

## Research Highlight: CUPiD Publication, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024



**Above:** Dr Alicia-Marie Conway receiving Early Career Researcher Award at GM Cancer Awards 2024

The Manchester CUP Research team, in collaboration with the Cancer Research UK National Biomarker Centre, have been working on new blood tests to predict tissue-of-origin in CUP. Molecular profiling from tumour tissue in patients with CUP is difficult - this new research outlines a blood-based approach to molecular profiling to predict tissue-of-origin in CUP, using circulating cell-free DNA (cfDNA) methylation patterns.

This new blood test, called CUPiD, correctly identified the tumour type in 84.6% of cases. As this has been proof of concept research, the next steps will be further validation in larger patient cohorts of known tumour cfDNA samples, in a statistically powered prospective CUP trial.

The paper can be accessed at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-47195-7>



## TEA BREAK [GETTING TO KNOW YOU]

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**Dr Alicia-Marie Conway**

Clinical Lecturer & Medical Oncology Trainee at the CRUK National Biomarker Centre, The Christie and University of Manchester

### RESEARCHER PROFILE

I completed my medical training at Manchester University in 2010, where I undertook a research masters in viral oncology. I commenced my academic medical oncology training in 2015 and completed a PhD at the CRUK MI Cancer Biomarker Centre in September 2022. My doctoral research investigated the role of circulating tumour DNA in CUP. I was awarded a NIHR Academic Clinical Lectureship and Early Career Researcher award.

**Q: What are your research interests?**

**A:** They include evaluating blood-based biomarkers in difficult to diagnose cancers, with a focus on CUP diagnosis and treatment stratification. I am interested in how we can improve the diagnostic pathway for patients with CUP and Malignancy of Unknown Origin.

**Q: What are you looking forward to in the next year?**

**A:** In collaboration with the CRUK National Biomarker Centre we have been awarded funding to continue to develop CUPiD. We are collecting hundreds of blood samples to test this further in patients with known cancer and CUP. This will help to refine the CUPiD test, with the hope of implementing in a national prospective trial. I'm also looking forward to working with patients and their carers in the CUP club PPIE group, to develop such a trial and continue to shape my research.

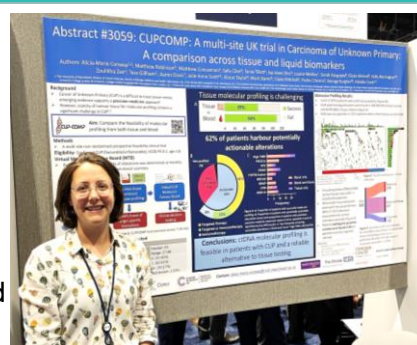
**Q. Do you have any advice for other early career researchers?**

**A:** Find good mentors, persevere, remain curious and collaborate.

## Updates on CUP clinical trials

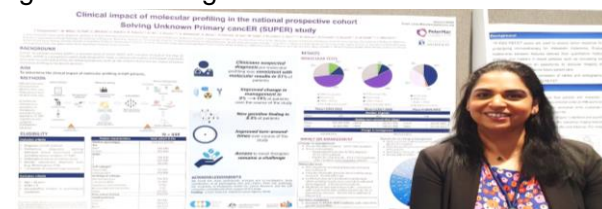
**The CUPCOMP study** - compared the feasibility of molecular profiling from tissue and blood in patients diagnosed with CUP. ctDNA analysis was 93% successful and reliably concordant with tissue. Potentially actionable alterations were found in 64% of patients. It showed ctDNA molecular profiling should be considered as a reliable alternative, to tissue-based testing.

More info at:  
[https://ascopubs.org/doi/10.1200/JCO.2024.42.16\\_suppl.3059](https://ascopubs.org/doi/10.1200/JCO.2024.42.16_suppl.3059)



**Presenting at the ASCO annual meeting.**  
**Top:** Alicia-Marie Conway, CUP COMP study.  
**Right:** Tharani Sivakumaran, University of Melbourne and Peter Mac Cancer Centre, Australia: SUPER Study

**SUPER study** – 449 patients had tissue-based molecular profiling with tissue-of-origin predictions. Molecular predictions changed patient management. Predictions were consistent with clinician suspicions, with 8.5% germline findings.



More info at:  
[Clinical impact of molecular profiling in the national prospective cohort Solving Unknown Primary Cancer \(SUPER\) study. | Journal of Clinical Oncology \(ascopubs.org\)](https://ascopubs.org/doi/10.1200/JCO.2024.42.16_suppl.3059)

**CUP CLUB: Hybrid Event – 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024.** We will host a virtual meeting with patients and family members that are interested in joining the CUP Club. This event is an introduction to members and will focus on what The CUP Club will offer and what people can be involved in at centres across the North-West of England. If you have patients or family members that would be interested in joining the CUP Club, please contact: [the-christie.cup-research@nhs.net](mailto:the-christie.cup-research@nhs.net) for further information. For patients seeking information, resources and support we ask that they are signposted to: [Cancer Research UK - Living with CUP](#); [Macmillan - Unknown Primary Cancer Community Forum](#), and the [CUP Foundation](#).

Your feedback and contribution to improving The Catch UP newsletter is welcomed. Please contact: [the-christie.cup-research@nhs.net](mailto:the-christie.cup-research@nhs.net)

The CatchUP prepared by the Manchester CUP Research Team and edited by Dr. Natalie Cook at The Christie NHS Foundation Trust. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please use this link to [Unsubscribe](#).