

GAT

George's Academic Training

Newsletter

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16th EDITION
OCTOBER
2023

Good news

In February of this year the St George's Integrated Academic Training Partnership (SGUL and SGHT) led by Professor Nidhi Sofat was invited to apply for NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowships (ACF) and Clinical Lectureships (CL) for 2024 and 2025. This is a two-year award of posts via a competitive bidding process with 50% awarded in 'response mode' and 50% awarded in support of NIHR Priority Research Themes.

We are delighted to report that the St George's IAT Partnership has been awarded 12 NIHR ACF posts and four NIHR CL posts for 2024/25.

Breakdown of posts:

2024 allocation — three ACF response mode, three ACF research themes (prevention and public health, clinical therapeutics & pharmacology & industry, digital). One CL response mode, one CL prevention and public health research theme.

TOTAL: six ACF awards and 2 CL awards for 2024.

2025 allocation — three ACF response mode, three ACF research themes (prevention and public health, clinical therapeutics & pharmacology & industry, digital). one CL response mode, one CL digital research theme.

TOTAL: six ACF awards and two CL awards for 2025.

This allocation of NIHR IAT posts builds on our successful 2022/23 bid. The GAT team looks forward to working with clinical academic supervisors and colleagues across the partnership to welcome our new trainees and help them to thrive at St George's.

Stay up to date with news and events by following us on Twitter [@gat_sgu](https://twitter.com/gat_sgu)

New starters

Lottie Brown



Academic Clinical
Fellow in Infectious
Diseases

Lottie has joined the Institute for Infection and Immunity as an NIHR-funded Clinical Academic Fellow in Infectious Diseases, supervised by Dr Tihana Bicanic and Prof Tom Harrison. She is completing the fellowship alongside internal medical training (IMT), which will then run-through to specialty training in infectious diseases. She completed academic foundation training at St Thomas' Hospital. Lottie is a budding mycologist. Her primary research interests are the diagnosis and management of superficial fungal infections, including fungal keratitis and vulvovaginal candidiasis as well as invasive fungal infections like

pneumocystosis and histoplasmosis. She is also interested in neglected tropical diseases, having completed a Masters in Tropical Disease Biology at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. Lottie's early career achievements include 10 publications, seven national prizes and four international presentations. She is an active member of the Fungal PCR Initiative Pneumocystis and Candida working groups, an international working group of experts in mycology. She has been invited to speak on her latest work, a meta-analysis of PCR diagnosis of pneumocystosis at Trends in Medical Mycology (TIMM), in Athens in the Autumn.

New starters

Simran Parmar

Academic Clinical
Fellow in Renal Medicine



Simran is originally from Vancouver, Canada, and came to the UK in 2015 to start his undergraduate medical training at Keele University in Stoke-On-Trent. After intercalating in 2019 to undertake a Masters in Philosophy (MPhil) in Primary Care Sciences, he graduated in 2021 and went on to work for St George's University Hospital NHS Trust as an academic foundation doctor in renal medicine. During this time, he

worked on departmental projects including a randomised control trial investigating the effectiveness of potassium binders in up-titrating heart failure medications in patients with heart and kidney failure. He was recently appointed as an academic clinical fellow (ACF) at St Georges University Hospital and has begun his training towards becoming an academic nephrology consultant.



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New starters

Rosie Crane

Academic Clinical
Lecturer in Paediatrics



Rosie is joining St George's as an Academic Clinical Lecturer in the Centre for Neonatal and Paediatric Infection. She is an ST6 doctor in Paediatric Immunology and Infectious Diseases. She completed a Wellcome Trust Research Training Fellowship in Kilifi, Kenya, focused on Environmental Enteric Dysfunction (EED: chronic intestinal inflammation that is common amongst children in tropical low-income settings). Rosie completed a Master's in Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and a DPhil in Clinical

Medicine at the University of Oxford.

In a Kilifi birth cohort, Rosie found that exclusive breastfeeding protected infants against EED. She also saw high morbidity and mortality from antimicrobial-resistant (AMR) bacteria in local Kenyan neonatal and paediatric units. Rosie now plans to research the role of breastfeeding and human breast milk constituents in the prevention of enteric colonisation with AMR bacteria amongst infants in both high- and low-income settings.

