



Project: Effect of Smoking on the Natural History of Crohn's Disease: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis.

'It is a privilege to receive this award. Not only will it help to fund me during further research it also provides me with great encouragement to continue with the research side of my career.'

Natalie To is currently an Academic Foundation Trainee (F1) in Gastroenterology at St James University Hospital, Leeds.

'Gastroenterology is an extremely interesting specialty with a wide range of pathologies ranging from the very young to the very old and includes a mixture of medicine and interventional procedures,' says Ms To. 'It is a challenging but very rewarding area of medicine in which to work and one where you feel you can actually improve people's quality of life quite significantly.'

'Crohn's disease is a chronic condition affecting the intestines. It is life-long and runs a relapsing and remitting course. During episodes of relapse (flare ups), patients with Crohn's disease often require medical treatments including steroids or powerful drugs that suppress the immune system, or even require operations to remove parts of the intestine.'

'We already know that smoking tobacco is one known risk factor for actually getting the condition. However, individual studies that have looked into the effect of smoking on the future course of Crohn's disease have shown different results.'

The aim of our study is to provide a more precise estimate of the effect of smoking on Crohn's disease by combining results from all the previous studies that have looked in to this, using meta-analysis. A positive result may help to design future NHS policies aimed at targeting smoking cessation policies towards at risk patients. Evidence suggests that such interventions could be cost-effective for the health service to implement and in addition, patients with Crohn's disease who smoke may be more willing to consider stopping if there is precise evidence to show that that smoking can have an impact on their disease course and outcome.'

Dr Alex Ford Natalies supervisor says:

'This study will hopefully provide useful data to inform smoking cessation advice in patients with Crohns disease who smoke.'

