



**British Heart
Foundation**

At the Heart of Innovation: BHF Translational Research Day 2025

Agenda

- 09:00 – 10:00 **Registration**
- 10:00 – 10:20 **Welcome and opening remarks**
Professor James Leiper, BHF
- 10:20 – 11:20 **Early-stage insights in translational research**
Chair: Professor Chris Denning, University of Nottingham
- 10:20 – 10:35 **How basic discovery makes its way into the clinic**
Professor Federica Marelli-Berg, Queen Mary University of London
- 10:35 – 10:50 **My journey in pursuit of transplantation tolerance**
Professor Giovanna Lombardi, King's College London
- 10:50 – 11:05 **Cardiac amyloidosis: From discovery to clinical translation**
Professor Mariana Fontana, University College London
- 11:05 – 11:20 **Q&A**

11:20 – 12:20 Innovative pathways: Bridging science and clinical impact

Chair: Professor Mark O'Neill, King's College London

11:20 – 11:35 Patients know best: Spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD) a patient-led research journey

Professor David Adlam, University of Leicester

11:35 – 11:50 Tissue-based pathways to precision cardiology

Professor Andrew Grace, University of Cambridge

11:50 – 12:00 Q&A

12:00 – 12:20 Spotlight Session: Novo Nordisk

12:00 – 12:15 Novo Nordisk's commitment to cardiovascular innovation through R&D and partnerships. Dr Avidesh Nazeri, Novo Nordisk

12:15 – 12:20 Q&A

12:20 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 –15:15 Roundtable discussions

Table	Topic	Experts	Discussion points
1 2 3	Venture capital funding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Shazad Malik, Advent Life Sciences • Dr Rana Lonnen, Science Capital • Dr Kerstin Papenfuss, Deep Science Ventures 	How to secure VC funding for innovative healthcare projects. Key criteria VCs look for in translational research proposals.
4 5 6	Collaborations between academia and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Avidah Nazeri, NovoNordisk • Dr Rebecca Canter, Eli Lilly • Carmen Guerrero, AstraZeneca 	Benefits of partnering with pharmaceutical companies. Challenges in collaborative research.
7	Navigating the early stages of innovation	Panacea Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Ross Thomson • Dr Mina Bekheet 	Key steps in developing a research idea into a viable product. Building a strong network and founding a team.
8	Intellectual property: sharing and protecting ideas	J A Kemp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Lucy Williams • Stephen Hodsdon 	Navigating IP and balancing sharing and protecting your research.
9 10	BHF funding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translational Awards • Healthcare Innovation • Clinical Studies • Discovery and Clinical Fellowships • Project Grants • Special Projects and International • Chairs & Programme Grant 	Explore potential BHF funding opportunities.

15:15 –16:00 Panel discussion: Fuelling innovation – Navigating the funding landscape

Chair: Dr Shahzad Malik, Advent Life Sciences

Panel members:

- Dr Kerstin Papenfuss, Deep Science Ventures
- Professor Nick Morrell, University of Cambridge
- Dr Vishal Gulati, Recode Ventures
- Dr Rebecca Canter, Eli Lilly
- Dr Rana Lonnen, Science Capital
- Professor Paul Leeson, University of Oxford

16:00 –17:00

BHF Keynote Session

Chair: Professor Helen Philippou, University of Leeds

Designing and translating biomaterials for regenerative medicine, biosensing and therapeutics.

Professor Molly Stevens, University of Oxford

17:00 –17:10

Closing remarks

Professor James Leiper, BHF

17:00 –18:30

Networking drinks

Professor Dave Adlam

Dave Adlam is a cardiologist from Leicester. His research interests span non-atherosclerotic causes of heart attack, particularly Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection (SCAD -<https://beatscad.org.uk/>); data linkage with a particular focus on cardio-oncology (<https://vicori.le.ac.uk/>); and novel medical devices (<https://intervent-cardio.com/>). Founding Chair of the ESC-ACVC SCAD Study Group which led publication of the first European Position Paper on SCAD and the ESC-EORP SCAD Registry, he was awarded a BHF Heart Hero Award alongside his then PhD student and our SCAD Patient Lead for establishing SCAD research and the linked clinical service. Outside work, having recently retired from scouting, he is trying to return to amateur dramatics after 25 years (with very limited success according to audience polls)!

