

## IHS Short-stay Scholarship reports 2020

Renato Arruda, Brazil



Institution: Guy's and St Thomas' Headache Centre, London, UK

Mentor: Anna Andreou

May to June 2022

After 2 years since the COVID19 pandemic begun, I could finally enjoy the opportunity of my short-stay scholarship and visit Guy's and St Thomas' Headache Centre for 2 months between May and June 2022.

The Headache Centre has activities related with assistance, research and education.

As in the Brazilian National Health System, the UK National Health System (NHS) is divided in complexity levels of care. The Guy's and St Thomas' Headache Centre is considered a high complex tertiary care centre. This means that usually only refractory headache patients are referred to this centre. Accordingly, I had the opportunity to follow several different and complex cases, many of them (diagnosis with unusual presentations, and different associated features) I had not seen before.

Besides the great deal of clinical appointments, I could follow other activities related to headache treatment such as peripheral nerve blocks, botulinum toxin injections, neuromodulation techniques and even surgery sessions (spinal cord stimulation for refractory chronic pain conditions). I learnt a lot how the headache service is divided and settled, as well as the roles of different professionals involved in the care of a headache patient. I was also able to participate in research activities. The

Guy's and St Thomas' Headache Centre coordinates and collaborates with several clinical studies, being an important centre of headache research. In this sense, I had the opportunity to get in contact with different branches of studies, design and methodology, and operational aspects of research. Furthermore, I was invited to participate in some study's data collection and analysis, and this was deeply rewarding to me.

I am certain this experience enhanced the way I approach and manage headache disorders. During the observership period, I could follow rare, difficult to treat, complex cases that surely contributed to my knowledge. Furthermore, I have come back to my country, Brazil, packed with a bunch of ideas to implement in terms of research, and organisational aspects of a headache centre.

Mostly important, I have made great new friends I am sure we will see each other again soon. I want to thank Dr Andreou and Dr Giorgio Lambru immensely for the hugely kind and warm welcome. Both were very accessible and open to questions and discussions during my time in London. Thanks to the headache nurses Beth Hill, Maddie Murphy and Bunmy for their cordiality. Thanks to my new and already wonderful friend Valeria Caponnetto; it was amazing to have your companionship these months. I want to deeply thank IHS for such an exquisite opportunity and I could not forget to thank Carol Taylor for her empathy and patience despite my concerns along the turbulent pandemic times.



Social event with Dr Andreou and Dr Giorgio Lambru



"Cross the Divide" (2000), sculpture at the St Thomas' Hospital entrance



With my new and already very good friend, Valeria Caponnetto from Italy

---

Garik Yeganyan, Armenia



Institution: Danish Headache Center, Glostrup, Denmark and Hull Royal Infirmary, Hull, UK

Mentors: Rigmor Jensen and Fayyaz Ahmed

August to November 2022

In 2019 I was awarded an IHS short-stay scholarship to visit the Danish Headache Centre. The COVID-19 pandemic postponed my visit for 2 years but I was finally able to travel in 2022.

From 29 August to 21 October I visited Danish Headache Centre (4 weeks) and Hull Royal Infirmary (4 weeks). These visits were incredible. I met many headache specialists and learned a lot of new knowledge from them.

In the Danish Headache Centre I had an opportunity to work with Professor Rigmor Jensen, Dr Henrik Schutz, Dr Nunu Lund, Dr Vlasta Vuković Cvetković, Dr Aydin Gozalov, and others. During clinics we were seeing patients, discussing cases, and made decisions together. The supervision system with senior doctors was an excellent opportunity to discuss the case one more time and fill in the gaps in the cases because of the language barrier. The Danish experience of managing patients with migraine, tension-type headache, post-traumatic headache, idiopathic intracranial hypertension, cluster headaches, etc. was very interesting, starting from taking history, discussing all the types of headaches and symptoms in detail, and finishing with treatment options according to guidelines. Here I understood how important patient education is – it helps both a patient and a doctor to deal with the disease as well as possible.

In the UK I participated in clinics with Professor Fayyaz Ahmed and other doctors from Hull Royal Infirmary and learned essential skills for working with botulinum toxin in chronic migraine patients. The UK model of patient management was faster and more focused on quick diagnosis and treating. This model is very useful in case of emergencies and large flow of patients.

In the UK I also had an opportunity of one visit to Leeds General Infirmary. With Dr Luis Idrovo I had an excellent clinic with very interesting and unusual cases and learned the technique of great and lesser occipital nerve blocks.

During this trip, I met new friends from all over the world, including but not limited to other IHS short-stay scholars. I am sure that this international friendship/partnership is useful for every young specialist. I am trying to start my career as a headache specialist in Armenia and am thinking about the possibilities to integrate my international experience into Armenian healthcare. Both the British and Danish models of patient management will be useful to create an Armenian model which will suit Armenian needs and capabilities.







