

# George's Academic Training (GAT) Newsletter

TENTH EDITION May 2021

## Welcome to our 10th Edition of the GAT Newsletter

'It is with great pride that I reflect back on what our George's Academic Training (GAT) training has achieved over the last 5 years. Highlights have included:-

- ◆ The establishment of a cohesive programme of training and mentorship for our group of Clinical Academic Trainees who are interested in pursuing a Research Path as part of their Medical or Surgical Training.
- ◆ The set-up of our GAT website, which is embedded within the research webpages for the University and has been instrumental in achieving visibility for our Clinical Academic Trainees, both NIHR and locally funded, so that they are aware of the research training and opportunities on offer.
- ◆ We have worked with our Educational Partners in the Joint Faculty at Kingston University to set-up and deliver the newly established PGCert in Research Skills and Methods, which to date has enrolled 33 students. Recruitment continues to rise year-on-year and feedback from clinicians who have completed the course has been excellent to date.
- ◆ The notion that research can and should be embedded within Clinical Practice is an important Ethos of the GAT programme. With the able assistance of Yvonne Forde and Mat Paul, we have launched the ResearchAware lecture series, which is a free-to-access series of lectures and workshops that are hosted and delivered by the University and focus on developing generic skills in Research, with themed sessions including Statistics, developing methodology in Research Studies, Ethical Approval and Applying for Grant funding.

I am proud of GAT's achievements to date and we hope to build on these firm foundations over the next few years. As we come out of the challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic, we are planning an exciting series of workshops and training tailored to trainees, so watch this space...'

**Professor Nidhi Sofat**

### In this issue:

- ◆ Research Aware—Research Skills and Methods Series 2021
- ◆ News from our academic foundation programme doctors
- ◆ News from our clinical academic trainees
- ◆ Congratulations
- ◆ Academic Clinical Fellows in General Practice
- ◆ MEET - Dr Charlotte Mason-Apps, Academic Clinical Fellow in General Practice



**We are pleased to announce that the GAT team are again running the ‘ResearchAware’ research skills and methods training series in 2021.**

- ◆ Each session is eligible for self-assessed CPD points.
- ◆ 1 - 2hr training sessions to introduce skills & considerations for healthcare research involvement.
- ◆ Delivered by experts in research skills & methods across St George’s University of London, St George’s Healthcare NHS Trust and Faculty of Health, Social Care & Education
- ◆ Open to all, and of particular relevance to clinicians and allied health professionals who are:
  - interested in doing research and potentially developing their own projects
  - active researchers who wish to build, broaden or refresh their knowledge

Sessions are informal and our presenters understand attendees may have to leave early or arrive late to the session to fit around professional obligations.

The series will cover:

- Significance of significance – examining different interpretations of the concept of ‘significance’
- Research Integrity and Ethics.
- Building your career in clinical research
- Writing up research and research proposals
- Critical appraisal for research and clinical practice
- Science communication
- Patient and Public Involvement in Research Design

For further information on the *ResearchAware* research skills and methods training series, including details of how to register for specific sessions, [please click here.](#)

## News from our academic foundation programme doctors

We receive a fixed annual income to our Small Grant Fund from the Isaac Schapera Research Trust to support research conducted during Academic Foundation Programme years.

Two of our AFP doctors have made successful applications to the fund and here are their reports:-

### **Dr Louis Dwyer-Hemmings, Academic Foundation Programme Year 2 doctor , attended the Essential Radiology for Junior Doctors course**

Essential Radiology for Junior Doctors is a comprehensive course that covers all aspects of basic medical image interpretation, with a focus on acute imaging. It is usually run in the Hammersmith Hospital, but since the coronavirus pandemic, the course has moved online. Junior doctors from all over the country attended, and I was very grateful for the GAT grant which allowed me to be one of them.

The course included sessions on medical physics, plain film interpretation, and cross-sectional imaging of the head and abdomen. Content focussed on detecting common abnormalities, with emphasis on acute or life-threatening conditions. The course demonstrated structured approaches to image interpretation, which have already been valuable when on-call as a medical SHO, giving me the confidence to accurately detect basic abnormalities on radiographs. I'm looking forward to extending this experience to skeletal imaging in my upcoming Emergency Medicine rotation.

Alongside developing my clinical skills, the course has been essential for my research activities. During my academic time, I have been focussing on medical imaging research. The course gave me an excellent overview of imaging modalities and their potential roles in research. One of my projects involves the assessment of image-processing software as a virtual biomarker for disease severity in hand osteoarthritis. This involved comparing the software outputs with an established radiographic measure of osteoarthritis severity – the Kellgren-Lawrence scale. The image interpretation techniques taught on the course were invaluable in reliably scoring the radiological severity of these images, and thus accurately assessing the use of this software. I would wholeheartedly recommend the course for any doctors who are interested in performing research in medical imaging, or who want to improve their general image interpretation skills.

