

Press release  
11 June 2020  
For immediate release



## **Kingston Hospital launches HPV research project with Kingston University**

Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Kingston University have teamed up to launch a PhD studentship, studying HPV and its effect on upper gastrointestinal cancers.

The project will investigate the role of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) in the development of upper gastrointestinal cancers (oesophageal and gastric), which are major health problems worldwide. It is hoped that this research will provide insight into the causes and treatment of these increasingly common cancers, via early screening and vaccination.

Muhamad O Shafiq (known as Osama) has been appointed to the three year studentship, funded by Kingston Hospital Charity and the Laurie Todd Foundation, established by local resident Maundy Todd in memory of her late husband, who was diagnosed with Advanced Oesophageal cancer in 2018.

In December last year, Kingston Hospital was recognised in the Lancet editorial for its efforts to promote research and for making more clinical trials available to its patients. The Trust's progress has also been recognised by the National Institute for Health Research, which named Kingston Hospital as the top acute trust

in England for the percentage increase in research studies now available for patients.

Dr Hossein Ashrafi, Associate Professor in Pathology and Cancer Biology within the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing at Kingston University, said:

“Establishing a relationship between upper gastrointestinal cancer development and high risk HPV subtypes would provide invaluable insight into the role this virus plays in the formation of oesophageal and gastric tumours. This could, in turn, lead to the broadening of early HPV screening and the development of vaccines that could help prevent and treat some forms of gastrointestinal cancer.

“This project demonstrates the importance of the relationship Kingston University has developed with its local hospital NHS Foundation Trust. It will bring mutual benefit to both institutions and allow us to further strengthen our research links, ultimately benefitting patient care.”

Dr Helen Matthews, Research Director and Consultant Gastroenterologist at Kingston Hospital, said: “As Research Director at Kingston Hospital and a Consultant Gastroenterologist, I am very excited to start our joint project with Professor Ashrafi at Kingston University investigating the role of Human Papilloma Virus in the development of oesophageal cancer. As a team, we hope that this will lead to future insights into the causes and treatment of this increasingly common and difficult to treat cancer. In addition, we can build on this project to create more collaborations between our local academic centre, Kingston University, and our clinical team at the hospital to answer questions that are of real importance to our local population and community.

“We are very proud that we are getting increasing national recognition as a research centre – Kingston Hospital has recently been used as an outstanding example of how to improve equality of access to research in a Lancet editorial (December 2019). One of the key strategic steps noted in this article was the closer partnership with Kingston University and the Royal Marsden Hospital to allow access for our local patients to cutting edge innovation and research. We are hugely grateful to the Laurie Todd Foundation, without whose support we would be unable to pursue this

really important work.”

Maundy Todd, founder of the Laurie Todd Foundation, said: “I am so pleased that, despite the current incredibly difficult conditions, Kingston Hospital and Kingston University have started work on this research. I hope it will contribute to earlier diagnosis for oesophageal cancer. My husband, Laurie, died six weeks after diagnosis, despite Kingston’s and The Royal Marsden’s heroic efforts.”

To find out more about the Laurie Todd Foundation, visit <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/laurietoddfoundation> .

To find out more about Kingston Hospital Charity, visit [www.khc.org.uk](http://www.khc.org.uk) .

- ENDS –

**All press enquiries to:**

- Communications Team on 0208 934 3614 or email [khft.comms@nhs.net](mailto:khft.comms@nhs.net)
- Visit [www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk](http://www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk) and see the news section of the website.

**About Kingston Hospital:**

- We are an NHS district general hospital supporting around 350,000 local people across Kingston, Richmond, Roehampton, Putney and East Elmbridge.
- In 2018, Kingston Hospital became the first acute hospital trust in London to be rated Outstanding for overall quality and leadership by the national Care Quality Commission regulator.
- We have approximately 350 beds and directly employ around 2,900 staff. Our trust provides a full range of diagnostic services and treatment services.
- On an average day, 350 people are seen in our accident and emergency department, 13 babies are delivered, over 1,200 outpatient appointments take place and 180 patients are admitted onto our wards for treatment.

- Our main site is the Kingston Hospital site but we also run a number of outpatient clinics in the community, including in Raynes Park, Surbiton, Queen Mary's Roehampton and Teddington.
- We are proud of our values and of always putting our patients first.

**About Kingston Hospital Charity:**

Charitable donations to Kingston Hospital Charity help provide a quality of care that is over and above what is possible with NHS funding alone. Kingston Hospital Charity supports Kingston Hospital by raising the monies needed to: fund high quality clinical research; help transform parts of the hospital estate that require additional investment to create patient-centred spaces, designed to deliver the best quality of care possible; purchase the latest medical equipment for better diagnosis and treatment; and recognise the dedication and caring commitment of staff by supporting their development and wellbeing.

For further information please visit [www.khc.org.uk](http://www.khc.org.uk) .