The Imperial College London, Department of Medicine networking event

Hosted by the Division of Infectious Diseases

Evening of Friday 17 October 2014

Virology Library St Mary’s Medical School

As an introductory event we had a beer and pizza based networking event at St Mary’s campus for the PhD students in the department of medicine, many of the sections were represented including molecular virology, mucosal infection and immunity, paediatrics, infectious diseases epidemiology and surgery. The event was set up by Dr John Tregoning (campus cohort representative) and Ekaterina Kinnear and Simren Gill (PhD representatives). The aim of the event was to encourage interactions between PhD students at the St Mary’s campus. Due to the nature of the St Mary’s campus, students can feel isolated, particularly in groups where there are only one or two students. This is exacerbated by the lack of a central café/ tea room on campus and the restrictions in access between the different sections in the building. An opportunity to strengthen bonds and create networks between students was welcomed to both improve the research environment and enable students to troubleshoot their research with each other.

The event was a huge success, with instant feedback suggesting that the students attending the event felt it was a very constructive forum for them to discuss their issues and a lot of comments along the lines of: ‘Oh I see you all the time but didn’t know who you were’. We were also very lucky to be supported by Dr Laki Buluwela (Lead for Doctoral Degrees, Faculty of Medicine) and Mike Asavarut, Student AWO for FoM. A survey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZSBS3NT) has been circulated with positive feedback suggesting that quarterly events would be of value and that: “More events and an area to socialise More social events, Organizing more events for networking between PhDs, more interaction with people” would all be of value. We are grateful to the Cohort Building Support Programme for supporting this event and will definitely do more events in the future.