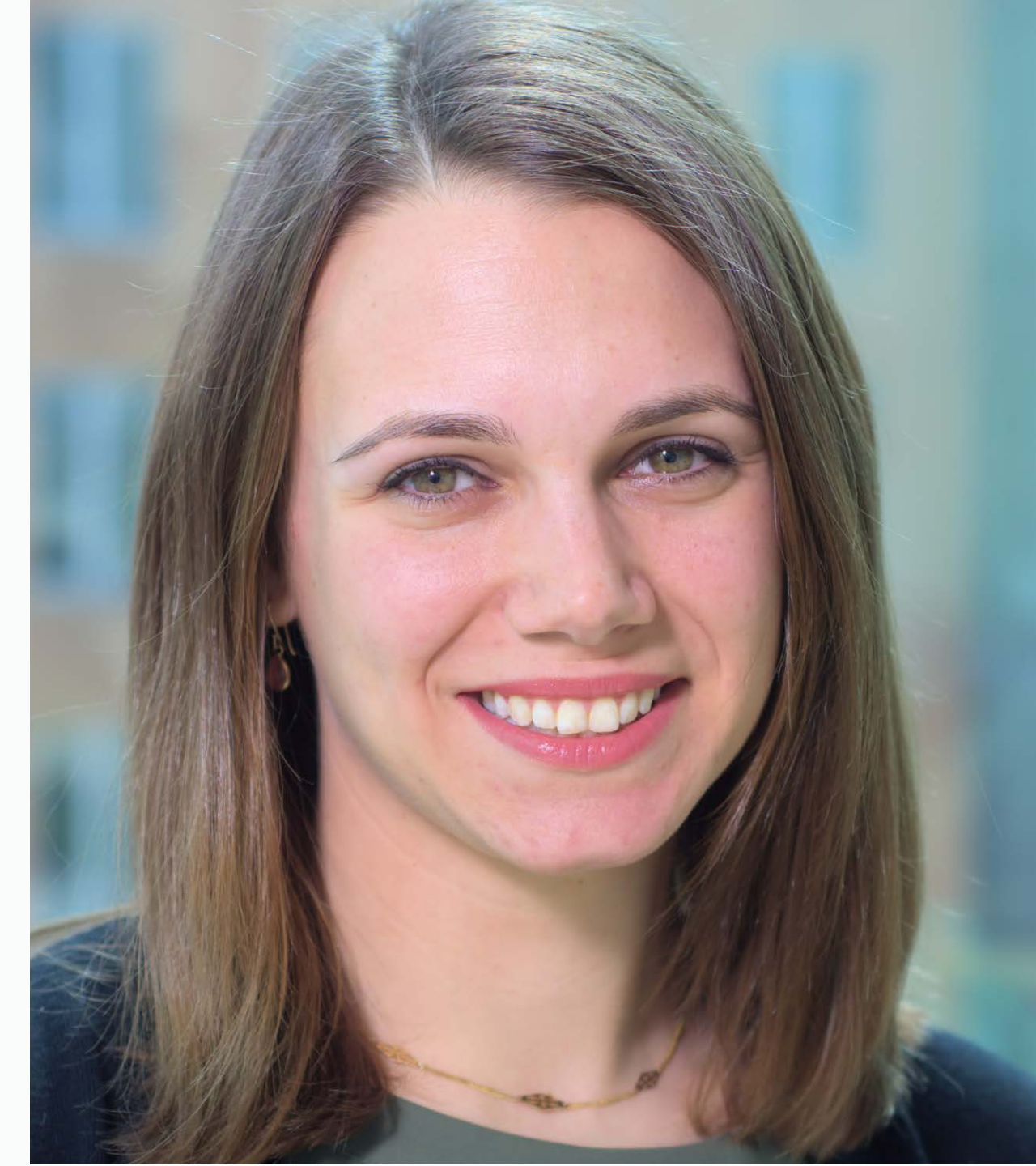
Dr Mina Bekheet

Mina Bekheet is a Millennial Serial Entrepreneur and Venture Capitalist. He is the Founder and CEO of Panacea, an innovative enterprise committed to discovering, launching, financing, and scaling the next wave of life sciences and health tech companies..



Dr Rebecca Canter

Rebecca is passionate about finding novel ways to address complex disease through multidisciplinary approaches that address biology relevant to people's experience of their conditions. Rebecca is currently Executive Director, Lilly Ventures at Eli Lilly and Company. Her remit is to invest in transformative science and ground-breaking technologies that will lead to the development of life-changing medicines. Prior to joining Lilly, Rebecca was a Senior Associate in the Dementia Discovery Fund at SV Health. Before her move to venture, Rebecca worked at Biogen in the Neuroinflammation, Acute Neurology, and Pain group and earned her PhD in Neuroscience from MIT.



