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BALR Annual Conference 2026 Programme

George Davies Centre, Leicester, UK

**It is our great pleasure to invite you to Leicester for the
British Association for Lung Research (BALR) Conference 2026.**

23rd June – 14.00 – 20.00
24th June – 8.30 – 16.45, Conference Dinner 19.00
25th June – 8.30 - 13.00

Conference organisers
Dr Katy Roach (Leicester)

Leicester organising committee: Dr Richard Allen, Catherine Bee, Ellie Cox, Professor Bibek Gooptu,
Dr Olivia Leavy, Esra Ozaltin, Mathuscha Ratnasingham, Dr Adam Wright

Dr Alison John (Imperial) & Dr Amanda Tatler (Nottingham), & BALR Committee

Topics & Session Highlights

Keynote Speakers

Professor Ian Adcock, Professor Anna Hansell, Professor Simon Johnson

Three Forces Shaping Lung Disease: Genetics, Damage, and Mechanisms of Repair

Professor Martin Tobin (University of Leicester), Professor Louise Donnelly (Imperial College London),

Dr Dustin Bagley (King's College London)

The Air We Breathe: Environmental Drivers of Lung Disease

Professor Matthew Loxham (University of Southampton), Dr Helen Davies (University of York),
Dr Simon Lea (University of Manchester)

Predicting the Breath: Computational and Experimental Models of Lung Disease

Dr Nick Hannan (University of Nottingham), Professor Bindi Brook (University of Nottingham),
Dr Carl Whitfield (University of Manchester)

From Injury to Fibrosis: Mechanisms of Dysregulated Lung Repair

Dr Nicola Robinson (University of Glasgow), Dr Kevin Liu (Imperial College London)

Breaking the Cycle: From Lung Injury to Emerging mechanisms

Dr Maurice Dungey (University of Leicester)

Partnering for Progress: Industry Insights and Lung Research Challenges

Dr Claire Goatman (Boehringer Ingelheim), Dr Ellen Forty (Asthma + Lung UK)

Competitions & Awards

Spoken Sessions

Postgraduate Competition

Early Career Researcher Competition

Mid-Career Researcher Competition, sponsored by MAARA

Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis Prize

Poster Sessions

Awards available for all career stages

Tuesday 23rd June 2026

Please scan the QR code below to view an interactive google map of key information to assist with your stay in Leicester (including emergency information):



12.30 – 14.00 Registration and Networking (George Davies Centre Reception, 1.33, 1.34 & 1.35)

Please feel free to share your time with us on social media:

X: @BALRcommunity

#BALR2026

14.00 – 14.15 Welcome and Introduction - Dr Katy Roach, University of Leicester (Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

14.15 – 15.00 Opening Keynote Talk - Multi-omics to explore airways disease - Professor Ian Adcock, Imperial College London (Chair: Dr Amanda Tatler, University of Nottingham)

Session 1: Three Forces Shaping Lung Disease: Genetics, Damage, and Mechanisms of Repair (Chairs: Professor David Cousins, University of Leicester and Dr Olivia Leavy) (Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

15.00 – 15.35 Eighteen years of consortium genome-wide association studies of lung function: what have we learned? – Professor Martin Tobin, University of Leicester

15.35 – 16.10 Lung damage driving COPD - Professor Louise Donnelly, Imperial College London

16.10 – 16:45 Targeting mechanical epithelial injury reverses asthmatic airway remodelling and hyperresponsiveness in mice - Dr Dustin Bagley, King's College London

16.45 – 17.15 Refreshments, Exhibitors and Poster Viewing (Rooms 1.33, 1.34 & 1.35)

Session 2: Early Career Researcher Competition (Chairs: Professor Ian Adcock, Imperial College London, and Manuela Platé, University College London) (Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

17.15 – 17.30 CRISPRi perturbation of predicted cis-regulatory elements associated with lung function impairment in human bronchial epithelial cells - Dr Rohan Paranjpe, University of Nottingham

17.30 – 17.45 Gαq/11-Dependent Modulation of the Extracellular Matrix Mediates Alveolar Repair - Dr Amanda Goodwin, University of Nottingham

17.45 – 18.00 Identifying Genetic Risk Loci for Bronchiectasis: Early Insights from a Multi-Ancestry Genome-Wide Association Study in the All of Us Research Program - Dr Kayesha Coley, University of Leicester

Session 3: Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis Prize Talk (Chairs: Professor Martin Tobin, University of Leicester and Dr Richard Allen, University of Leicester) (Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

18.00 – 18.15 Investigating the ability of TROCEPT, a novel viral therapy, to infect fibrotic lung tissue - Dr Nancy Gomez, University of Nottingham

18.15 – 18.30 Leupaxin Orchestrates Proliferation and Myofibroblast Transition in Human Lung Fibroblasts – Dr Petar Popov, University of Cardiff

18.30 – 20.00 Poster Session and Drinks Reception (Rooms 1.33, 1.34 & 1.35)

Please ensure you take time to view the abstracts on display.

