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Dr Falk/Guts UK Awards 2023

MEDICAL STUDENT PRIZE WINNER:

Mr Advait Upadhyaya

PROJECT:

The Development of unified Hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome/ Hypermobile Spectrum service for patients with concomitant Functional Dyspepsia and Irritable Bowel Syndrome



Mr Upadhyaya undertook the preliminary research for this project whilst intercalating for a MSc in Gastroenterology at the Wingate Institute of Neurogastroenterology, Barts and the London School of Medicine. Mr Upadhyaya is currently in his 4th year wherein he completed the project as part of his 4th year Dissertation. He is currently the Vice President of the Gastroenterology Society at his university and has helped set up the first undergraduate gastroenterology conferences.

'Following the data analysis, we suggest a trial of an MDT service in a tertiary hospital, comprising of Neurogastroenterologists, Rheumatologists and allied healthcare professionals. This pilot study will involve a small group of patients with a baseline review of symptoms and medications with a mutually agreed management plan put in place, followed up over a 6-month period and a final review. An audit team would then review this model and compare it to the healthcare costs seen in this study. Following these results, we could trial this approach on a larger scale.'

'Our long term aim is the creation of a novel and unified service which would be both cost-effective and tailored for these patients.'

Mr Upadhyaya explains:

'98% of Hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome/Hypermobile Spectrum Disorder (hEDS/HSD) patients have a Disorder of Gut-Brain Interaction (DGBI). Many of these patients suffer from multimorbidity and have increased health-seeking behaviours and subsequent polypharmacy which all lead to higher healthcare costs. Also, as with other chronic conditions, these patients also have generally low quality of life scores and often report poor symptom control with the current services available to them.'

'Yet despite this, there is no specific service for these patients in the UK. I wanted to examine the current situation for these patients, with the aim of suggesting methods of providing a multi-disciplinary, unified services which would not only improve patient outcomes but also reduce healthcare costs; a point particularly important given the current fiscal climate.'

'660 hEDS/HSD patients with concomitant Functional Dyspepsia (FD) and/or Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) were included in the study. We found that patients with FD were significantly more likely to have an outpatient consultation, inpatient admission and/or use artificial nutrition than patients without FD and as a result were more likely to have greater healthcare costs. Additionally, polypharmacy within and across drug classes was highly prevalent with 73.2% were on at least 5 medications.'

'The ten largest healthcare costs (£20,000 - £98,000 over 6 months) were in patients with FD±IBS. The majority of total healthcare costs (31%) were attributable to outpatient consultations, with rheumatology and (neuro)gastroenterology services being used the most, and allied services such as physiotherapy and psychology being used the least (despite the significant benefits of using these services).'

Mr Upadhyaya's Project Supervisor Dr Asma Fikree Gastroenterology Consultant at the Royal London Hospital in London, comments:

'Advait Upadhyaya has been a phenomenally hard-working, enthusiastic and extremely bright medical student and it has been an absolute joy to work with him for the last few years. During his MSc he did an epidemiological study investigating health care utilisation in over 600 patients with Hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, a study which is the largest of its kind and will have very important implications for how NHS services are managed for this group of patients.'

'He has since gone on to do a further study looking at predictors of high healthcare costs in this patient group. He has achieved all this alongside his excellent clinical training and numerous other positions of leadership. He truly is a fantastic all-rounder and the type of student that you come across once in a blue moon - and I am delighted that he has won this award of which he is entirely worthy.'

Mr Upadhyaya states:

I am very grateful to win this award. My tutor, Dr Asma Fikree, and I have worked very hard on this project, and it is really encouraging to see that this work is being recognised. I want to thank everyone who has supported me during this and everyone involved in organising and running this project. 'I have my heart set on a career in gastroenterology, especially neurogastroenterology, due to the wide scope for research and future treatment options this brings. Winning this award would no doubt do a lot for my future career as it shows my dedication for this speciality and proof that I want to help these patients. competition.'



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