

Press release: Global health must survive political upheaval: Dr Jeremy Farrar delivers MHRA annual lecture

For science, research, and innovation to provide solutions to global health challenges, people and ideas need to be able to come together to make a difference, Dr Jeremy Farrar OBE, Director of the [Wellcome Trust](#) said at the 12th Annual Lecture organised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in London tonight, 10 October 2017.

Speaking to an audience of leaders from across the UK life science community, Dr Farrar explained how recent political events in Europe and beyond have shaken the foundations of long established international structures, collaborations and arrangements, which have long been seen as the best way to protect public health.

However, to continue to safeguard global health during this period of international uncertainty, medicines regulators, scientists, and innovators must work together to make sure there is more global cooperation, not less, to achieve solutions which are effective, sustainable and fair.

Dr Jeremy Farrar, Director of Wellcome, said:

Recent world events such as Brexit have created an uncertain future for global health. But the health challenges we face don't respect national boundaries – they require global solutions.

As we enter complex negotiations to leave the European Union, it's vital that we protect regulatory cooperation and create an environment in which medical innovation succeeds not despite the regulatory environment, but because of it.

This is a priority issue, an issue of health security, and all sides should push for it to be dealt with as soon as possible in the next phase of the negotiations.

The Agency's Chief Executive, Dr Ian Hudson, said:

As regulators, we understand the importance of being forward-looking, innovative, and open when facing global health challenges. A deep and close working relationship across the EU has led to significant public health and safety improvements and helped us succeed in the face of crisis.

Playing a leading role in promoting and ensuring public health remains the key priority for our Agency and it is vital to increase

international collaboration and maintain collaborative frameworks to help make sure new, innovative treatments are made available to the UK health sector at the earliest, safest opportunity.

Ends

Notes to Editor

1. The MHRA Annual Lecture is the Agency's flagship event bringing together over 350 senior domestic and international leaders from medicine, government, industry, academia, third sector and world health institutions. This year's event took place on Tuesday 10 October at the [Francis Crick Institute](#).
2. Each year the lecture is delivered by internationally renowned experts to bring their perspective on topics of global importance. This year Jeremy Farrar, Director of one of the world's largest private funders of medical research, the Wellcome Trust, delivered a lecture titled 'Health and disease know no borders: why global health must survive political upheaval'. His lecture follows those by Dr Margaret Chan, WHO, in 2016, and Dr Dan Hartman, Gates Foundation, in 2015.
3. Dr Jeremy Farrar, Director, Wellcome Trust – Before joining Wellcome in October 2013, Jeremy was Director of the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit in Vietnam for 18 years. His research interests were infectious diseases, tropical health and emerging infections. He has published over 500 peer-reviewed scientific papers, mentored many dozens of students and fellows, and served as Chair on several advisory boards for governments and global organisations, including the World Health Organization. He was named 12th in Fortune's list of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders in 2015. Jeremy was appointed OBE in 2005 for services to tropical medicine, was awarded the Memorial Medal and the Ho Chi Minh City Medal by the Government of Vietnam, and has been honoured by the Royal College of Physicians in the UK and the American Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. He is a Fellow of both the Academy of Medical Sciences and the Royal Society.
4. [Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency](#) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits justify any risks. MHRA is a centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency which also includes the [National Institute for Biological Standards and Control \(NIBSC\)](#) and the [Clinical Practice Research Datalink \(CPRD\)](#). MHRA is an executive agency of the Department of Health.