Faraidoon Haghdoost, Australia



Institution: Danish Headache Center, Glostrup, Denmark

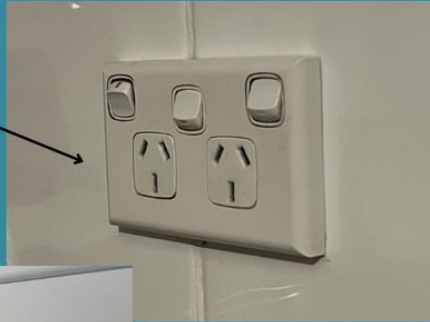
Mentor: Rigmor Jensen

September to October 2022

I am Faraidoon. A medical doctor from Kurdistan of Iran and a PhD student at The George Institute for Global Health, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. I am very passionate about research on headache and migraine. Many of my colleagues and friends know me as Big Head Pain, as I have a Big Head, and my field of study is Head Pain.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, I received the IHS Short-Stay Scholarship to join the famous Danish Headache Center under the supervision of Rigmor Jensen. I was very excited about the opportunity, but unfortunately, I had to wait until the restrictions were over. I finally went to Denmark in September 2022 to stay for about five weeks.

**Me in Australia with  
COVID  
travel restrictions**



**Me finally in  
Denmark  
with Danish  
Headache Center**



Faraidoon Haghdoost



Each day I joined one of the experts in DHC from 9 am to 3 pm (with a 1-hour lunch break). I will share some main points I learned from each expert here.

DHC provided a detailed schedule for me. All staff were super friendly and tried to help me have a lovely stay and learn as much as possible.



**Danish  
Headache  
Center  
(DHC)**



Everything was clear and provided. All I needed was to experience and learn without being worried about anything. After receiving the uniform, I totally felt being part of the team.



I started my first day by joining Messoud Ashina, the past president of IHS. I learned from Messoud how to take a good headache history and ask questions that might sometimes be difficult to explain—for example, using visuals and drawings to explain different headache characteristics and pain features.

I met Scott from The Jefferson Headache Center that day as he was also visiting DHC. Being in DHC helped me improve my connections with researchers and clinicians from other countries.



I learned how Nunu Lund made management plans by listing the next treatments to offer to help other doctors, nurses or herself in future visits.

Doctors and patients should know that managing headache takes time, and maybe we should try different treatments to find the best one.



Rigmor accepted to become my supervisor and helped me with the application for IHS short-stay scholarship. I learned much from her in her clinic and during my stay at DHC. She is a real role model and a great leader.

I

learned from her that patients with chronic pain, headache and migraine can have severe pain but look calm. And you may think it is not as intense as they say. We should be careful and never misjudge.



Aydin Gozalov is the best person if you want to learn about Trigeminal Neuralgia and facial pain. I got familiar with the techniques of Occipital nerve block and Botox injection.

Aydin is very kind and supportive. He helped me to have the best schedule to get the most out of my stay at DHC.

Nazlican was also there on the same scholarship. She is from Turkey, and we had the chance to learn together for about two weeks.



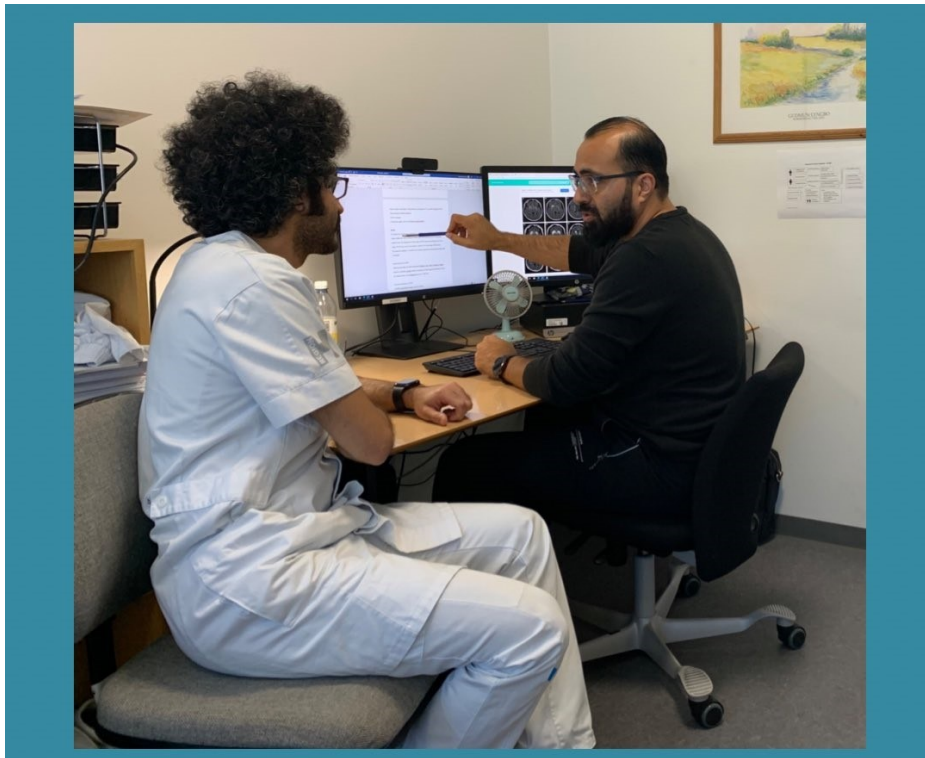
I spend some days with Henrik Schytz in his clinic. Devoting time and energy to managing patients with headache disorders and also conducting research, and adding to the literature was an impressive job done by DHC, especially Henrik.