New starters

Katie Feather



Academic
Clinical Fellow in
Rheumatology

Katie has joined the Institute for Infection and Immunity at SGUL as an Academic Clinical Fellow in Rheumatology, with a sub-interest in Therapeutics and Clinical Pharmacology. In this role, Katie will rotate through several medical specialities as an Internal Medical Trainee with dedicated time allocated to research within this combined field of interest.

Prior to taking up this award, Katie was a Clinical Teaching Fellow in Clinical Pharmacology at SGUL, during which time she undertook a multifaceted educational role alongside

clinical and academic responsibilities. She was also a member of the Prescribing Safety Assessment team and local Formulary Committee.

This award offers Katie the opportunity to pursue her interests in the intersecting fields of genomics and pharmacology, within the rapidly evolving discipline of rheumatology. Katie is looking forward to expanding her knowledge of pharmacogenomics and precision medicine with the hope of improving treatment outcomes for patients with rheumatological conditions.

New starters

Holly Coltart



Academic Clinical
Fellow in General
Practice

I studied Medicine at University of Glasgow with an intercalated degree in Medical Humanities. It was at this time that I was first introduced to Medical Anthropology, which has been a particular interest of mine since. I wrote my thesis using anthropological literature on the question, 'Is health a human right?' I completed foundations training in South Thames and then undertook a clinical fellow year in HIV, where I was involved in research on novel treatments for PML and on PrEP use by women in Europe. After this, with Covid travel restriction finally lifted, I was able to complete an

MA in Medical Anthropology at Harvard University in Boston, for which I received a scholarship from the Bonnyman Trust. My research focused on the social construction of Long Covid, and the way it was shaped as an object of medical attention from early discussions on social media, through mainstream journalism and parliamentary debate until it was eventually formalised in a NICE case definition. Prior to entering GP training, I have spent the last year working as a social anthropology clinical fellow in the Emergency Department at Northwick Park Hospital.

New starters

Victoria Pilkington

Academic Clinical
Fellow in Primary Care



Dr Vicki Pilkington is an ST1 GP Registrar and an Academic Clinical Fellow in Primary Care with a specific interest in Sexual and Reproductive Health. She undertook her undergraduate medical training at Imperial College London, during which she undertook a BSc in Global Health. Her dissertation project on HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) was shortlisted for the Wellcome Trust Project Impact Award.

After graduating from Imperial in 2020, she joined Oxford's Academic Foundation Program where she worked in National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit and the Nuffield Department for Population

Health. Her project highlighted sociodemographic inequalities in perinatal mental healthcare using data from the National Maternity Surveys. After completing her foundation training, she spent a year working as a Clinical and Research Fellow at King's College London. Her focus was on the sexual and reproductive health of the trans and non-binary population. She worked on projects including a cross-sectional study gauging attitudes and awareness towards contraception and an NIH funded multi-centre looking at HPV self-swabbing as part of the cervical screening programme in trans men and non-binary people.

News from Specialised Foundation Programme doctors



We recently had an editorial published in the British Journal of General Practice in which we explored an important issue in primary care – tongue-tie and its management. We gave a background to the condition, exploring its incidence and management options. This project was very useful in developing our clinical knowledge around ankyloglossia – a topic that is not always covered well in undergraduate or postgraduate curricula – and in building our research skills. We felt it an important topic to cover given the quadrupling in recent years of babies undergoing a tongue tie division, despite up to 75% of cases being asymptomatic.

We completed this project easily alongside our FY1 clinical commitments. We were able to develop our skills in being lead authors in a project from conception to completion. We were very grateful to have supervision and guidance from co-authors Professor Oakeshott and Dr Knights throughout the

project. By having them involved we were able to gain feedback and advice about the piece from experts in both research and general practice. Access to this level of supervision and mentorship is just one of the many perks of being a part of the George's Academic Training group.

