environment Agency<sup>4</sup>; School of Business and Management, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK<sup>5</sup>

Exploring Expectation Change and Stickiness and in Adults with Chronic Pain- An experimental study

Chronic Pain Trajectories and Employment in Later Midlife: Insights from the HEAF Study

Causal Structure from Social Isolation and Loneliness to High-Impact Chronic Pain

The Influence of Eveningness Chronotype on the transition from low to high impact chronic pain: A UK Biobank Data Longitudinal Analysis Protocol

Mediating effect of emotional and practical support on pain impact in young adults

Does dysmenorrhoea in adolescence increase the risk of chronic pain in adulthood?

Chain reactions between aspects of social life informing the experience of chronic pain: an ethnographic study

Social influences in the experience of transition to or from long-term (chronic) pain: a synthesis of qualitative research studies.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Charlotte E Lee (1,3), Hollie Birkinshaw (1, 2, 3), Matthew Garner (1) & Tamar Pincus(1, 3)  | The Impact of Validation and Invalidation on Pain and Cognition: A Follow-Up Study  |
| 1. School of Psychology, Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences, University of Southampton 2. School of Primary Care, Population Sciences and Medical Education, Primary Care Research Centre, University of Southampton 3. Consortium to Research Individual, Interpersonal and Social Influences in Pain (CRIISP)  |   |
| <b>Hollie Birkinshaw</b> , Charlotte Lee, Tamar Pincus   | What constitutes validation and invalidation by clinicians in consultations for chronic pain? A qualitative exploration.                          |
| University of Southampton, Consortium to Research Individual, Interpersonal, and Social influences in Pain (CRIISP)  |   |
| <b>Afra Azadi</b> , Amanda C de C Williams   | Mapping out the pain experience in chronic pain in visceral diseases: does it avoid the fear and avoidance model?                                 |
| University College London (UCL), APDP: ADVANTAGE   |   |
| <b>Evie Telfer</b> , Prof. Christopher Eccleston, Prof. Edmund Keogh   | New Methods for Exploring Dyadic Connectedness in Pain: A Study Protocol  |
| Consortium to Research Individual, Interpersonal and Social Influences in Pain (CRIISP)  |   |
| <b>Ian-Ju Liang</b> , Cassie Higgins , Pauline Adair , Callum Leese , Philippa Dall , Blair Smith , Lesley Colvin  | Tailored Physical Activity Interventions for Chronic Pain Patients: Insights from a mixed-methods study   |
| School of Medicine, University of Dundee   |   |
| <b>Mohammed Alghamdi</b> , Valerie Sparkes, Jennifer Davies, Sharmila Khot   | The impact of immersive virtual reality on pain processing and patient-reported outcome measures in persistent low back pain: preliminary results |
| Cardiff University   |   |
| <b>V. S. Marks1</b> , R. A. Crockett1, 2, T. J. Denison1, B. Seymour2  | Lie to Us: A patient guided approach to blinding in studies of deep brain stimulation for chronic pain  |
| 1. Department of Engineering Science, University of Oxford, Old Road Campus Building, Oxford, OX3 7DQ 2. Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, Level 6, West Wing, John Radcliffe Hospital, OX3 9DU   |   |
| Noureen Shivji, Candy McCabe, Sharon Grieve, Ian Taverner, Joanne Lloyd, Ellen Readman, Adele Higginbottom, Lisa Austin, Ed Keogh, <b>Carolyn Chew-Graham</b>  | Establishing sustainable public involvement in pain research: top tips for researchers  |
| Keele University, University of West England, University of Bath   |   |
| <b>Neil E O'Connell</b> , Joletta Belton, Geert Crombez, Christopher Eccleston, Emma Fisher, Michael C Ferraro, Anna Hood, Francis Keefe, Roger Knaggs, Emma Norris, Tonya M. Palermo, Gisele Pickering, Esther Pogatzki-Zahn, Andrew SC Rice, Georgia Richards, Daniel Segelcke, Keith M Smart, Nadia Soliman, Gavin Stewart, Thomas Tölle, Dennis Turk, Jan Vollert, Elaine Wainwright, Jack Wilkinson, Amanda C de C Williams | ENTRUST-PE: An Integrated Framework for Trustworthy Pain Evidence.  |
| Brunel University London, The ENTRUST-PE Network   |   |
| <b>Hannah Sallis</b> , Amanda Ly, Samantha Stone, James Dunham, Emma Fisher, Abbie Jordan, Neil Heydon-Dumbleton, Noureen Shivji, Rachael Gooberman-Hill, Edmund Keogh, Rebecca Pearson  | A summary of pain and psychosocial factors: Exploring data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children                               |
| University of Bristol, University of Bath, Keele University, Manchester Metropolitan University  |   |
| <b>Lillywhite</b> , A1., Tong, Thompson2., Honnorat, A2., Haines, T.S.F2., Lutteroth, C2., Keogh, E. M1  | Development of a semantic database for building psychosocial models of chronic pain   |

