

TRAINING BURSARY PROGRAMME REPORT (2023)

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Training bursary program destination: The Lupus Clinic at the Centre for Rheumatology, University College London (London)

The SLEuro Training Bursary Programme is an exceptional initiative aimed at providing specialized training in the management of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and related conditions. As a beneficiary of this programme, I had the opportunity to undertake an 8-week intensive training at The Lupus Clinic at the Centre for Rheumatology, University College London. My experience under the mentorship of Professor Anisur Rahman was profound and transformative, both professionally and personally.

1. Motivation for Applying to the Training / Main Objectives

My primary motivation for applying to the SLEuro Training Bursary Programme was the pursuit of specialized training in the management of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and related conditions. Although I see a high volume of lupus patients at my centre, working in a resource-limited setting has its limitations. My main objectives were to gain expertise from the diverse perspectives of a world-renowned lupus experts, enhance my clinical skills under the guidance of esteemed professionals, and deepen my understanding of the myriad manifestations of lupus across various patient demographics.

2. Fulfillment of Objectives by the Training / Description of Activities

The transition from a high-volume, resource-limited centre to the Lupus Clinic in London was a remarkable change. The clinic operates with a patient-centric approach, allowing ample time for each consultation and ensuring the delivery of the highest quality of care. The diverse patient demographic in London, encompassing various nationalities, ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds, provided a rich spectrum of case studies and a deeper understanding of the disease's manifestations across different populations.

Professor Rahman Anisur, my mentor, exemplified the ideal blend of extensive knowledge, humility, and unwavering support. His insightful guidance played an instrumental role in my growth into a more skilled and confident lupus clinician. Working with Professor Anisur and attending clinics with respected colleagues like the ever-so-great Prof. David Isenberg, Dr Venkat Reddy, gave me a broader view of treating lupus.

The specialized clinics were also very useful. The adolescent Lupus and Myositis Clinic with Prof. Coziana Ciurtin, the Antiphospholipid Clinic with Prof. Hannah Cohen and the Myositis Clinic with Prof. Pedro Machado improved my understanding of these complicated conditions. The wide range and depth of expertise at the Centre for Rheumatology helped refine my clinical skills.

The program was not just academic but also a cultural exchange. I made lasting friendships, especially with Dr. Rym Abida and Dr. Madhura Castelino. They made me feel welcomed and included. I now have connections that go beyond professional and are cherished personal relationships.

In the short time I was there, I could work on projects with Prof. Rahman and Rym, including planning potential collaborative studies.

3. Opportunities / Strengths of the Center for Future Applicants

The Centre for Rheumatology offers a multitude of opportunities for future applicants, including exposure to a diverse patient base, the chance to learn from leading lupus experts, and the ability to attend specialized clinics. The center's strengths lie in its comprehensive, patient-focused care approach, its diverse and in-depth expertise, and the potential for forming international professional networks and collaborations.

4. Practical Advice for Future Applicants to the SLEuro Training Bursary

Future applicants to the SLEuro Training Bursary should:

- Embrace the learning opportunities from the diverse patient cases and specialized clinics.
- Seek active mentorship and engage with the experts at the clinic to maximize learning.
- Be open to the social and cultural exchanges that come with the training.
- Foster professional relationships with peers and mentors as they can extend beyond the program.
- Engage in collaborative projects and research to expand their experience and professional development.
- Enter the program with a mindset geared towards growth both as a clinician and as an individual.