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Dr Falk/Guts UK Awards 2020

DOCTOR F1/F2 RESEARCH AWARD WINNER: **Dr Maja Kopczynska**



PROJECT: Psychosexual function and quality of life in Chronic Intestinal Failure (CIF)

Dr Kopczynska is undertaking this research at the Intestinal Failure Unit Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust. She is currently an Academic FY2 Doctor, focussing on gastroenterology, at the Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust.

Dr Kopczynska explains:

'Many GI conditions are chronic and/or lifelong and whilst working with the IF Unit, which has a psychology team attached to it, I learnt about the importance of holistic care and quality of life for such patients. I also spoke to patients who told me what was important to them, including sexual function.'

'Patients suffering from chronic IF (CIF) require long-term home parenteral nutrition (HPN), as it is impossible for them to absorb sufficient amounts of food. Though life-sustaining, HPN is a therapy that changes everyday life of a patient radically. So far, research has mainly focused on the physical consequences of HPN but recently more studies are also exploring quality of life of CIF patients.'

'In this study we aim to investigate the prevalence of psychosexual dysfunction in patients diagnosed with CIF and to provide an accurate picture of the overall psychosexual well-being of patients diagnosed with CIF.'

'The study will be an observational cohort study of patients diagnosed with CIF attending HPN clinics at the national IF referral centre. The study will utilise a mixed-methods design using quantitative standardised questionnaires to address our primary aim and an inductive qualitative approach to address our secondary aim.'

Based on the outcome of this study the standard of practice in the HPN clinics could be changed and our data could enable clinicians to capture patients' distress related to their health-related quality of life.'

Dr Kopczynska's Project Supervisor, Consultant Gastroenterologist Professor Simon Lal comments:

'I would like to congratulate Dr Kopczynska for her initiative in highlighting this neglected area of research for people living with Chronic Intestinal Failure and for recognising that psychosexual function is a key issue to these people and their partners. Dr Kopczynska has devised a mixed-methods protocol to explore the prevalence of sexual problems in these patients, including the involvement of the psychology team. Despite her junior stage of career, Dr Kopczynska has already demonstrated a clear aptitude in research, as reflected by her peer-reviewed publications. I am confident that she will achieve the goals of her study.'

Dr Kopczynska states:

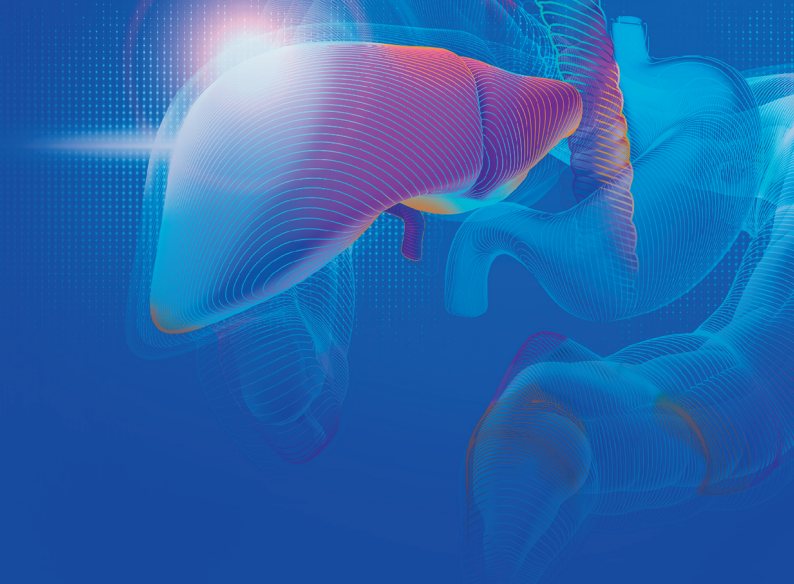
'I am honoured to receive the Dr Falk Guts UK F1/F2 Research Award and I would like to thank my supervisor at the Intestinal Failure Unit for the support and encouragement.'

'My ambition is to become an academic gastroenterologist, combining translational research with excellent clinical care. I constantly seek to explore gaps in optimal diagnostics and management and find novel solutions or methods to encourage implementation of current best practice.'

'This award provides me with opportunity to fulfil my passions and develop expertise in my area of interest to better understand patient needs and find ways to deliver more personalised care.'



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