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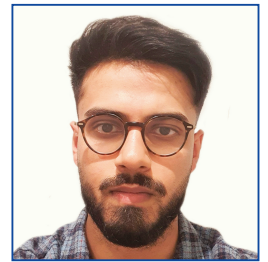


Dr Falk/Guts UK Awards 2021

F1/F2 RESEARCH AWARDS WINNER: Dr Umair Akbani

PROJECT:

Evaluating the performance of a novel classification system for irritable bowel syndrome in predicting outcomes to gut-focused hypnotherapy.



Dr Akbani undertook this research at the Neurogastroenterology Unit, Department of Gastroenterology, Wythenshawe Hospital, Manchester Foundation Trust. He is currently completing an Academic Foundation Programme at the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust.

Dr Akbani explains:

'My ambition is to practise as an Academic Gastroenterologist. One of the reasons I became involved in this project was it gave me the opportunity to work within prestigious research centres, and under the mentorship of world class research clinicians.'

'Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common condition considered to be a disorder of the signalling between the gut and the brain, which negatively affects the quality of life of its sufferers. The condition is incurable, and for some people the symptoms can be so severe that they do not respond to any medications or dietary changes.'

'Despite initial scepticism, over the past 35 years mounting evidence and clinical experience from tertiary centres - including our own centre in Manchester - have shown that gut-focused hypnotherapy can improve symptoms, even in severe, refractory cases. It is thought that hypnotherapy can modulate some of the key pathophysiological processes including visceral pain sensitivity and motility and, additionally, can improve coping, resilience, self-regulation skills. Unfortunately, access to hypnotherapy is very limited and expensive and therefore there is a need to find out whether there is type of IBS patient who might benefit most from this treatment and conversely, those who would not.'

'Recent work carried out in Leeds has shown that IBS patient's symptom profiles can be sub-grouped into 7 distinct IBS sub-types with varying degrees of gastrointestinal, extraintestinal symptoms and psychological comorbidity. That data also suggested that patients with predominantly psychological symptoms profiles may potentially be more likely to benefit from psychological interventions such as gut-focused hypnotherapy than patients than other IBS subtypes.'

'The aim of this study will be to prospectively sub-type patients already undergoing gut-focused hypnotherapy for IBS at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, using this novel IBS classification system.'

'This will be done by classifying the patient symptoms from their patient history and then using patient questionnaires to determine their response to the hypnotherapy treatment. We will then compare the subtypes against those who respond well or poorly to the hypnotherapy treatment. We hypothesise that response rates to gut-focused hypnotherapy will be higher in those patients who belong to symptom clusters with higher levels of psychological comorbidity.'

'IBS is a complex and often misunderstood illness and, while this project does not aim to create a panacea for those affected, it is exciting to work on something which has the potential for real world application.'

'Indeed, we hope that our study will provide evidence to help select the right patients for hypnotherapy in the future, to improve treatment outcomes and improve access to this effective form of treatment, enabling it to be offered at an earlier stage to the patients that are most likely to benefit.'

'On a personal level, my aspiration is that this project will add to my own development as an academic and result in greater competence as a clinician.'

Dr Akbani's Project Supervisor, Dr Dipesh Vasant, consultant gastroenterologist & Honorary Senior Lecturer, comments:

'Umair is a bright, committed & hardworking Academic Foundation doctor who has expressed an interest in a career in academic gastroenterology, and I am delighted to be his supervisor and mentor. It is anticipated that the work in this grant proposal will lead to at least one high impact publication and further research opportunities.'

'Under my supervision this year, in preparation for his academic block he has already drafted a review article for publication related to the work included in this research proposal, whilst in full time clinical training. Overall, I have been impressed with his work ethic, enthusiasm and the commitment and dedication he has shown already.'

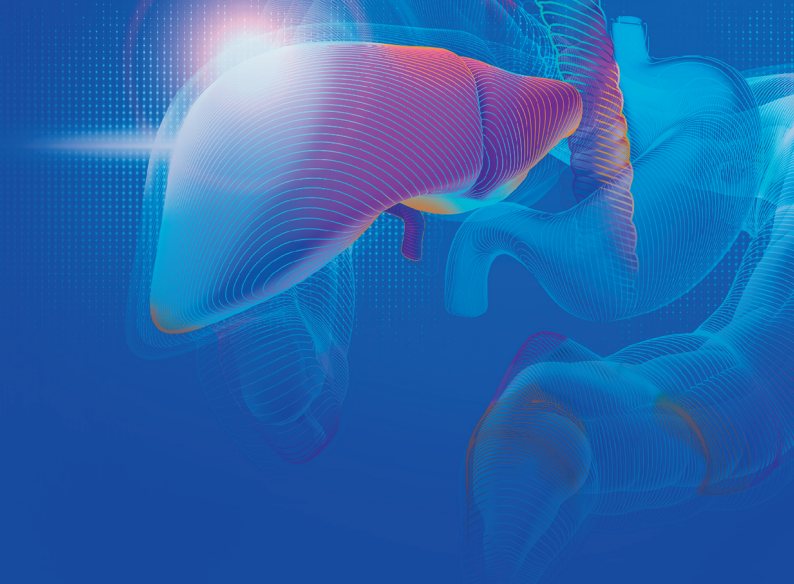
Dr Akbani states:

'I hold this award with great distinction and would like to use this opportunity to give great thanks to Dr Vasant and everyone in the research team who have allowed me to participate. This award is fiercely contested among fantastic, intelligent and hardworking men and women, and I feel humbled to be selected as a recipient.'

'Guts UK have been doing incredible work for the last 50 years and have funded countless projects with the central aim of helping patients who suffer from all GI related problems. I hope I can carry on the tradition of producing outstanding research with real world benefit just as my predecessors who have been awarded this prize have.'



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