

Professor Hing Leung

Professor of Urology/Surgical Oncology and Honorary Consultant Urological Surgeon, University of Glasgow/Beatson Institute for Cancer Research (CR UK).

Prof Leung's translational research work is aimed at incorporating diverse clinical and scientific disciplines to achieve better patient outcomes. His pioneering work has helped to validate the significance of key signalling pathways as critical biologic and prognostic markers in clinical prostate cancer and these have resulted in ongoing drug development programmes. His unique role in translational research for uro-oncology has contributed to the first multi-centre gene therapy trial in prostate cancer within the UK. He is also recognised for success in developing a vibrant environment for training future clinical and scientific researchers to work in the field of translational studies.



He serves on the Executive Committee of the nationally funded Prostate Cancer Collaborative (PROMPT), the Scientific Advisory Board of the Orchid Cancer Charity and the MRC Clinical Training Fellowship Panel. He also chairs the newly formed Section of Academic Urology within the British Association of Urological Surgeons.

As Head of Urological Oncology at Newcastle University, Prof Leung played a key role in establishing translational research in Urology, across the UK. In September 2006 he took up employment with the University of Glasgow and aims

to make its department of Urology the largest and most successful in Europe.

Leaving his home and parents in Hong Kong at sixteen years old Prof Leung studied in Cardiff, before taking a place at Aberdeen University which, in the 1970s, had one of the top medicine departments in the world.

Quickly discovering an interest in surgery, he spent every moment in theatre that he could during clinical appointments throughout the UK. Then in 1988 while at East Birmingham Hospital he became fascinated by urology and the die was cast.

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- ▶ In the mid nineties, Newcastle University had a very strong Urology Department and Prof Leung became Clinical Lecturer and Honorary Senior Registrar in Urology there – convincing them, unusually, to give this young trainee a full research programme.

Not a lot of research was being done then in urology and funding was quite difficult to secure yet Prof Leung progressed through Senior Lecturer to become Professor of Urological Oncology, to holding the chair of Urological Oncology and becoming the Head of the Urology Research Group. Working closely with clinical and laboratory colleagues, he managed to build the largest and most successful urology research group in the UK, earning the respect of many of his peers and coming to the attention of the University of Glasgow who tempted him north in late 2006.

In accepting the Glasgow post he acknowledges two main reasons, “One was the opportunity presented to me by the University of Glasgow and the Beatson to develop what was essentially a small specialism for them – urology - into a larger one; and the second was the fact that my wife is Glaswegian and we felt that our children would benefit from increased contact with the wider family members here.

“Over time I hope to put Glasgow firmly on the map for Urology, a task which will be aided greatly of course by the area’s already excellent infrastructure for clinical trials and incredibly supportive patients. Links between the University, the Beatson and the NHS here are growing all the time – all in all it’s an exceedingly positive environment to work in and my aim is to make this the largest Urology Department in Europe.”

In his current role, Prof Leung’s research is focusing on the role of aberrant signalling in the FGFR and ERK5 pathways in the disease, and drug development programmes against these targets have been initiated. Negative regulatory signalling molecules are also being studied.



Prof Leung remains in contact with the department he nurtured at the University of Newcastle and is actively collaborating with a number of other institutions such as the Universities of Cambridge, Sheffield and York, and Cancer Research Technology (CR UK). Over the years he has also been involved in collaborations with Cobra Therapeutics (ML Ltd), Gene Express Technology, Astex and OSI. Due to his acknowledged expertise he is regularly invited to speak at events on both a national and international level.

Prof Leung says, “Among my goals for the future are increasing knowledge of cancer biology, developing new treatments for clinical trials, training future translational researchers and generally facilitating increased interactions among clinicians and scientists. As a young student I was greatly influenced by some of those who taught me, particularly those who gave me opportunities outwith those I could normally have expected. Now it’s my turn to inspire and encourage today’s young researchers and I look forward to seeing the fruits of their labours in the years to come.”



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