We feel it is important to mention that the first journal we approached politely declined our article proposal as they had recently published a similar article. This highlights the importance of being resilient and persevering in academia; particularly when writing papers in cutting-edge research or, in the case of tongue tie management, potentially controversial areas.

If interested, we would recommend that all of the new FY1 SFPs should definitely get involved in research during this year, instead of waiting for their research block in FY2!

[Click here to read the editorial.](#)

— Heidi Lawson and Laith Evans

News from Specialised Foundation Programme doctors



David ChunHei Li

I was a vascular Specialised Foundation Programme (SFP) trainee at St George's University Hospital 2021 — 2023, with a keen interest in general surgery. Alongside my primary project on visceral artery aneurysms, I dedicated my time to enhancing undergraduate surgical education for medical students and improving the management of open fractures in the emergency department. I'm delighted to share that both projects were accepted at the Association of Surgeons in Training (ASiT) annual conference. The ASiT conference spans three days and

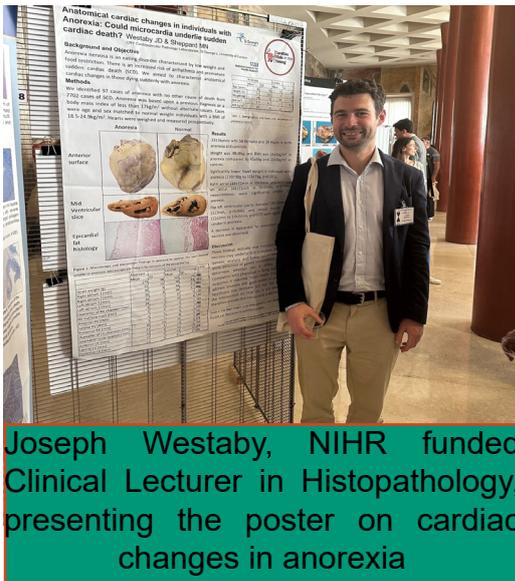
includes a day of high-quality, affordable pre-conference core surgical course. It provides an excellent platform to connect with fellow aspiring surgeons and surgeons, keeping abreast of developments in surgery. I highly recommend it.

My experience gained from the SFP, and the support of the vascular team, facilitated my successful application for an Academic Clinical Fellowship in General Surgery at East Midlands. This continues paving the way for my future as an academic surgeon.

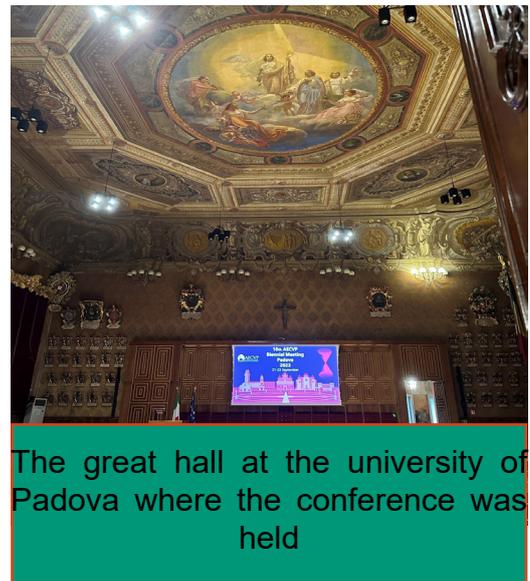
— David ChunHei Li

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News from trainees



Joseph Westaby, NIHR funded Clinical Lecturer in Histopathology, presenting the poster on cardiac changes in anorexia



The great hall at the university of Padova where the conference was held

Joe was appointed as an academic clinical fellow at St George's back in 2016. He has worked under the supervision of Professor Mary N Sheppard undertaking research into sudden cardiac death, completing a PhD on anatomical, histological and immunohistochemical findings in the normal heart and cardiomyopathies which was funded by Cardiac Risk in the Young. He progressed to become an NIHR clinical lecturer in 2022.

