

BRAIN TUMOUR INFORMATION EVENING

TUESDAY 26TH MARCH 2019 @ CCRCB

On Tuesday 26th March Brainwaves NI in association with CCRCB (Centre for Cancer research & cell biology) welcomed over 80 members and their families for an information evening specific to brain tumours. Guests were welcomed by our very own Chairperson Kate Ferguson and a series of presentations were given to those in attendance.

Mr Tom Flannery started off the evening. Tom is a neurosurgeon at RVH and I have no doubt he carried out the surgeries for many of the patients in the room. He gave a detailed update on the surgical management of gliomas, showing the audience many images of brain tumours pre and post-surgery. It is truly fascinating how they use these images to plan and carry out the surgery. He discussed some patients that have wide awake surgery and how the clinicians in the theatre with him assist the surgery by talking to the patient and asking them to do simple tasks like wiggle fingers. I am sure this was an excellent insight to the patient's family members to see exactly what their loved one had been through.

Professor Kevin Prise, (Professor of Radiation Biology), gave more of an overview of the Brain Tumour Focus Group and its research. This research group aims to improve the delivery of personalised medicine for malignant brain tumours. He also explained how they work in collaboration with many other universities and hospitals such as Bristol and Edinburgh. Together they all share their data and using different skill sets in each lab can carry out this fundamental research.

Dr Conor McGarry, (Radiotherapy physicist) talked about the new stereotactic radiotherapy service that is now available to all patients at the Cancer centre at City Hospital, Belfast. This service has been offered by the Belfast Trust since January 2017. Prior to this date, patients needed to travel to Leeds to avail of this treatment so it is great to now have this at home for those patients.

Dr Caitriona McInerney, (Brainwaves NI Research Fellow) is the researcher that is funded by Brainwaves NI. She delivered a talk entitled "Understanding the genetics of brain tumours". She was able to present some of the recent results from a collaborative study with the University of Bristol.

Finally, Dr Darragh McArt (Reader in Translational Bioinformatics) discussed interrogating the molecular landscape of brain tumours. His focus is using state of the art techniques to help determine the genetics and

characteristics of brain tumours to classify them better, therefore making treatment much more person/tumour specific. His research group are implementing artificial intelligence and deep learning to try and find a cure for cancer. His presentation was extremely fascinating and is very much the way forward in research.

After these presentations the guests were given a tour of the labs in CCRCB which again was something that not everyone is given an opportunity to do. It was a privilege for everyone to see what exactly goes on behind the scenes.

Professor Kevin Prise concluded the evening with a special presentation to Brainwaves NI to celebrate the 25th anniversary. He congratulated Kate Ferguson on her fantastic contribution over the past 25 years in supporting the patients & families affected by brain tumours. He also thanked the charity for generously donating over £400K towards brain tumour research at CCRCB.

We really hope all our members who attended found the evening beneficial to their own journey and shows exactly what their fundraising efforts are paying for.