

## End of Fellowship report 2021-2022 Dr Ramona Mascas

I am not sure how I would have visualised myself a year ago today.

Exactly one year ago, 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2022 was the first CPD day for the HEE Fellowship. I applied for the Supporting International Medical Graduates fellowship in November 2021. This appealed to me as an opportunity to give back some of the support I was fortunate enough to receive as an international medical graduate myself.

I did not know what it will entail, in fact I had to google "fellowship" a few times as I didn't fully understand the role of a fellow. The aspect I underestimated the most was how much I will need to expand on my research and IT skills.

I will detail here my experience in chronological order:

The 1<sup>st</sup> quarter:

It was a blur- I was confused about all the things a fellowship entails, I didn't know where to start, how to choose the most meaningful project. At one of the CPD sessions we had brief introduction to research, and I was completely overwhelmed. I haven't done that since I was an FY2 doctor.

Things felt better when we've decided to work together as a group, I connected with Mary and Ellie, two other Supporting IMG fellows. I love teamwork!

We had lots of meetings, got to know who's who, I met my mentor, Sam, we connected, and we had time to read about what's been done before and what needs to be done still.

We contributed to the induction for IMG GP trainees, attended Culture in Practice sessions and got involved in facilitating the ST1-ST2 teaching sessions. I was fully immersed but still felt I hadn't made much progressed.

The joint CPD session with the previous fellows was very helpful as we could see what they have done before and get inspired. At the same time, it was reassuring to connect with other current fellows during our monthly CPD sessions and realise that I wasn't the only one feeling lost.

By the end of first quarter, we decided on the project – luckily it was the one I was most interested in: "Understanding GP trainers' views on supporting international graduate GP trainees"

Highlight: I attended an RCGP ball for the first time!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter:

Finding the time to work together was difficult!! We all worked different days, so we have ended up meeting in the evenings which was not ideal. We had a WhatsApp group and communicated on it as much as possible. We started learning how to design a demographic survey, using SurveyMonkey, asking the right questions, we had support, but the progress seemed slow.

The highlight has been attending the Trainer's Conference Day in May – an opportunity to introduce our project to ensure we'll get sufficient responses. For this I had to do a small presentation and use a personal story – I used to think I did not like public speaking – but I'm glad I've done it and got out of my comfort zone! I wished I attended a few more Toastmasters sessions beforehand though!

In June I attended for the first time ever a RCGP conference!

By end of June the survey has been sent out to all trainers in Wessex by email.

The 3<sup>d</sup> quarter:

I continued being involved in the teaching sessions, met with Ellie and Mary and in September we have started doing the thematic analysis of the data.

I have also started working on my second project – Barriers and enablers for IMG GPs in becoming trainers– the most helpful thing was connecting with a Scottish GP at the RCGP conference who presented his work on what are barriers and enablers for any GP in becoming a trainer. This was a great starting point.

Other highlights:

I attended Closing the Gap course.

Facilitated at the Autumn IGM Induction Days

Facilitated at the Global Health Day

The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter:

Time has really flown by, we had to focus on processing of the data from the survey in time to submit an abstract to the Levelling the field conference. New sets of skills learned, doing a thematic analysis, use Excel efficiently, make graphs, my 12 yrs old son has been so helpful! It's been extremely difficult to find time for the three of us to meet due to work commitments, so we had to work separately and when bringing together the info sometimes it has created more work. I cannot believe how fast we wrote the abstract! I am so grateful to Katie for her help – without her we wouldn't have managed to submit it in time for the Levelling the field conference.

I have also helped organising the end of the fellowship conference along with another fellow, Nicky. This was good and I could see how much more confident with speaking in front of a group, communicating, liaising. It was a great experience overall.

I didn't manage to do much progress on my second project so when the opportunity to extend the fellowship by 6 months arose I absolutely jumped to it.

It has been an amazing experience and I am so glad I applied a year ago, I'm looking forward to the next 6 months.

## 10 reasons to do a HEE fellowship

1. A great way to get to do research again
2. Dramatically improve your IT skills
3. Teamwork
4. Teaching
5. Meet amazing people you wouldn't have otherwise
6. Expand your portfolio, do something different to your clinical role
7. Discover strengths you didn't know you had
8. Go to conferences
9. Get a publication
10. Have fun!