

NIHR/BAD taster week

Centre for Cell Biology and Cutaneous Research

Blizard Institute, London

11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> January 2016

## Report

I would like to thank the NIHR/BAD for awarding me with a taster bursary, enabling me to spend a week in the laboratory of Professor Edel O'Toole at the Blizard Institute, Bart's and the London. I was given a warm welcome to the laboratory and spent the week shadowing one of the senior research fellows.

My week at the Blizard Institute was extremely productive and interesting. I was reintroduced to basic research techniques such as cell culture, Western blotting, DNA extraction and PCR. I also gained experience in molecular biology techniques such as immunohistochemistry and immunofluorescence relevant to biomarker expression.

The laboratory of Professor O'Toole is engaged in cutting edge dermatological oncology research with extensive experience in *in vitro* models of invasion as well as *in vivo* models of tumorigenesis. I learnt about manipulation of gene expression in cancer cell lines and how this can be achieved using RNA interference or through stable overexpression of relevant proteins. I also had the opportunity to learn more about cancer cell biology including 3D migration and how to set up invasion assays.

I attended the weekly lab meeting and a research update seminar where I met members of other research groups within cutaneous science and learnt about their ongoing research. I also had the opportunity to discuss my research interest and received good advice and guidance from leading academics at the institute.

As part of my taster week, I also spent half a day at the Francis Crick Institute, Lincoln Inn's Field with a statistician where I learnt more about the application and appraisal of statistics in research.

Overall my taster week experience has been invaluable and has given me an interesting insight into the variation between different research institutes. I have gained further understanding of alternative approaches to contemporary translational research and have potentially built a network for future research collaborations. I have also improved my research skills and have gained knowledge in new techniques and use of laboratory equipment. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Blizard Institute and highly recommend this taster week to anyone who has future career aspirations in academic Dermatology.

Diana Tang

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