

## Pfizer International Scholarship Report: Rebekah Das

I am a physiotherapist from Australia, currently living and working in New Delhi, India, and was delighted to receive a Pfizer International Scholarship to expand my knowledge on the current evidence-based treatment of pelvic floor dysfunction. My husband and I have started a new physiotherapy clinic offering evidence-based treatment for two speciality areas -- orthopaedics and incontinence/pelvic floor dysfunction. We have found only very few clinics offering physiotherapy for pelvic floor dysfunction and have not found any training for physiotherapists to conduct per vaginal or per anal assessments of the pelvic floor. Treatment offered is therefore not tailored to specific assessments of pelvic floor function.

My aims in setting up a clinic include the following:

- To offer high quality, evidence based clinical physiotherapy services to people with incontinence and pelvic floor dysfunction.
- To provide training to local physiotherapists in the assessment and treatment of pelvic floor dysfunction.



Post-graduate or professional training for physiotherapists in pelvic floor rehabilitation or the treatment of incontinence is not currently available in India. Therefore, to continue my professional development, whilst living in India, I have actively sought opportunities to travel for professional development activities. I was very grateful to receive a Pfizer International Scholarship to travel for a two week period to the United Kingdom to achieve the following objectives:

- To gain experience in assessment and treatment approaches provided under the umbrella term 'biofeedback' for the treatment of faecal incontinence or bowel evacuation disorders (venue: St Mark's Hospital, London).
- To observe the use of percutaneous tibial nerve stimulation and further observe complimentary conservative management strategies in the treatment of faecal urgency and bowel evacuation disorders (venue: Royal London Hospital, London).

I was delighted to meet many staff at each of the above venues who were very generous in sharing their time and expertise in the management of bowel evacuation disorders. I was also grateful that every patient who was asked was willing to allow me to observe their assessments and treatments. It was interesting to gain a perspective on how health care systems can differ across countries. I also gained insight into how terminology regarding conservative management of bowel dysfunction can vary even between hospitals within the same health care system. I learned new strategies for assisting patients with troublesome

bowel symptoms and consolidated my thoughts and reasoning processes regarding this area of clinical practice. I also had the privilege of discussing research directions being prioritised. I am currently exploring ways in which I might be able to access some of the therapeutic equipment I observed being used in the United Kingdom, here in Delhi, where access to even basic supplies such as incontinence pads is very limited. The Pfizer Scholarship provided me with an invaluable opportunity to expand my knowledge in this important area of clinical practice and I look forward to applying what I have learned, to benefit patients who seek treatment for pelvic floor dysfunction