

Deepa Muthu Krishnan - Macmillan Haematology Dietitian/Pre-Doctoral student



As a Macmillan specialist Dietitian, I am passionate about cancer care and have been supporting the nutritional care of patients living with and beyond cancer since 2010. Haematological cancer is my area of special interest as I have spent significant amount of time supporting the nutritional needs and working on enhancing patient experience in this area.

Dietitians caring for patients undergoing autologous stem cell transplant face significant difficulty challenging historical practices and they need to be equipped with evidence from research. Lack of nutritional pathways or guidance and historical practices of not intervening earlier all lead to poor nutritional status which negatively impacts on the treatment outcomes. Understanding the importance of nutrition through quality research in this group of patients will enhance their treatment experience and optimise outcomes and have always been one of my research interests.

I had always had a burning desire to do research but being in a clinical setting, you always prioritise patient care over research interest. There was a need, and I had the research ideas, but I was not sure how to take it forward. Though I have done a Master of Science, I felt that I needed to brush up my research skills, develop better understanding of health research and network before considering a research project.

I learnt about the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR's) AHP training pathways and I applied to do the pre-doctoral bridging programme. I am quite excited to start this programme in October 2019 which is exactly what I want to do and hope it will equip me to put fourth my nutritional questions in cancer care into a research project at the end of the programme.

In future I aspire to contribute to quality nutritional research in cancer care that would enhance the nutritional care and experience of patients. I feel one step closer to my clinical academic career dream with the NIHR pre-doctoral programme.