Wednesday 24th June 2026

8.30 - 9.00 Arrival, Refreshments and Networking (Rooms 1.33, 1.34 & 1.35)

Session 4: The Air We Breathe: Environmental Drivers of Lung Disease, sponsored by MAARA (Chairs: Professor Dominick Shaw, University of Leicester and Dr Rachel Clifford, University of Nottingham)
(Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

9.00 – 9.25 Airborne particulate matter and the alveoli - emerging sources, mechanisms, and effects - Professor Matthew Loxham, University of Southampton

9.25 – 9.50 The Lung Chemistry Model in Python: A new computational model for predicting asthma exacerbation risk from indoor air pollutants - Professor Helen Davies, University of York

9.50 - 10.15 From inhaled particulate matter to macrophage dysfunction: environmental imprinting in COPD - Dr Simon Lea, University of Manchester

10.15 – 10.45 Refreshments, Exhibitors and Poster Viewing (Rooms 1.33, 1.34 & 1.35)

Session 5: Predicting the Breath: Computational and Experimental Models of Lung Disease (Chairs: Professor Bibek Gooptu, University of Leicester, and Kamini Rakkar, University of Nottingham) (Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

10.45 – 11.10 Immune-competent, stem cell-derived models of the lung - Dr Nick Hannan, University of Nottingham

11.10 – 11.35 Airway remodelling in asthma, tissue destruction in emphysema: two sides of the same coin? - Professor Bindi Brook, University of Nottingham

11.35 – 12.00 Linking lung physiology to function through patient-specific computational modelling - Dr Carl Whitfield, University of Manchester

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch (Rooms 1.33, 1.34 & 1.35)

13.00 – 14.00 Poster Session

Please ensure you take time to view the abstracts on display.

Session 6: Postgraduate Competition (Chairs: Professor Bindi Brook and Dr Nick Hannan, University of Nottingham) (Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

14.00 – 14.15 The Role of TRPM7 in Human Lung Myofibroblast Profibrotic Function - Mathuscha Ratnasingham, University of Leicester

14.15 – 14.30 Integration of IPF-associated SNPs with differential DNA methylation and gene expression shows cell-type specificity in airway and parenchymal fibroblasts – Anita Valand, University of Nottingham

14.30 – 14.45 Neutrophil recruitment, activation, and CXCR1/2 regulation in lymphangiomyomatosis, Sasha-Gaye Richards, University of Nottingham

Session 7: From Injury to Fibrosis: Mechanisms of Dysregulated Lung Repair (Chairs: Professor Peter Bradding, University of Leicester, and Mathuscha Ratnasingham, University of Leicester)
(Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

14.45 - 15.10 Lung repair in a new era of Cystic Fibrosis - Dr Nicola Robinson, University of Glasgow

15.10 – 15.35 Spatial Multiomic Profiling of Human IPF Lung Reveals Fibrotic Epithelial Niches and Genotype-Associated Remodelling Dr Kevin Liu, Imperial College

15.35 – 16.00 Refreshment Break (Rooms 1.33, 1.34 & 1.35)

16.00 – 16.45 Keynote Talk - From air pollution epidemiology to interdisciplinary research in respiratory health
- Professor Anna Hansell, University of Leicester (Chair: Professor Matthew Loxham, University of Southampton) (Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

19.00 – 23.00 Conference Dinner (The City Rooms, 16 Hotel St, Leicester LE1 5AW)

Thursday 25th June 2026

8.30 - 9.00 Arrival, Refreshments and Networking (Rooms 1.33 & 1.34)

Session 8: Mid-career Researcher Competition, sponsored by MAARA (Chair: Dr Alison John, Imperial College London and Dr Kevin Liu, Imperial College London) (Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

9.00 – 9.15 Investigations into the role of TGFβ1 in induction of senescence in airway smooth muscle cells, Dr Ruth Saunders, University of Leicester

9.15 – 9.30 Conservation of donor response profiles in cryopreserved lung tissue supported by initial metabolic and secretory cytokine analyses, Dr Panayiota Stylianou, University of Leicester

9.30 – 9.45 Mapping the Molecular Lung Response to Biomass Smoke Using Spatial Transcriptomics, Dr Robert Hall, University of Nottingham

Session 9: Breaking the Cycle: From Lung Injury to Emerging mechanisms (Chairs: Dr Bettina Schock, Queen's University Belfast and Dr Manuela Platé, University College London) (Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

9.45 – 10.10 Targeted Treatments for Mesothelioma - Dr Maurice Dungey, University of Leicester

10.10 – 10.35 Abstract Talk - p63 regulates stem cell maintenance and age-associated functional decline in human airway basal cells – Dr Drew Farr, UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health

10.35 – 10.55 Refreshments (Rooms 1.33 & 1.34)

Session 10: Partnering for Progress: Industry Insights and Lung Research Challenges (Chair: Dr Katy Roach, University of Leicester) (Bina Popat Lecture Theatre 2)

10.55 – 11.15 Working with Industry: Boehringer Ingelheim - Dr Claire Goatman, Senior Medical Science Liaison, Boehringer Ingelheim UK and Ireland

11.15 – 11.35 Funding, priorities, and partnership: using the Lung Research Grand Challenges to advance your research – Dr. Ellen Forty - From Asthma and Lung UK

11.35 – 12.30 Closing Keynote Talk - Lung injury and repair in LAM: altering the balance – Professor Simon Johnson, University of Nottingham (Chair: Dr Amanda Tatler, University of Nottingham)

12.30– 12.45 – Awards and Closing BALR address

We hope you have enjoyed the conference. If you need to get in touch with us following the conference, please email leicesterbalr@gmail.com.