



THE UNIVERSITY
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Transcript of Rowling Clinical Fellow video

[Hatice Kurudzhu]

Hello. My name's Dr Hatice Kurudzhu and I'm one of the clinical fellows at the Anne Rowling Clinic.

The Rowling Clinical Research Fellow role provides a chance for UK-based early-career doctors in any specialty to step out of clinical training for 12 months to experience clinical research as part of a multidisciplinary research team here at the Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic at the University of Edinburgh.

The Anne Rowling Clinic is a University of Edinburgh and NHS clinical research facility that was founded by author J.K. Rowling in memory of her mother Anne. The Clinic integrates the best health care with the best health research for degenerative brain conditions including multiple sclerosis, motor neuron disease, Parkinson's and dementias.

There is some really cutting-edge research going on here, both observational studies and clinical drug trials. For example, the FutureMS study is a longitudinal Scotland-wide study which is working towards personalised medicine for MS – aiming to predict how severe an individual's MS will be. Then there's the MND-SMART clinical trial which is a UK-wide multi-arm multi-stage trial led from Edinburgh that's testing new drug treatments for motor neuron disease. It's now the biggest ever clinical drugs trial in motor neuron disease in the UK.

We are also a recruiting site for a number of clinical trials led from elsewhere in the UK or internationally, such as the international multiple sclerosis microbiome study.

There are several clinical research fellows here at the Clinic at any given time, and our role is to assess patients for a variety of research studies and trials. We lead the screening and baseline assessments that are needed to enrol people into a study. We carry out the follow up assessments too, so we build up a long-term relationship with the participants.

Although we are involved with several studies at the same time, our time is flexible so there's also the opportunity to lead on a particular area of research, and to do presentations and publish papers. It's a great academic training.

I've always been interested in neurodegenerative conditions and cognitive disorders. I had actually completed my Neurology training in Turkey and this post has been the stepping stone for me to become a consultant here in the UK. Most of my colleagues

here are junior doctors who will embark on careers in a range of disciplines when they complete their clinical fellowship.

For me the best part of this position has been being part of such a professional multi-disciplinary team that spans from research nurses and specialist nurses to statisticians. I've really enjoyed having the opportunity to follow patients through their entire disease journey and build some very special relationships. This is different from what I would have experienced as a clinical trainee where you only tend to see a snapshot, so for me it's much more satisfying during my transition to becoming a consultant.

[Alex Christides]

We're going on a home visit for the MND-SMART trial. So we're going off to visit a patient in their house to screen them and see if they're eligible to take part in the trial....

Patients have been very grateful to have the opportunity and to take part in the trial and to have me go out with all the kit and bring the research clinic to their homes.

It'll help my career in a number of ways. It's opened my eyes to the way that you can try and involve patients in these conditions that are less well researched and have less research options, less treatment options.

Getting to know the patients and participants with MND over this year has been really helpful, allowed me to forge relationships with patients that I wouldn't necessarily get in an acute medicine job and I think I'll carry that with me going forward in my career as well.

[Rachel Blacow]

I do have some research experience in a post prior to this. But what this has given me is, I think research experience in a field that's closer to my interest. But it was nice to come to the Anne Rowling Clinic and to I am going to start my radiology training and I've got an interest towards neuro radiology.

So it's been very helpful for my specialty applications and things to talk about in interviews to say, yes, I've got this experience, but I've also got this experience that's more relevant, and I've been able to have opportunities to go to lots of MDTs [multi-disciplinary team meetings] and to meet the neuroradiologists and get lots more exposure to kind of the radiology specialty than I had done in previous aspects of my career up to now. So I think that has been helpful for my applications.

[Hatice Kurudzhu]

So I would strongly encourage any early-career doctors who are interested in clinical research to look seriously at the Anne Rowling Clinical Fellow position. It's a great chance to experience a really world-class academic environment, to step out of clinical medicine for a year, and to get fully involved in clinical research while still practising as a doctor.