

Building Collaboration: Information & Reagent Exchange

The discipline of food virology, responsible for everything from characterization of the viruses to prevention and control, requires trans-disciplinary training and access to specific, limited resources. Recent research has shown that viruses, not bacteria, are the leading cause of foodborne illness, making advances in this field increasingly critical. NoroCORE is taking a multi-faceted approach to building scientific and human capacity to support increased and sustained efforts in food virology. Towards this end, the team has established mechanisms for information and reagent exchange, including a comprehensive, publicly accessible literature database; formalized mechanisms to facilitate reagent exchange; and an online community page for the sharing of technical expertise.

The NoroCORE Food Virology Literature database is an online, searchable database dedicated solely to food virology publications, with over 3000 articles from 1992 to present. It is updated monthly to include recent publications. The database is accessible at norocorelit.com (or via links from the NoroCORE website, norocore.com). Full publications are available to collaborative partners, while abstracts are available to non-members/public (due to copyright restrictions). Each collaborative investigator has a personal login and password for accessing the database, providing them instant access to relevant publications. Currently, the database is up to date for publications related to norovirus, with efforts underway to expand comprehensive coverage for hepatitis A and other foodborne viruses.

NoroCORE has also developed a formalized mechanism to facilitate reagent exchange among collaborative partners. The NoroCORE website has a page dedicated to reagent exchange, which currently supplies instructions and contact information for sharing reagents between institutions, including relevant forms. The website will also house a comprehensive list of the virus strains, virus-like particles, and monoclonal antibodies available for



exchange. Should collaborators have additional questions not answered on the page, they are able to contact NoroCORE for additional information via the “Contact Us” form on the website, or directly via email.

NoroCORE collaborative partners at the University of Georgia have established an OpenWetWare wiki page online to further foster sharing of technical expertise, called the Winter Vomiting Lab. This is a publicly available page where researchers can share technical information such as experimental protocols, notes, demonstration videos, links, and other resources. NoroCORE plans to complement this resource by providing an additional mechanism to securely share password-protected materials on the NoroCORE website for materials that are not yet published or publicly available. Taken together, these resources put information and expertise at the fingertips of collaborating researchers who might not otherwise have access to these essential tools.