### **Dr Izzy Watts, Academic Foundation Programme Year 2 doctor, AFP small grant report**



**PRIMARY CARE  
WOMEN'S HEALTH FORUM**

In September I had the opportunity to attend a fantastic conference on women's health. I had just started my academic block which was based in a GP surgery for 2 days a week, with the remainder of the week undertaking projects linked to academic primary care. Within the first month of GP I found myself having to rapidly 'brush up' on my skills in women's health – as this formed a large proportion of my workload and was not something I had had much exposure to during my FY1 year (especially during COVID redeployment!). My supervisor recommended a conference organised by the Primary Care Women's health forum exploring women's health issues through different ages and highlighting important areas of future research.

The conference was my first experience of a 'zoom-based' event and was a wonderful introduction. In advance we were sent background webinars on the teaching sessions: 'Early years', 'Fertile years', 'Renaissance years' and 'Golden years'. These involved lecture-based teaching as well as filmed consultations with actors. For the conference itself we were able to submit questions and work with the conference facilitators to discuss different cases and research areas. I really appreciated the opportunity to attend the conference as it was a great learning experience and also introduced me to zoom based conferences. The opportunity to hear about different clinicians' experiences during COVID and new avenues of research in women's health was also incredibly valuable and is definitely something I wish to continue in my ongoing academic career.

# News from our clinical academic trainees

**Dr Dipender Gill** (Clinical Lecturer in Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics)



I began my NIHR CL post in December 2020 and my areas of research include leveraging genetic data to unravel pathophysiological mechanisms and identify therapeutic targets within cardiometabolic disease.

Notable recent publications in these research areas include:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33813844/>,  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33644404/>,  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33356394/>.

Additionally, I have established a teaching course on the use of genetics for drug development. This short course “Genetics in drug development” will provide theoretical and practical advice on using genetic data to:

1. Identify drug targets
2. Investigate the effects of drug target perturbation for different indications
3. Explore potential adverse effects and repurposing potential for drug targets
4. Identify biomarkers to explore drug efficacy in early stage clinical trials
5. Identify population subgroups for which drug effects may vary

Explore interactions between different drugs and exposures

Further details are available at:

<https://onlinesales.admin.cam.ac.uk/conferences-and-events/mrc-biostatistics-unit/mrc-biostatistics-unit-short-courses/genetics-in-drug-development-november-2021>

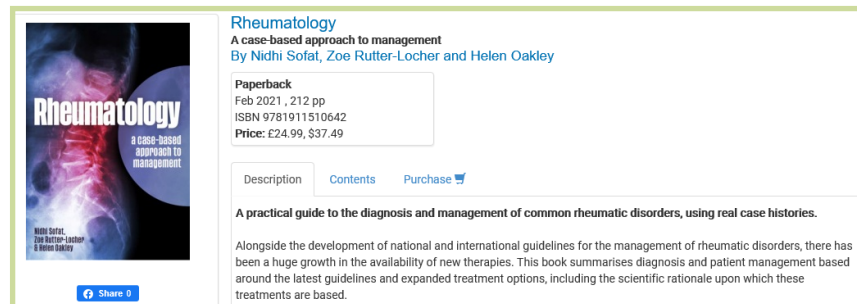
## NOTICEBOARD

- Date for the diary SGUL Research Day Wednesday 8 December 2021.
- Information on NIHR events can be found [here](#).
- Enrolling now— [Healthcare Research Skills and Methods PgCert](#).
- The Academy of Medical Sciences [grant schemes](#)

*Congratulations*

Nidhi commented  
“Although it has taken several years working on this project and gathering cases which would best illustrate examples of the conditions involved, it is hugely rewarding to have the book published and to receive positive feedback from people who have used it!

Professor Nidhi Sofat along with **NIHR Academic trainee Zoe Rutter-Locher** and St George’s NHS Trust physiotherapist Helen Oakley has written a new book entitled called ‘Rheumatology: A Case Based Approach to Management’. The initiative was prompted by feedback received from medical students and junior doctors at St George’s about having a dedicated book about musculoskeletal conditions and their treatment and includes clinical presentations of the most common musculoskeletal diseases with case histories together with the many new treatments available in rheumatology.



---

### Dr Mohammad Razai wins General Practice Award

*Congratulations*



Dr Mohammad Razai, Academic Clinical Fellow in General Practice, has won the GP Trainee of the Year/Rising Star Award at the General Practice Awards 2020.

Supported by Pulse, the annual awards are given to individuals and teams for their achievements in general practice over the previous year. Dr Razai was one of four GPs shortlisted for the award and was selected as the eventual winner of this year’s prize.

Speaking on his win, Dr Razai said, “I am honoured and overwhelmed with joy to receive this award. I am grateful to my NHS colleagues, practice team, trainers, and St George’s for providing a supportive and nourishing environment. This recognition is truly heartening after a difficult year for all of us.”

