

Experiences of AHPs in predoctoral fellowships.

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Background – Laura

- I am a physiotherapist and have specialised in heart and lung transplantation since 2009
- I started to present and publish service evaluation work and extend our rehabilitation services – pushing the boundaries of who could have active rehabilitation in our cardiothoracic intensive care unit
- I completed my MSc in Cardiorespiratory Physiotherapy in 2015

**Recognising the limited evidence base within the rehab/transplantation field
I had many questions!**

Background – Laura cont.

- Applied for a funded research bridging programme but was unsuccessful
- After asking for feedback, I had 2 very useful meetings – the start of my research network
- 2021 – applied for NIHR ARC-GM internship
- 2022-24 NIHR ARC-GM predoctoral fellowship
- Planning 2025 DCAF application



NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration
Greater Manchester

Background – Vicki

- I joined RMCH in 2012 to set up the Ketogenic diet service for children and young people with drug resistant epilepsy and neurometabolic conditions
- I attended conferences and shared abstracts and posters
- In 2017 I co-founded the Ketogenic Dietitians Research Network
- In 2020 I completed MSc in Advanced Clinical Practice

Research into epilepsy and the ketogenic diet is limited and sparked my interest with so many unanswered questions..

Background – Vicki

- In 2022 NICE recommendations for the use of the ketogenic diet changed
- NICE research recommendation: What is the short and long-term clinical and cost-effectiveness of ketogenic diets in drug resistant epilepsy?
- Made contact with a Health Economist at Manchester University

**Applied to a research
fund to support Health
Economist time
Then I spotted the Pre-
doctoral fellowship**

Application Process - Laura

- Discussions with manager, considered impact on team and ability to backfill my position
- Spent about 5 months preparing the application
- Sought out supervision team: cold calling!
- Project ideas - Support from supervisory team

SWOT analysis
Consider literature
gaps
Training plan
Gantt chart

Application Process - Vicki

- I gained support from my current working group
- Attended the Teams Q&A
- Approached my manager
- Approached ARC-GM supervisor with my idea
- Developed my application with the advice and support of my team

Keep a CV
Discuss your ideas
Take on board advice

Working with a supervision team - Laura

- Establish expectations – frequency of meetings, paperwork etc.
- Learn how to "manage" your supervision team (role in meetings, feedback mechanisms)
- Critical friends
- Different strengths and expertise, know who to approach (pros and cons)
- Honesty and hard work are valued



Working with a supervision team - Vicki

- You have to be brave and reach out to people you don't know to build the right team of support
- Sometimes not everyone agrees
- Navigating different personalities can be hard
- Sometimes you have to make difficult decisions to let supervisors go

Supervisors aren't the only support network

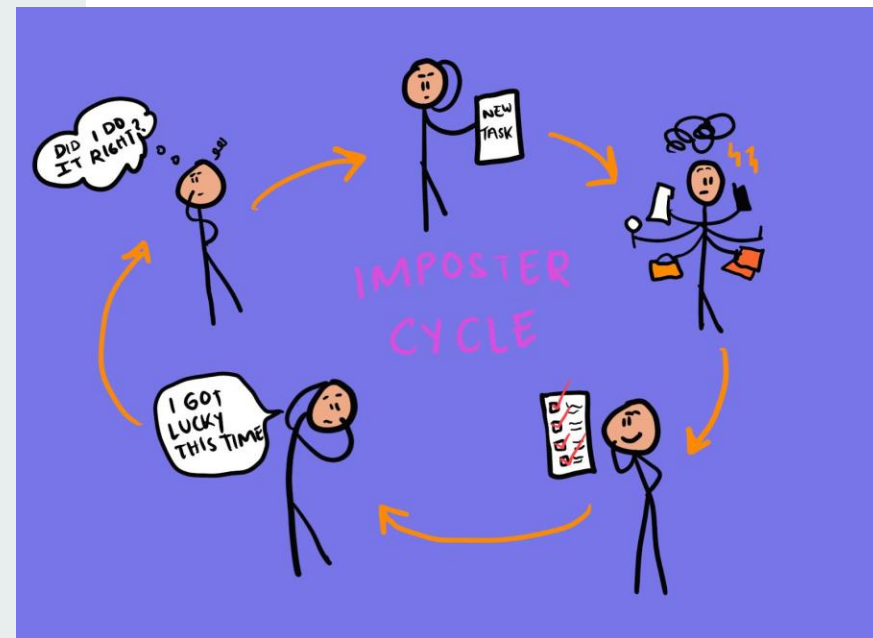
Fellowship Reflections - Laura

- So glad I was brave and applied!
- Utilise your network: different people will serve different roles
- Look back on where you have come from
- Set small, manageable tasks/goals
- Celebrate achievements
- Manage competing time demands
- Recognise that pressure (and confidence) will ebb/flow
- Learned a lot about myself, and how I work best



Fellowship Reflections - Laura

- Fellowship work has impacted my career
- Confidence to take on new roles/challenges
- Still have imposter syndrome



Fellowship Reflections - Vicki

- The funded time for the fellowship was invaluable
- The additional support fund meant I could access training courses
- I have gained a support network
- I have developed a research question

**I applied for a 4ward
PhD fellowship**

Achievements – Vicki

- Completed a Masters Module in Health Economics
- Completed a cost analysis of the ketogenic diet
- Written and published 4 articles (with 4 pending)
- Presented at national and international conferences
- Invited to write articles and a book chapter
- Increased my research knowledge
- Feel better able to support colleagues

Challenges

- **Balancing competing demands**
- **Imposter syndrome**
- **Research world can feel overwhelming**
- **Difficulties setting realistic achievable goals**
- **What is the next step?**

Achievements – Laura

- Masters module in Research Design
- Associate PI scheme completed
- PPIE funding obtained and PPIE group established
- Presented work at national and international conferences
- 1 paper published, 1 accepted (publication imminent), 1 paper in preparation.
- Accepted onto ACPRC Editorial Committee

- **Easy to feel overwhelmed**
- **Factor in breaks**
- **Set realistic expectations**
- **Be flexible**
- **No two fellowships are the same!**

Questions

