

Professor Manju Kurian Biography:

Dr Manju Kurian is a UCL Professor of Neurogenetics and NIHR Research Professor at UCL-Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health. She is also a Consultant Paediatric Neurologist at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

After graduating from the University of Cambridge (1998), she trained in Paediatrics before subspecialising in Paediatric Neurology. At the end of her clinical training, she undertook a PhD with Professor Eamonn Maher (University of Birmingham) investigating the molecular genetic basis of childhood neurological disorders (2007-2011). During this time, she identified mutations in the gene encoding the dopamine transporter (*SLC6A3*) as the cause of infantile parkinsonism-dystonia, as well as other genes causing movement disorders and epilepsy in children.

She moved to UCL after her PhD, and has since established herself as an independent Principal Investigator at the Institute of Child Health. She was awarded a Wellcome Intermediate Fellowship in 2013, NIHR Professorship in 2017 and The Jules Thorn Award for Biomedical Research in 2017. Her working pattern is an 80:20 academic/clinical divide. Clinically, she looks after children with neurogenetic conditions, including a group of patients with AADC deficiency and other neurotransmitter disorders. The remainder of her time is spent in academic work, managing her research group, which comprise a mixture of post doctoral fellows, clinicians, PhD students and research assistants.

Her current research encompasses gene discovery for childhood neurological disorders. Her lab uses a number of different models to investigate the underlying pathological basis of disease. Her lab has developed expertise in induced pluripotent stem cell models for studying neurological diseases of childhood, including AADC deficiency. She works closely with UCL Gene Therapy groups to develop novel therapeutic strategies for children with pharmaco-resistant movement disorders. Her long term goal is to translate her research for patient benefit, through improved clinical diagnosis and better therapies.