He has recently made use of the NIHR travel bursary to attend the Association for European Cardiovascular Pathology meeting held in Padova, Italy. Joe presented a poster on 'anatomical cardiac changes in individuals with anorexia: Could microcardia underlie sudden cardiac death?'. The poster was well received with a number of people asking questions as well as being asked to be sent the poster.

The conference was held in the historical university of Padova with its elaborate decor.

There were many great talks given in the highly specialised field of cardiovascular pathology which included one on the

discovery of titin truncating variants underlying 'inflammatory cardiomyopathy', another highlighting that there was no increase in sudden cardiac death caused by myocarditis during or after the pandemic and one on the use of fibronectin and C5b-9 to detect early ischaemia.

During the trip Joe was able to meet with collaborators from Denmark, Finland and Australia including Professor Jytte Banner, Professor Ivana Kholova and Professor Sarah Parsons.

Joe was elected to become a board member for the Association for European Cardiovascular Pathology.

Joe would like to thank both the National Institute of Clinical Research and those who run the Integrated Academic Training scheme at St George's for enabling the visit.

The next Association for European Cardiovascular Pathology meeting will take place in October 2025 and will be held in London organised by Professor Sheppard and Joe. Cardiac Risk in the Young will help with the organisation of the meeting.

News from trainees



Dr Wijeyeratne with Professor Andrew Krahn, Immediate Past President of Heart Rhythm Society, and the other finalists at the Young Investigator Awards in Clinical Electrophysiology

Dr Yanushi Dullewe Wijeyeratne was selected as a finalist in the 2023 Heart Rhythm Society (HRS) Young Investigator Awards in Clinical Electrophysiology. She presented her findings on the role of common genetic variants on phenotype and arrhythmia risk in cardiac sodium channel disease at the HRS annual meeting in New Orleans, US in May 2023. The HRS annual meeting is the largest congregation of arrhythmia professionals from around the world, comprising of nearly 8,000 clinicians, scientists, researchers and innovators in the field of cardiac pacing and electrophysiology from over 90 countries. Earlier this year, Dr Wijeyeratne also presented her findings on the clinical characterisation of the world's largest cohort of patients carrying the most common cardiac sodium channel variant that causes Long QT syndrome and Brugada syndrome, at the



Dr Wijeyeratne presenting her research at the European Heart Rhythm Association

European Heart Rhythm Association (EHRA) annual meeting of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) in Barcelona.

Dr Wijeyeratne is a longstanding GAT trainee. She was initially awarded an NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowship in 2012, after which she completed her PhD at St George's in the field of genetics of sudden cardiac death and the use of induced pluripotent stem cell models to study inherited arrhythmia syndromes. She is a Fellow in Cardiac Electrophysiology and Devices at St George's Hospital, and was appointed an NIHR Clinical Lecturer in Cardiology in 2022. Within a few months of commencing her lectureship, she was awarded the Academy of Medical Sciences Starter Grant for Clinical Lecturers. She is a member of Professor Elijah Behr's research group and leads a worldwide consortium cardiac sodium channel disease.

News from Academic General Practice

The academic GPs in PHRI and IMBAE are organising a regional academic conference on health inequalities and promoting equity in primary care, which will be held in Cambridge in January 2024. Early career researchers are encouraged to apply, with prizes available for best presentations for students, early care researcher, best clinical and educational research abstracts. [Click here to find out more.](#)

PHRI are delighted to have been awarded a GP NIHR ACF fellowship for 2024, with the

appointee being supervised within PHRI. This is in addition to the locally funded academic clinical fellow awarded to the academic GP group from NHSE London.

IMBE welcome Dr Sheila Uppal in a new role as Deputy Head of Primary Care Education. She is moving from Brunel to SGUL and has a strong academic interest in faculty development and educational pedagogy for undergraduates.

News from Academic Neurosurgery

- Teresa Scott, a neurosurgery trainee, has joined on a one-year appointment from Birmingham with an academic interest in PPIE, NetZero, and service development in functional neurosurgery.

- Alaa Al-Mohammad is a research fellow in Digital Technologies for

Functional Neurosurgery who will be working with Dr Michael Hart and Mr Erlick Pereira for a six-month period.