Professor Chris Denning

Chris Denning is Professor of Stem Cell Biology and Director of the £100m Biodiscovery Institute (BDI), the University of Nottingham's largest research facility. It hosts 850 staff working across 6 global research themes: Cancer, Engineering Biology, Pioneering Therapeutics, Regenerating & Modelling Tissues, Taming Microbes, and Demystifying Biomolecular Complexity. During Chris' tenure as Director, the BDI has leverage more than £250 million research funding and has supported formation of a dozen new companies, which includes him being co-founder of the drug delivery spinout, Theragenix. His research spans several BDI themes by engaging cardiovascular differentiation of human pluripotent stem cells for use in drug screening and in production of new in vitro models of genetic-based cardiovascular disease - ORCID iD: 0000-0003-0802-8617



Professor Marianna Fontana

Marianna Fontana is the Director of the UCL CMR unit at the Royal Free Hospital, Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant Cardiologist at the National Amyloidosis Centre, Division of Medicine, University College London. She obtained her Medical degree (MD) and qualifications as a cardiologist at the University of Pisa. She subsequently moved to the UK, undertaking a PhD at UCL which focused on CMR in cardiac amyloidosis. She was appointed Senior Lecturer at the UK National Amyloidosis Centre and Director of the UCL CMR unit at the RFH, in 2015. Her research interests include pathogenesis, diagnosis and treatment of cardiac amyloidosis with a special focus of cardiac magnetic resonance.



Professor Andrew Grace

Andrew Grace is Professor of Experimental Cardiology at the University of Cambridge. He is a recognized innovator having interests in 'disruptive' technologies that have included devices, diagnostics and drugs. Some of his work has changed practice and he made some of the 'most important contributions' to the development and implementation of subcutaneous defibrillators. Translational contributions have involved considerations of impacts of genetic variation on the heartbeat. The current programme has two areas of focus: first, the provision of a physically robust model of cardiac excitation extending from charge movements through structurally resolved channels to surface recordings; and second, the development of freeze-sampling tools to acquire human tissue safely for both single cell and spatial -omics analysis.



Carmen Guerrero

Carmen Guerrero is Associate Director, Academic Partnerships at AstraZeneca (Cambridge, UK). She leads transactional strategy for collaborations with academic institutions, research institutes, and hospitals, engaging with principal investigators and technology transfer offices to enable innovative science. She oversees the structuring, negotiation, and execution of research and collaboration agreements aligned with AstraZeneca's strategy and compliance. Previously, as Associate Director, Genomics Contracts, she served as alliance manager for the Centre for Genomics Research, managing complex third-party partnerships and leading vendor due diligence. Her collaborations span cardiovascular, oncology, respiratory, and immunology therapeutic areas.

Dr Vishal Gulati

Vishal Gulati, MD FMedSci, is a physician-scientist and venture investor, co-founder of Recode Ventures, backing early-stage biotech and healthtech companies. He has invested in innovative companies tackling unmet medical needs, with products reaching patients in nearly 100 countries. His portfolio spans therapeutics, diagnostics, digital health, and medtech, with notable investments in Sensible Biotechnologies, Zoe, Lindus Health, Nanograb, Probably Genetic, LabGenius, and Waypoint Bio. Previously at Molten Ventures, Atlas Venture, and Oxford Science Enterprises, he also chairs or advises funds and institutions including KHP Ventures, Cancer Research Horizons, and the Francis Crick Institute.



Mr Stephen Hodsdon

Stephen Hodson is a European and UK patent attorney, chartered trade mark attorney, and IP litigator based in J A Kemp's Cambridge office, where he became a partner in 2018. His practice spans telecommunications, electronics, software, cleantech, and medtech, with expertise in technologies at the intersection of engineering and bioscience. He advises multinationals, universities, SMEs, and start-ups, and is known for his practical, commercially focused approach. Stephen is active in the Cambridge start-up ecosystem, mentoring and lecturing through EnterpriseTECH, Accelerate, and Ignite at the University of Cambridge Judge Business School. He is a trusted adviser to early-stage companies, offering a holistic approach to IP strategy, protection, and risk management. Also qualified as a barrister, he can litigate and advocate in UK courts. In 2024, he was named "Senior Lawyer of the Year" at the Cambridgeshire Law Society Legal Excellence Awards.



Professor Paul Leeson

Paul Leeson is a Cardiologist and Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine at the University of Oxford. He heads the Preventive Cardiology Research Group and his team have pioneered the development and clinical application of imaging and artificial intelligence within cardiovascular prevention, particularly in relation to hypertension management and echocardiography. Innovations spun out of the group in the field of imaging have now been developed into regulatory cleared products, in use in hospitals in the US. He is a member of the UK Biobank imaging advisory board and chairs a NIHR Invention for Innovation Product Development Award committee.



