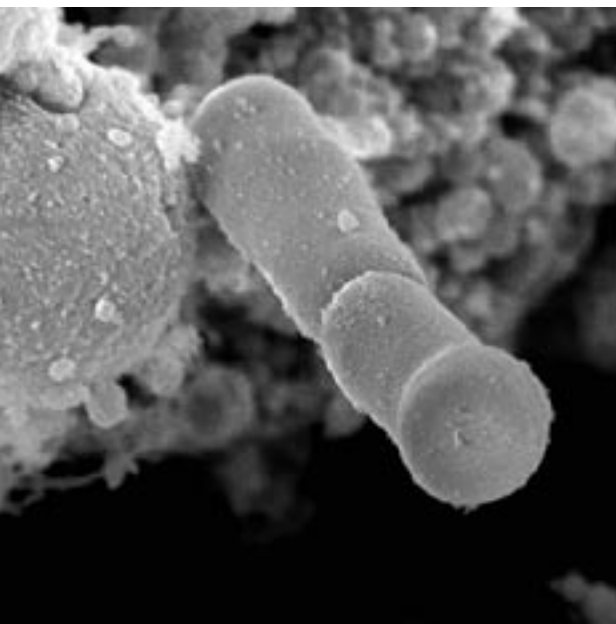


The Scottish Infection Research Network



▲ Scanning electron microscope image of *Clostridium difficile* bound to the intestinal surface. Dr Gill Douce, University of Glasgow, and Dr Dave Goulding, Sanger Institute

► Glasgow Biomedical Research Centre. Administrative home of SIRN. Tim Mitchell



Hospital-acquired infections (HAIs) such as *C. difficile* and MRSA are a major problem in healthcare. In Scotland, HAIs probably cost £180 million per year. Although these infections are common, there are fundamental gaps in our knowledge of HAIs and the causative organisms. Treatment and prevention requires medical intervention as well as good infection control. Traditionally this has been an area in which it is difficult to obtain funding and many clinicians and scientists have avoided working in this field.

As part of the Scottish Executive's commitment to reduce HAIs, the Scottish Infection Research Network (SIRN) has been set up, funded by the Scottish Executive Health Department and hosted at the University of Glasgow.

A 15-person steering group, consisting of representatives of academic research, clinicians, nurses, behavioural scientists, statisticians and educationists, co-ordinates the functions of the Network. Its multidisciplinary nature is key to its aims in promoting interaction between scientists, clinicians, healthcare professionals and patients in addressing the problem of HAIs. The Director of the Network is Dr Alistair Leanord. The Network currently operates using expertise from within Scotland, but this is expand-

ing through links with other UK and European bodies.

The Network's primary objective is to facilitate, promote and deliver research that will significantly contribute to the prevention and control of HAIs. It is also essential to build a high quality research infrastructure that will foster effective collaboration among members of the HAI research and academic communities. SIRN will also build capacity and the capability of the HAI research community, and develop and shape high quality research proposals within themed programmes that meet the funding criteria of the Chief Scientist Office. SIRN will also assist in the development of major HAI research priorities for future needs. A major factor in the process is the clear definition of the problems and development of a strategy to address them. The ultimate goal is to apply and disseminate knowledge that enhances the delivery and quality of patient care.

SIRN is keen to promote interaction with other networks and groups with an interest in HAIs. For more information about SIRN see our website at www.gla.ac.uk/sirn and if you would like to be part of this effort please contact us at sirn@bio.gla.ac.uk

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Steering Group