



LAURA SUTTON

2019 Scholarship Recipient



In 2019 during the second year of my PhD, I was honoured to be awarded the OARSI scholarship to travel from my home institution at the Menzies Institute for Medical Research in Australia to the University of Nottingham in England. There, I worked with Professor Kim Edwards and her team on the Health of Adults Longitudinal Study (HALO). The HALO study is interested in the long-term impact of running on the development and progression of knee osteoarthritis in a non-elite running population.

As part of my research, I was working on developing the Australian arm of the study including the re-launch of the study survey and analysis of the existing dataset. As this was a new collaboration, the scholarship strongly supported the development of our collaborative and professional relationship. Being able to work face-to-face accelerated our research potential as we could work efficiently without time-zones inhibiting our productivity.

Effective survey design and management were crucial to the success of this study and working closely with the team in Nottingham enabled me to acquire these skills quickly and learn from expert researchers in the field. Using these skills, we were able to successfully re-launch the survey with our team in Australia. Having access to the existing HALO dataset and working with the UK HALO team allowed us to start the data cleaning and preliminary analysis as a collaborative effort. Understanding how the data was collected is a crucial part of this process and being able to conduct this portion of the analysis on site with the UK HALO team was invaluable. I have developed extensive skills in cleaning a large dataset and can now conduct the remaining analysis on our new data independently.



The opportunity to work with a research group in another country was invaluable, the contacts, skills and relationships that I developed during my travel have heavily enriched my research career and opened doors for me that I did not think were possible. In addition to the research benefits, the opportunity to discover another country, city and university is irreplaceable.

This international collaboration has had a big impact on my PhD

research, and I would definitely recommend that anyone who has the option to, applies for the OARSI scholarship. Without it, my research with the HALO team would not have developed as quickly and productively as it did.

Our collaboration has enabled us to fast-track our data analysis and the re-launch of the survey was highly successful. I will always be grateful for the opportunities awarded to me with the receipt of the OARSI scholarship.

Laura Sutto March 2020