Faisal Mohammad Amin showed me how important it is to consider all comorbidities and related conditions like stress and anxiety in managing people with headache disorders.



Evidence-based medicine and remaining updated daily are other important things I learned from Faisal and at DHC.



Another fantastic experience happened in the Diagnostic lab in DHC run by Merete Bak Bertelsen and Janne Jensen. Checking papilledema, reactions and reflexes, etc., are performed in this lab.





Garik was also at DHC during my stay. He is a neurologist from Armenia. I wouldn't predict to find two friends from Turkey (Nazlican) and Armenia (Garik) when I was leaving Australia to go to Copenhagen. This is another fantastic thing about what DHC and the IHS scholarships can provide for you.



I had the chance to meet professor Lars Edvinsson at the Glostrup Research Park in Copenhagen.

I learned there, mainly thanks to Philip Reducha, about animal models for migraine, settings for their basic research and current projects. It was super exciting and very impressive.



I learned from Anja Petersen that migraine could be managed by approaches like neck physio, massage, and relaxation techniques, but we may forget to try them.

General practitioners who usually visit many people with headache and migraine could adequately manage the condition if they were well-trained.



In addition to managing complicated cases of headache disorders, I learned how seniors like Prof. Lars Bendtsen support junior doctors and help them manage their patients. This culture and setting are what we need in all countries.



Ina Nørsgaard showed me how to listen to patients (a skill we need to improve) and let them discuss their concerns, especially about side effects and the treatment we offer.

The best treatment without effective communication can become the worst.





I learned from Rune Häckert Christensen about his research and the current projects at the Danish Headache Center.

Lily Kokoti showed me how they perform migraine provocation. Thanks to her and the participants that let me observe, I learned what I have always wanted to know.



Communication, taking history, and follow-ups can be difficult if there are barriers, like not speaking the same language. Seeking translation and ensuring the message is received and nothing is unclear needs patience, experience, and commitment. Anders Hougaard was a great person to learn this from him.



In the following photo, you can see some legends in the field of headache disorders and me (not a legend). They are fantastic role models and super kind human beings. They are a source of knowledge for managing headache disorders and an important part of our beautiful culture among headache researchers.

I had the chance to meet many others from different European universities during the annual meeting of DHC. I was lucky that the event happened precisely when I was there. There were many great presentations with updates on the management of migraine.





It was not all about research and science. My visit to DHC was the beginning of many friendships.



I came back to Australia with more knowledge and less hair, as during my stay in Denmark, I cut my hair to support the woman, life, freedom movement in Iran.

I want to thank DHC and IHS for providing this opportunity and Rigmor for supporting me. I came back to Australia as a different person. With more knowledge and more experience.



Faraidoon Haghdoost



Nooshin Yamani, Iran



Institution: Praxis Gendolla, Essen, Germany

Mentor: Astrid Gendolla

August to September 2024

I had the privilege of spending three weeks at Dr. Astrid Gendolla's clinic in Essen, Germany, as part of an International Headache Society (IHS) short-stay scholarship grant. This unique opportunity allowed me to immerse myself in a specialized headache training program aimed at enhancing my expertise in managing complex headache disorders. The experience provided valuable insights into advanced diagnostic and therapeutic approaches within a multidisciplinary clinical environment. My primary goal for this training was to expand my knowledge and skills in headache management, focusing on the latest evidence-based practices. I sought to learn innovative diagnostic techniques, observe treatment protocols, and gain a deeper understanding of personalized care for headache patients, particularly in a European clinical setting.

