



PROJECT: Anorectal Dysfunction in Ulcerative Colitis: A Cross Sectional Survey

'I would like to express my thanks to Core and Dr Falk for supporting this award. Winning this prestigious award will be invaluable for my career development as a research active Gastroenterologist.'

Dr Dipesh Vasant is currently working in Gastroenterology at the Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and is an Honorary Lecturer at The University of Manchester. His twelve-month research project will take place at the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

'Bowel continence is often taken for granted. However, three out of every four people affected by Inflammatory Bowel Disease have regular 'accidents' or are 'caught short'. These distressing symptoms lead to suffering, social embarrassment and reduced quality of life. Unfortunately, even with the best Inflammatory Bowel Disease medicines available, bowel continence does not improve for some people. At the moment, due to a lack of research in this population, we do not know how many people are affected by these devastating symptoms, without having evidence of active bowel inflammation.

'This project, will for the first time, quantify the number of people who have bowel incontinence without evidence of active bowel inflammation. This will help raise awareness and define a group of symptomatic individuals who do not have any prospect of responding to anti-inflammatory medications. It is anticipated that this project will identify an area of currently unmet need for an often neglected group patients.

'As well as my interest in Inflammatory Bowel Disease, I have a strong interest in gut function in health and disease. During my training I have been fortunate to spend one-month at a leading centre in America where new treatments for bowel incontinence were being pioneered.

I have also been involved in one of the largest studies in the UK assessing outcomes from treatments to strengthen pelvic nerve and muscle function to improve bowel continence. This work led to several publications and I found that patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease often had difficult to treat bowel incontinence.'

'This work identified the need for the proposed study, to help us understand the scale of the problem, determine whether further research including development of better treatments is needed and whether clinical practice needs to change.'

Dr Vasant's Supervisor Dr Jimmy K Limdi comments:

'IBD is a complex biological problem that must be understood at many different levels and our patients experience many symptoms that cannot be explained by our current knowledge and existing paradigms. Bowel continence is one such symptom that can affect the very core of what makes us human- dignity and emotion. 'I firmly believe that our best research questions come from our patients and clinical observations from listening to what they are telling us or ...sometimes feel embarrassed to say.

I am absolutely delighted that Dr Vasant, who has an excellent clinical and research track record, particularly in the field of neuro-motility has expressed such an interest in pursuing this research with me. Dr Vasant's clinical career and academic achievements speak for themselves. In addition to these vital and commendable attributes, he possesses what I feel is that intangible, yet most important quality that makes any clinician or researcher's work truly meaningful- believing in the question and seeking answers, for the greater good.'