Professor James Leiper

James Leiper is Director of Research at the British Heart Foundation where he is responsible for strategic development and oversight of the BHF's research awards portfolio. He has broad expertise in cardiovascular diseases, particularly vascular physiology and translational research. James is also Honorary Professor of Molecular Medicine at the University of Glasgow's School of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Health. Trained in molecular biology at the MRC Clinical Research Centre, he developed an interest in cardiovascular physiology at UCL's Centre for Clinical Pharmacology, continuing this work as Programme Leader at the MRC Laboratory for Medical Sciences. In 2017, his group joined the University of Glasgow, focusing on translating basic science findings into improved understanding of human health and disease.



Professor Giovanna Lombardi

Giovanna Lombardi is Professor of Human Transplant Immunology at King's College London. Her research has focused on the mechanisms of transplant rejection and tolerance with a particular focus on regulatory T cells (Tregs) in healthy individuals and in patients. Recently she has translated her work with Tregs to the clinic and she has completed two clinical trials with polyclonally expanded Tregs in renal and in liver transplant patients. She is involved in additional clinical trials with Tregs in renal transplant patients and in children receiving heart transplants. At the same time her group has demonstrated that cell therapy with CAR-Tregs offers an advantage compared to polyclonal Tregs. The success of her work with Tregs provided a key foundation for the formation of the start up company Quell Therapeutics.



Dr Rana Lonnen

Rana Lonnen is a healthcare technology investor, entrepreneur, and molecular biologist. At Novartis, she leads strategic investments in technology companies, on a mission to transform the healthcare ecosystem and make positive impact on people's lives. Previously, Rana was Head of Preclinical Development at a UK biotech, Auspherix; investment consultant to IP Group in London; Founder and CSO of a UK-based Biotech, Axendos therapeutics. Prior to this, she was a Wellcome Trust-backed principal investigator in drug discovery in the field of Infection, Immunity, and Inflammation, author and inventor on high impact peer-reviewed publications and patents; before this, Rana worked at Bristol-Myers Squibb, in sales and marketing. Rana holds a PhD in molecular biology and an MBA from Imperial College London.



Dr Shahzad Malik

Shahzad Malik is a Founding General Partner of Advent Life Sciences, one of the leading trans-Atlantic venture investors focused on building innovative Life Sciences businesses in the UK, Europe and the USA. In over two decades of venture investing at Advent, he has been actively involved with numerous successful investments in Europe and the U.S. in the biopharmaceutical, medical device and diagnostics arenas. Shahzad practised as an interventional cardiologist, and was involved in basic science research before moving to the commercial world via McKinsey. He has an M.A. in physiological sciences from Oxford University and an MB, BChir from Cambridge University.



Professor Federica Marelli-Berg

Federica Marelli-Berg qualified in Medicine and Surgery at the University of Milan in 1989, and specialized in Hematology in 1993 at the University of Pavia, Italy. In 1997 she completed her PhD studies at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School (London) under the supervision of Professor R. Lechler. In 2000 she was awarded a Governors' lectureship by Imperial College London, where she continued her academic career to become Professor of Immunology in 2011. In November 2011 she joined the WHRI (Barts and The London SMD, QMUL) as Professor of Cardiovascular Immunology and Director of the Centre for Biochemical Pharmacology. She was awarded the BHF Chair of Cardiovascular Immunology in 2016.

Professor Nick Morrell

Nick Morrell is an Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the University of Cambridge. He was previously the British Heart Foundation Professor of Cardiopulmonary Medicine and inaugural Director of the Cambridge Heart and Lung Research Institute. He has published over 300 papers on pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) and bone morphogenetic protein biology and was elected Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences in 2011. He received a Doctor of Science (ScD) from Cambridge in 2018 and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the European Respiratory Society in 2019. In 2015, he founded Morphogen-IX to commercialise PAH treatments from his Cambridge lab. The company was acquired by Centessa Pharmaceuticals in 2021, where he served as President of the BMP programme until 2023. In October 2023, he founded Interact Bio Ltd, where he is CEO, developing transformative medicines for rare vascular diseases, including PAH.