## Poster Prize Winners

Delegates were asked to vote for two separate poster prizes:

‘Science Quality’ – which poster describes research likely to have highest impact?

‘Science Communication’ prize – which poster is most clearly presented and understandable?

Congratulations to the winners:

Jessica Bates (Nottingham Trent University) won the Science Communication Prize for  
‘Immune driven changes to dorsal root ganglia environment in part drive  
chemotherapy-induced neuropathy onset’

Hollie Birkinshaw (University of Southampton) won the Science Quality Prize for:  
‘What constitutes validation and invalidation by clinicians in consultations for chronic  
pain? A qualitative exploration’

## Participant Feedback

We received feedback from 25 attendees, and were pleased to see that feedback indicates that the conference was well received, useful and enjoyable! Most of the respondents rated the usefulness of the APDP member presentations, usefulness of the poster session, and usefulness of the poster pitches 4 or 5 out of 5. Many expressed an appetite for the continuance of networking opportunities / another conference next year. There are also helpful comments and feedback that would be fed into any future event.



## Bursary Awardee Feedback

We offered the opportunity for early career researchers, including PhD students and post-doctoral researchers, and Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) APDP members to apply for a bursary. The bursary would pay up to £250 towards travel costs, car parking, and a single night's accommodation. In total, we paid bursaries to eleven individuals to support them in their attendance of this year's conference.

We invited feedback and the responses that we received strongly suggest that the bursary enabled participation where it may not otherwise have been possible.

“.....for ECRs in particular, it means a greater likelihood that they can attend and specifically present their work which is key.”

“Receiving support via travel bursaries enabled me to attend the conferences without worrying about whether I could afford to come....Generously covering train fare and hotel costs allowed me to travel in good time for the conference so I could attend all of the sessions each time, often including socialising with other attendees over breakfast or before the conference, making the absolute most of the opportunities.”

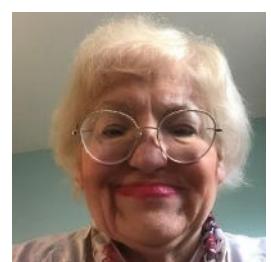
“The bursary was useful since it allowed me to travel even for an encore poster”

“As a doctoral fellow, I found the APDP bursary extremely helpful. Without access to travel funds through my grant or institution, the bursary made it possible for me to attend this important meeting. It was a great opportunity to present my research, network with colleagues, and advance my academic career.”

“The bursary provided equity to enable me access the same professional development, connections and networking opportunities available through the APDP conference and improved my ability to thrive.”

## Conference Organising Committee

Thanks to all our committee members for making this a successful conference.

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|---|---|---|
|    |    |    |
| Dr Jennifer Davies, Cardiff University  | Prof. Michelle Briggs, University of Liverpool                                      | Jo Josh, PPI member   |
|    |    |    |
| Dr Bhushan Thakkar, University of Dundee  | Professor Gary Macfarlane, University of Aberdeen                                   | Curie Freeborn, PPI member  |
|  |  |  |
| Dr Andreas Themistocleous, University of Oxford                                     | Maureen Grossman, PPI member  | Debs Smith, PPI member  |
|  |  |  |
| Dr Milena De Felice, University of Sheffield  | Liz Dennis, Administrative Support, University of Nottingham                        | Doris Chu, Administrative Support, University of Nottingham                           |

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to Jennifer Davies, Cardiff University, and the University of Nottingham Academic Rheumatology team:



*Left to right: Jennifer Davies, Dan McWilliams, Liz Dennis, Stephanie Smith.*

*Thank you also to Doris Chu from the University of Nottingham.*

Thank you to our sponsors:

- Versus Arthritis
- UKRI
- Lilly
- NIHR
- Medical Research Foundation

Thank you to Professor David Walsh, Director of APDP

Thank you to Professor David Walsh for his substantial contributions to the APDP. He was founding Director of the APDP until his retirement in Spring 2025.