- Our seven Tesla MRI project for people with Parkinson's disease is now open and recruiting. Please contact Dr Michael Hart (drmikehart@icloud.com)

News from Academic Vascular Surgery

esvs Official Journal of the European Society for Vascular Surgery

European Journal of Vascular & Endovascular Surgery

NIHR ACF Aurelien Gueroult has published as first author in the *European Journal of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery*: [Click here to read](#) 'Long Term Outcomes and Durability of Fenestrated Endovascular Aneurysm Repair: A Meta-analysis of Time to Event Data'.

esvs Official Journal of the European Society for Vascular Surgery

European Journal of Vascular & Endovascular Surgery

NIHR Clinical Lecturer James Budge has published in the *European Journal of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery*: 'Predicting Prosthetic Mobility at Discharge From Rehabilitation Following Major Amputation in Vascular Surgery'. [The pre-proof is available to read by clicking here.](#)

NIHR

Barney Farquharson, who is currently studying for an MD with the Vascular Research Group, has just won the NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) of Kent, Surrey, Sussex (KSS) Vascular Surgery Prize at the NIHR KSS CRN Vascular Research Day 2023.

Wellcome Trust 2023/24 funding opportunities

Research can be in any discipline – including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), experimental medicine, humanities and social science, clinical/allied health sciences, and public health – as long as it has the potential to improve human life, health and wellbeing, and aligns with the Wellcome Trust [funding remit](#).

Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers

Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers (two calls, closing March and September 2024). The next call is due to close during March 2024 (TBC by the Academy of Medical Sciences). We have not had details about the July 2024 calls as yet.

Level of funding: Up to £30,000

Duration of funding: one-two years

Eligibility: be a research active clinical lecturer, have a PhD or MD., hold a medical, dental degree and be in higher speciality training.

Career Stage: Leading a research programme, Postdoctoral research.

Applicant Questions: Contact clinicallecturers@acmedsci.ac.uk (AMS)

PhD Fellowships for Health Professionals

PhD Fellowships for Health Professionals (Through the year, contact PhD Programme in Global Health Research in Africa

<https://www.create-phd.org/>).

Level of funding: Salary and research expenses

Duration of funding: three years (full-time equivalent)

Eligibility: Allied Health Professionals (Contact programme for additional details) for those who have demonstrated potential for a career as an academic health professional.

Career Stage: Leading a research programme, Postdoctoral research.

Applicant Question: Katherine Barrett create-phd@lshtm.ac.uk

Wellcome Grant Writing Advice:

[How to write a grant application | Grant funding | Wellcome](#)

If you are interested in applying please contact the Research Office in the first instance: research@sgul.ac.uk

Research Day 2023

Registration, poster abstract submission and award nominations are now open!

This year St George's Research Day will take place on Wednesday 6 December, 10.30am — 7pm in the Curve Lecture Theatre. Research Day is an annual celebration of the world-class research and enterprise that has happened at St George's over the year.

We are delighted that Sir Paul Nurse will deliver the Thomas Young Lecture this year. Sir Paul Nurse was awarded the 2001 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine and is the Director of the Francis Crick Institute.



The event also includes a number of short oral presentations from St George's staff, poster presentations and research awards.

Lunch and a drinks reception will be provided.

[Please click here to register to attend and submit a poster abstract for consideration.](#)

The categories are:

- Chrissie Fenske Research poster prize (£1,000 prize)
- Undergraduate (£100 prize)
- Postgraduate, including MRes and MD (£100 prize)

The deadline for poster abstract submission is Sunday 27 November.

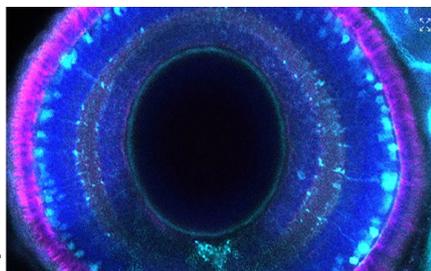


Image of the year 'Into a black hole' by Florencia Cavodeassi



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