During the program, I actively participated in clinical consultations, observing detailed patient evaluations and diagnostic discussions led by Dr. Gendolla and her team. These sessions provided valuable exposure to the holistic management of headache disorders, emphasizing personalized treatment approaches. I also gained insights into the collaboration between neurologists and other specialists, which highlighted the importance of a multidisciplinary approach. Observing treatment protocols, including the application of procedural therapies and the use of monoclonal antibodies for migraine prevention, was particularly insightful. Case discussions focusing on the latest advancements in headache research further enriched my understanding of current diagnostic and treatment strategies.

The scholarship significantly enhanced my practical skills and theoretical knowledge, particularly in tailoring treatment plans to individual patient needs and addressing comorbid conditions such as anxiety and sleep disturbances often associated with headache disorders. Adapting to a new clinical environment and language barrier presented minor challenges initially, but the supportive and inclusive approach of the team allowed me to quickly integrate and make the most of this learning experience. Additionally, exposure to a diverse patient population broadened my perspective on cultural variations in headache presentation and management.

This experience will greatly enhance my future practice by equipping me with advanced skills in diagnosing and managing complex headache disorders. Observing innovative treatments, alongside the multidisciplinary approach at Dr. Gendolla's clinic, has prepared me to offer more personalized and effective care to my patients. The training also broadened my diagnostic perspective, enabling me to better address diverse and challenging cases.

I am sincerely grateful to the International Headache Society for granting me this invaluable opportunity, which has laid a strong foundation for improving my clinical expertise and providing cutting-edge care to patients.



Aliya Yakubova, Kyrgyzstan



Institution: Danish Headache Center, Glostrup, Denmark

Mentor: Messoud Ashina

July to August 2025

In July–August of this year, I completed IHS Short-Stay Scholarship internship at the Danish Headache Center (DHC). I was fortunate that my mentor was Professor Messoud Ashina, as he is one of the world's leading experts in migraine research.

I am deeply grateful to him for his attentive mentorship and for providing me with the opportunity to learn about the current research directions of the DHC. Since the main focus of Prof. Ashina's group is on provocation studies aimed at identifying substances involved in migraine pathogenesis and developing new medications for migraine treatment, I began my internship by familiarizing myself with these projects. These studies are impressive for their well-designed methodology and high practical significance, both in advancing understanding of migraine mechanisms and in improving patient's quality of life. During the internship, I also took part in clinical and research consultations with patients suffering from trigeminal neuralgia, idiopathic intracranial hypertension, cluster headache, and post-traumatic headache. These consultations included testing various classes of medications and techniques to evaluate their effectiveness and potential inclusion in clinical guidelines for the treatment of these types of headaches. In addition, I attended outpatient consultations with neurologists and physiotherapists, and also participated in shifts in the hospital's general neurology department.

I especially remember consultations, which were conducted by leading headache specialists, such as Dr. Aydin Gozalov, Professors Rigmor Jensen and Lars Bendtsen. It was interesting and informative to observe their approaches, discuss therapeutic strategies, and see rare clinical cases, such as a patient with six (!) different types of headache.

The experience of my internship turned out to be remarkably diverse. During this time, I was able to take part in both clinical studies and fundamental experiments, become familiar with equipment in laboratory facilities and the animal house, and learn several new techniques, such as dermascan and transcranial Doppler.

As a neurologist involved in fundamental migraine research, I found it especially valuable to compare the therapeutic and research approaches used at the DHC with those employed at my institution. Although physicians worldwide generally follow international guidelines, true mastery lies in the details, and this is precisely what I tried to capture for myself so that I could apply them in my own work.



As for sightseeing, each day of my internship at the DHC was so full and interesting that I was only able to begin getting acquainted with the historic center of Copenhagen on a weekend two weeks after it started. Nevertheless, I still managed to see the main attractions of the city and its surroundings: I visited Nyhavn, the waterfront with the famous Little Mermaid, Christiansborg, Rosenborg, and Amalienborg castles, saw the Kastellet fortress, and even attended the annual jazz festival. And at the end of my stay, I have visited the famous Kronborg Castle in Elsinore, immortalized by Shakespeare in Hamlet. All of this served as a pleasant backdrop to my time at the DHC.

This internship greatly broadened my professional and personal horizons, inspired me to move forward in my research, and brought me new friends and colleagues.

In conclusion, I would like to once again express my gratitude to Prof. Ashina for his cordiality and willingness to arrange my stay at the DHC, and to the entire team — especially Zixuan, Katerina, and Nadja — for the warm welcome, the touching farewell, and for creating an atmosphere that made me feel the authentic spirit of Danish hygge.

And, of course, I am deeply grateful to the IHS Board, represented by Prof. Rami Burstein, for this internship opportunity, and to Carol Taylor for her kind guidance and support with organizational matters.

