

MEDICAL STUDENT PRIZE WINNER:  
**MS ELISABETH BAGGUS**



**PROJECT: Non-Responsive and Refractory Coeliac Disease:  
The Largest UK Experience from The NHS England  
Rare Diseases Collaborative Network.**

*'I am absolutely delighted to receive the Dr Falk / Guts UK Medical Student Prize. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time this year immersing myself in the world of medical research, and I am so grateful to my supervisor Professor David Sanders and the fantastic Academic Unit of Gastroenterology in Sheffield for the support and opportunities I have received throughout the year. This experience has enabled me to gain invaluable insight into the field, and encouraged me to pursue further work within the field of academic gastroenterology. This award will enable me to further my knowledge by attending conferences internationally, as well as enhance my career opportunities when applying for posts in the future.'*

*Ms Elisabeth Baggus is currently completing an intercalated BMedSci in the Academic Unit of Gastroenterology at The Royal Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield. She will return to take up her 4th year of medicine at the University of Sheffield in September.*

'Over the past few years I have developed a keen interest in gastroenterology and the importance of research so pursuing an intercalated BMedSci which combined these interests was the perfect opportunity for me.

'Coeliac disease (CD) is a common digestive disorder caused by an adverse reaction to gluten. The mainstay of treatment for CD is a gluten free diet, however in up to 30% of patients symptoms persist - non-responsive coeliac disease (NRCD). There are many causes for NRCD, one of which is refractory coeliac disease (RCD), of which there are two types (RCD I and II), with RCD II being associated with a poor prognosis.

'The aims of my study were to investigate the causes responsible for NRCD, and to assess and compare mortality across different NRCD groups. I found that, of 2,199 patients seen at our centre with CD, 292 (13.3%) had persisting symptoms. The leading causes for persisting symptoms in patients without evidence of RCD were gluten contamination (24%), and functional/irritable bowel type symptoms (20%).

In this cohort, 74 patients (26% of all NRCD) were diagnosed with RCD. Higher age at CD diagnosis, male gender, and hypoalbuminaemia at presentation were predictors for being in the RCD II group, which was associated with worse outcomes, with an estimated five-year survival of 76.2%.

'This is the largest UK study of NRCD and RCD, and these findings have the potential to help guide management of patients with NRCD and RCD in the future by adding to the small but growing pool of evidence available for these patients.'

***Ms Baggus' Supervisor Professor David Sanders comments:***

'Lizzie Baggus has been an outstanding medical student whose work in coeliac disease may directly influence clinical practice. Lizzie has been a vibrant member of the Academic Department of Gastroenterology in Sheffield. What a pleasure it has been to have her in our midst! She brought a smile to work every day and had a voracious appetite for her research as well as contributing to the wider arena of on-going projects. She was a much-liked team member working very closely with the other researchers and fellows.

'There is only one thing left to say – she needs to become a Professor of Gastroenterology!'

