

## **Christine and T. Jack Martin Research Travel Grant**

### **2020 Final Report**

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I would like to express my gratitude to the ANZBMS for awarding me the Christine and T. Jack Martin Research Travel Grant to extend my research fellowship at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard University, United States, under the mentorship of Dr. Ben Leder. The opportunity to undertake a research fellowship overseas at one of the leading centres of musculoskeletal research has been a tremendous journey, both professionally and personally.

On a professional level, my time at MGH gave me the opportunity to expand my research experience, learn new skills, and form international networks. Under the leadership of Dr. Ben Leder, I was responsible for conducting the first clinical trial to comprehensively assess the effects of combined anabolic and antiresorptive therapy, by direct histomorphometry in postmenopausal women with osteoporosis. I was responsible for the recruitment of study participants, running of study visits, and assisting with bone biopsy procedures. Additionally, under the supervision of Dr. Marie DeMay, I assisted with the processing and analysis of the bone biopsy specimens. The further experience gained in conducting clinical trials at MGH taught me new methods of conducting my own trials in the future. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, the study was put on hold until further notice. At the time of writing this report, this study has just re-commenced.

I also worked on a separate project evaluating the efficacy of zoledronic acid in maintaining the large gains in bone mineral density after treatment with combined denosumab and teriparatide. I was involved in data collection, analysis, and writing of the manuscript (currently in progress). I submitted an abstract based on this work to the ASBMR 2020 meeting, which will be held in a virtual format this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the projects that I worked on, I attended weekly research meetings (x3 per week), endocrine grand rounds, and journal club meetings. The opportunity to attend these meetings and participate in regular discussions with some of the world's experts in metabolic bone disease, such as Dr. Bouxsein, Dr. DeMay, Dr. Kronenberg, Dr. Mannstadt, Dr. Jueppner, and Dr. Finkelstein, was a unique and wonderful opportunity and I learnt greatly. During this period of time, I was awarded the John Haddad Young Investigator Award and accepted an invitation to join the ASBMR Early Stage Investigator Sub-Committee. I also remained active in my roles in the ANZBMS ECIC, ANZBMS POC, Therapeutics Committee and ECIC Newsletter Editorial Board, which gave me a sense of constant connection with the ANZBMS, something that I really valued during my time overseas.

On a personal level, travelling overseas and conducting research in another country was a truly enlightening experience. I learnt how to adapt to a new environment and work culture, was challenged to broaden my way of thinking, and also had the opportunity to enrich discussions by sharing my research/clinical experiences in Australia. I made wonderful friends (even went to a Red Sox game!), strengthened my international profile, and expanded my prospects of future collaborations. Thank you again to the ANZBMS for giving me this wonderful opportunity, I will always treasure my time spent at the MGH and in Boston.