# Academic Clinical Fellows in General Practice

Each year SGUL is pleased to offer two locally funded GP Academic Clinical Fellow (ACF) posts which provide specialist clinical training in general practice combined with training in academic primary care (research and teaching), usually over a four year period. In ST1 and ST2 they complete 18 months in hospital posts and 6 months in General Practice. In ST3 and ST4 they undertake integrated academic training working 50% in Academic training and 50% in General Practice.

St George's currently has nine GP ACFs in post and two of the trainees have shared their news:

## Dr Lucia Magee

Lucia participated in a [Twitter chat](#) recently with BMJ Leader to discuss her recent publication on the [barriers and enablers for aspiring women leaders in healthcare](#). This generated a great further discussion and was a great warm up event to celebrating International Women's Day, where she joined fellow [Women Speakers in Healthcare](#) co-founders, in hosting a workshop at the Health & Care Women Leaders Network unconference which was based on the theme of #EverydayCourage. She also recently co-hosted a workshop at the Royal College of General Practitioners 'Discover GP' event for medical students and foundation doctors interested in learning more about the speciality, and in shaping it's future.



---

## Dr Felicity Knights

Vaccine hesitancy among vulnerable groups has become extremely topical in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 vaccine roll-out, and it's been a real privilege to work with the Migrant Health Research Group during the first year of my ACF, and learn from their expertise in this area. We've recently had a [national qualitative study](#) accepted by BJGP exploring the views of healthcare professionals and migrants themselves around COVID-19 and on potential COVID-19 vaccines. Professionals and migrants alike reported concerns that pre-existing distrust of vaccinations and the NHS alongside low health literacy and widespread misinformation (including the idea that COVID-19 is a hoax or 'western disease') are likely to negatively affect uptake of a potential COVID-19 vaccine in some migrants. Some migrants reported contradiction of information between different information sources, and confusion or indecision with regards to whether to take the vaccine. Recommended solutions included improved outreach to local migrant community organisations and places of worship, alongside co-designing with migrants more inclusive delivery approaches and creative integration of migrant ambassadors into information-sharing campaigns.



I have also supported related studies with the Migrant Research Group, including a systematic review into the clinical outcomes and risk factors for COVID-19 in migrants in high income countries, and an in-depth national study to explore barriers and solutions to COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, and a current collaboration between GP Academic Clinical Fellows, three of whom are based at St George's, (Mohammad Razai, Roaa Al-Bedaery, Lucia Magee) aiming to investigate the facilitators and barriers to COVID-19 uptake in BaME groups across 5 London GP practices.



## Meet Dr Charlotte Mason-Apps, Academic Clinical Fellow in General Practice



Charlotte is currently coming to the end of her ST1 year as an Academic Clinical Fellow in General Practice at St George's Hospital.

As well as medicine Charlotte has completed a Masters in Theatre and a BSc in Medical Law. She has enjoyed working abroad and helped to run multiple research projects internationally including South Africa, the Caribbean and the USA at the prestigious New York University Langone Center

Charlotte started at SGH as an Academic Foundation programme trainee. During her AFP she conducted multiple projects, which led to her being awarded a certificate of merit for quality improvement contribution by The South Thames deanery. She was also awarded best oral presentation at The National Junior Doctors conference for her project on improving the quality of referrals at SGH.

Charlotte has an interest in performance medicine and was invited to present at the International Conference for performing arts medicine at The Hague.

After completing her AFP Charlotte stayed on at SGUL as a Clinical teaching fellow for USMLE. During the first Covid pandemic wave Charlotte was involved in creating and delivering online content & learning resources across multiple year groups at SGUL. During this time Charlotte also completed her PGCert in Healthcare and Biomedical education and was recently awarded FHEA (Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy) status.

Since starting her ACF Charlotte has contributed to the online course on the future learn platform 'Managing Covid-19 in primary care'. She helped to create the module on 'Long Covid'; the course had over 30,000 learners from 180 countries. Charlotte recently helped to contribute to an e-learning resource on RCGP e-learning looking at increasing vaccination uptake in the vulnerable patient groups.

*'I felt so lucky to start my professional career at St George's Hospital on the academic foundation programme. I was given the time and resources to explore areas of both academic and clinical medicine that I enjoyed. It was during this time I found particular enjoyment in teaching and it was through the connections with the University I made during AFP which led to my hearing about the Clinical Teaching Fellow position. Working alongside the other Clinical Lecturers and faculty at SGUL helped guide my career path and choice of general practice. The experiences and opportunities I was given were pivotal in my successful application for the Academic clinical fellow award.'*

**National Academic GP Training Conference 2021**

For early career researchers, clinical fellows, GP trainees, foundation doctors & medical students

**25th June 2021 | 09:00 – 15:30 | Virtual Conference**

Hosted by:  
Pan-London GP  
Academic Clinical Fellows

Registration: [www.academicgp.com](http://www.academicgp.com)

Supported by:  
**NIHR** | School for Primary Care Research

Logos: UCL, King's College London, Queen Mary University of London, Imperial College London, St George's Health Education England, NPS

QR code: SCAN ME