

How and Why does the BAD Support Research



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This article is based on a talk I gave at the June 2012 THESIS meeting. It emphasises that research is a major component of the clearly stated object of the BAD which is to promote for the public benefit the knowledge, teaching and practice of Dermatology and it undertakes this by;

- **Stimulating and promoting appropriate medical and scientific research and to publish the results of such research.**
- **To collect, collate and publish information and to hold conferences, meetings and seminars for the purpose of promoting such object.**
- **To publish and disseminate Journals called the British Journal of Dermatology and Clinical and Experimental Dermatology for the purpose of promoting such object.**
- **To relieve distress by promoting improvements in dermatological care.**

The BAD implements these activities through a number of subcommittees on the back of subscriptions raised from its members and from the financial success of the British Journal of Dermatology. The four major subcommittees in this regard are the Education, Research, *DermSchool* and the Conference and Events. In order to simplify the strands running through these committees, it is easier to break them into undergraduate, postgraduate and consultant activities.

Undergraduate

Following a BAD Strategy Day a few years ago there was a strong view that the BAD should encourage involvement of medical students in dermatology so that a career in our specialty could be considered and developed. We have just held the fifth *DermSchool* meeting on the first Monday of the annual meeting and there was a dedicated talk on research by Dr Gayathri K. Perera, a Dermatology SpR at the St. John's Institute of Dermatology, London. Attendees could apply for a bursary to cover cost of travel. In addition to *DermSchool* there are nine £500 awards given annually to support a research project related to dermatology or skin biology in an elective in the UK or in an overseas dermatology department. Furthermore there are two awards of £3000 for medical students to undertake a research project related to dermatology or skin biology as part of an intercalated degree. Please make your medical students aware of these activities.

Postgraduate

Involvement in research is mandated in

the 2010 Dermatology Curriculum for the training of specialty registrars. The Dermatology SAC of the JRCPTB has the responsibility to write and continually update the curriculum but there is a close dialogue between the Education Subcommittee and the SAC with cross-representation. In order to encourage research involvement there is the annual THESIS meeting originally established by Dr Clive Archer and now organized by Dr Michael Ardern-Jones. This two day meeting is an informal forum to encourage interactions between the attendees and research active registrars, scientists, consultants and full-time academics. There were a number of bursaries for trainees to attend the THESIS meeting and topics covered included clinical, epidemiological and laboratory based research, information on NIHR and MRC research training fellowships, the academic training pathway, advice on how to carry out and write up an MD or PhD and how to get your paper published.

Specialist registrars can get a taster of research by applying for one of the six £500 awards (Joint NIHR/BAD Research Taster/Visit Bursaries) to visit a research department and get a flavour of research in that department and/or initiate further research collaborations. There are also ten annual BAD/Dowling Club Travel Fellowships intended for those wishing to visit centres or attend overseas meetings and up to six £500 Joint NIHR/BAD Travel Bursaries for a researcher at a relatively early stage of their career to present work at a key dermatology scientific meeting such as the SID, ESDR or BSID. In addition there are four American Academy of Dermatology Scholarships valued at \$500 and successful applicants have their registration fee waived and they are provided with complementary courses.

Consultants

There are several BAD Study awards for consultants and these include a Geoffrey Dowling Fellowship for £25,000 to assist study/research overseas for 1-2 years, a Roger Harman African Travelling Fellowship £10,000 to assist study/training/research in a centre in Africa, a BAD Consultant Sabbatical Fellowship £20,000 to assist a 2 months full-time study/research and a BAD Study Fellowship £3,750 to assist with study/research for up to 3 months in the UK.

The British Skin Foundation (BSF)

Most BAD members are fully aware of the BSF and know that it is an independent charity which receives funding from the BAD to support its infrastructure and research.

Since its inception it has funded over 260 projects totalling £8,000,000. Amongst many of its successes it has jointly funded with the MRC (50%), BAD (25%), BSF (25%), four MRC/BAD/BSF Clinical Research Training Fellowships. These are offered under standard MRC terms and conditions and at the same funding level as any other MRC clinical research training fellowship. One such fellowship will be advertised this autumn and discussions are in an advanced stage to continue funding for these fellowships in 2013 and perhaps further.

UK Dermatology Clinical Trials Network (UK DCTN)

Those who were lucky enough to have heard Professor Hywel Williams's Guest Lecture at this year's Annual Meeting should have been uplifted by the success of the UK DCTN. This was established in 2003 as an independent membership based organisation run as a society by the Centre for Evidence Based Dermatology in Nottingham. It is affiliated as a special interest group to the BAD and receives practical (and some financial) support from the BAD because of the benefits it brings to encouraging all members to become involved in research.

UK Translational Research Network in Dermatology

This is an exciting new venture, currently being chaired by Prof Nick Reynolds, which is in the process of being set up as a non-profit making company similar to BADBIR. This new network will have major representation from the Research Subcommittee and aims to support and facilitate high-quality, translational/biomarker research in skin biology and skin disease across the UK for the benefit of patient care. It will work in conjunction with the UKDCTN to facilitate collaborative working involving clinicians and basic scientists to share expertise/resources.

It also aims to train, mentor and equip the next generation of basic and clinical scientists and to engender a research active and supportive environment in all our clinical departments around the UK.

I have only given a few examples of the many ways that the BAD encourages research. The energy and dynamism of so many people driving these projects forward from the staff at Willan House to the Subcommittees, Special Interest Groups and the teams involved in producing our BJD and CED needs acknowledging. Well done.