Dr Avidəh Nazeri

Avidəh Nazeri is the Vice President of Clinical Development, Medical, and Regulatory at Novo Nordisk UK. Over 19 years of experience in pharmaceutical industry across different countries and all stages of research and development. Avidəh has led growing teams to collaborate across multiple chronic common and rare diseases. Dr Nazeri holds an honorary teaching role at Warwick University. Previously she worked as an Endocrinologist at King's College London. Completed her MBA on health management focused on 'End of Life Care' and comparative data across countries. Her research interests are metabolic conditions, therapeutics and cardio-renal outcomes. She has authored in multiple international journals.



Professor Mark O'Neill

Mark O'Neill is Professor of Cardiac Electrophysiology at King's College London and Medical Director for Heart, Lung and Critical Care at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. A Rhodes Scholar with a DPhil in Physiology from Oxford, he specialises in the diagnosis and interventional management of atrial fibrillation and cardiac rhythm disorders. His research combines advanced cardiac imaging, electrophysiology, computational modelling, and AI to improve patient care and treatment outcomes. He has led major translational studies, developed open-source tools supporting international arrhythmia research, and mentors the next generation of clinical cardiovascular scientists.



Dr Kerstin Papenfuss

Kerstin Papenfuss is a proven leader in therapeutic venture creation, translating groundbreaking scientific ideas into successful companies. With a PhD in tumour immunology and an Executive MBA, her career spans impactful roles at LifeArc and the UK's Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, where she incubated companies like PureSpring. In her role at Deep Science Ventures DSV, Kerstin has built the pharma sector from scratch, founding 10 therapeutics and enabling tech companies and managing a portfolio of 15, including one exit. She's secured major collaborations, holds five board directorships, and champions female entrepreneurship in deep tech.



Professor Helen Philippou

Helen Philippou is a Professor of Translational Medicine at the University of Leeds. She co-founded (LUNAC Therapeutics) with a co-founder chemist. LUNAC is developing a first-in-class anticoagulant (anti-clotting agent) with no bleeding side effects. LUNAC is recognised with having been shortlisted for 4 “Best Start-up” Awards and winning 3 of these in 2020 and 2021. LUNAC was featured in J.P. Morgan’s first-ever Top 200 Female-Powered Businesses report, where LUNAC was rated 55 out of 6,085 UK high-growth companies in 2021. Professor Philippou also featured as a Mover and Shaker in 2021 BioBusiness Report, BioBeat. Recently she co-founded and is CEO of ClotProtect Therapeutics another spin-out company developing a small molecule therapeutic to stem acute bleeding in patients undergoing major surgery. ClotProtect has been shortlisted as finalists for 3 “Best start-up awards” in 2025 winning one of these in 2025 with one pending.



Professor Dame Molly Stevens

Molly Stevens FRS FREng FMedSci is John Black Professor of Bionanoscience at the University of Oxford and part-time Professor at Imperial College London and the Karolinska Institute. Her multidisciplinary research balances the investigation of fundamental science with the development of technologies and designer biomaterials to address some of the major healthcare challenges across diagnostics, advanced therapeutics and regenerative medicine. The impact of her work is recognised by numerous accolades, including the 2023 Novo Nordisk Prize. Professor Stevens' work has a strong translational drive. She is a serial entrepreneur and the founder of five spin-off companies.

Dr Ross Thomson

Ross Thomson is an academic cardiologist at Barts Heart Centre specialising in heart failure and cardiac imaging. He is the founding director of Cardio Stars, the British Heart Foundation's research translation and commercialisation programme run in partnership with Panacea Innovation. A former consultant at Boston Consulting Group, Ross has over a decade's experience at the intersection of clinical medicine, research and industry. He is passionate about taking scientific discoveries and innovation from bench to bedside, to improve the outcomes for patients with cardiovascular disease.



Dr Lucy Williams

Lucy Williams is a European and UK patent attorney with expertise in biotechnology, particularly in antibody therapeutics, cell and gene therapies, structural biology, and nucleotide synthesis. She joined J A Kemp in 2012 and became a partner in 2023. With a strong scientific background, Lucy completed her PhD as part of the prestigious Wellcome Trust PhD programme in Developmental and Stem Cell Biology at the University of Cambridge. Lucy works closely with technology transfer offices, spin-outs, and SMEs, providing strategic advice at all stages of commercialisation. Her experience spans invention identification, patentability assessments, freedom to operate analyses, patent drafting and prosecution, and portfolio building. She has led the prosecution of extensive national filing programmes for ocular gene therapies and has provided detailed freedom to operate advice for advanced cell therapeutics.





**Our vision is a world free from the fear of
heart and circulatory diseases**

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British Heart Foundation is a registered charity in England and Wales (225971),
Scotland (SC039426) and the Isle of Man (1295).

