

Dr Cher-Rin Chong is currently an Oxford Nuffield Medical Fellow at the University of Oxford. She is returning to the Basil Hetzel Institute in September 2019 to begin her NHMRC Peter Doherty Biomedical Early Career Fellowship in the Cardiovascular Pathophysiology and Therapeutics Group. Cher-Rin was also awarded an early career fellowship from The Hospital Research Foundation.

1. When did you start studying at the BHI?

I started my PhD in 2012 with the Cardiovascular Pathophysiology & Therapeutics group under the supervision of Professors John Horowitz and Betty Sallustio.

2. What were you doing before you came to the BHI?

I graduated from Pharmacy and had been working as a clinical pharmacist at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital since 2008.

3. What attracted you to work/study at the BHI?

I was most attracted by the support provided by my supervisors Professors John Horowitz and Betty Sallustio to their students, as well as their own outstanding achievements in their respective fields. I knew I was going to be trained by world-class experts! I also like the close proximity between The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the BHI, and the translational aspects of the research conducted in The Institute.

4. What are the best things about working/studying at the BHI?

The support and mentorship I received throughout my PhD at the BHI was second to none! I was allowed to explore and develop my research questions while being supported by the staff and students within the group. We had a very collaborative group, where everyone helped each other. It was truly a great pleasure to work there! I also really like the 'bench-to-beside, and back-again' research approach within the group. We had the opportunity to work from pre-clinical to clinical models and investigate a research question from various perspectives.

5. In a sentence or two, what research question are you working on at the moment?

The main aim of my research is to investigate why patients with diabetes have increased risk of heart disease, and how best to prevent it.

6. What is your biggest career highlight so far?

My biggest academic achievement so far is the winning of the Oxford Nuffield Medical Fellowship. This fellowship is awarded to two out of three countries (Australia, New Zealand and South Africa) every year on rotation, and I was the winner from Australia in 2016. This fellowship provides me the opportunity to conduct further training at the University of Oxford. In 2018 I was also fortunate to be awarded an NHMRC Peter Doherty Early Career Fellowship as well as an early career fellowship from The Hospital Research Foundation. These fellowships will allow me to return to Adelaide in September 2019 and continue my research at the BHI, TQEH.

7. Do you have a favourite memory of your time at the BHI to date?

I enjoy the company of my colleagues, many of whom are now my friends.

8. Would you recommend the BHI as a place to work/study? Why?

Yes, the support provided here for a junior researcher is amazing.