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Dr Falk/Guts UK Awards 2024

MEDICAL STUDENT PRIZE WINNER: **RONIT HARDASANI**

PROJECT:

What matters to patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease when on advanced therapies? A Qualitative Study.



Mr Hardasani undertook this project whilst intercalating for an iMSc in Medical Research, focusing on Inflammatory Bowel Disease at the Department of Population Health Sciences at the University of Leicester. Mr Hardasani is currently studying in his 4th year of his medical degree at the University of Leicester.

Mr Hardasani explains:

'I chose this project in part due to a keen interest in gastroenterology, a complex and fascinating speciality that affects such a large part of the population at some point in their lives. I also wanted to take the opportunity to learn more about how qualitative research can be applied to clinical practice and contribute to maintaining patient-centred care; a principle which is becoming increasingly significant in healthcare.

'IBD is an increasingly common illness that can impair people's quality of life through reduced autonomy and severe symptoms such as pain, faecal urgency, and rectal bleeding.

Research has shown that improved long-term health outcomes and patient satisfaction can be achieved by encouraging healthcare providers to involve patients in the decision-making process.

'However, within the spectrum of available medical therapies, there exists a significant heterogeneity in the key factors of treatment delivery such as where patients receive care, routes of drug administration, side effect profiles and requirements for monitoring. Recognising these differences, the optimisation of long-term patient outcomes necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the factors that hold significance to individuals with IBD when initiating and sustaining their treatment regimens to enable patients to occupy a central role in shaping their healthcare journey. Therefore developing a precise understanding of these determinants becomes pivotal in enhancing shared decision-making between healthcare professionals and patients.

'Given the scarcity of literature exploring patients' perspectives in depth, this study aims to develop a conceptual framework that would outline the core domains of priorities and values which influence decision-making regarding advanced therapies for patients with moderate to severe IBD.

'For this project, we carried out one-to-one semi-structured interviews to accurately capture patient perspectives. The discussions were structured around a topic guide which has been constructed using available literature and patient representative feedback. The topic

guide was modified based on emergent findings from the data analysis conducted alongside the interview stage.

'Interviews were audio-recorded, and transcripts analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. This approach offers a systematic and rigorous approach to identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns and themes within qualitative data, allowing the exploration of multifaceted factors influencing patient views and priorities around treatment decisions and their experiences of shared decision-making.

'The ultimate goal of the study is to obtain answers to the questions: "What factors are important to patients when starting advanced therapies for IBD?" and "What constitutes high-quality care for patients with IBD on maintenance biologic therapy?". We hope that these answers can then be used by healthcare professionals to facilitate patient-centred care by focusing on the factors most important to patients when discussing treatment initiation and optimisation.'

Mr Hardasani's Project Supervisor Dr Mohammad Farhad Peerally Gastroenterology Consultant at the University Hospitals of Northamptonshire Group Trust comments:

'As Ronit's supervisor during his intercalated MSc project, I have been thoroughly impressed by his meticulous approach, dedication, and the substantial progress he has made in developing the skills to conduct this research project into patient perspectives on advanced therapies for inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Throughout this project, Ronit has demonstrated exemplary research skills, swiftly mastering qualitative research methods to capture patient narratives effectively. What sets Ronit apart is not just the significance of their research topic but their exceptional preparation and execution of this ambitious qualitative study. He has shown a profound commitment to understanding the nuanced experiences and needs of patients, which is essential for improving treatment outcomes and patient satisfaction.'

Mr Hardasani states:

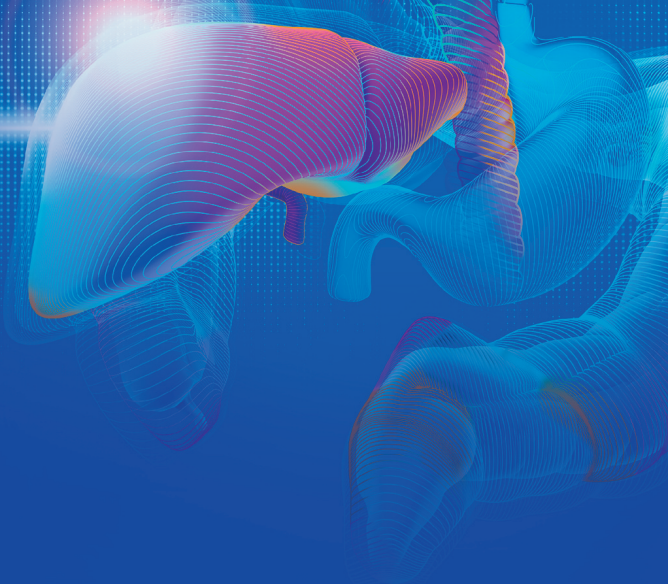
'It's such a great honour to be a recipient of the award, I couldn't have done it without my supervisors! Being recognised really elevates your confidence when you're doing something new; it pushes you to reflect on what you've achieved so far and how you can improve further. While working towards this award and succeeding definitely strengthened my academic writing, it's also something that's great for speciality applications and it encourages you to consider a career involving more research than if you hadn't been successful.'



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