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Young Minds, Fresh Visions: Impact of Students and Trainees in Eye Disease Research

WELCOME TO PROTON!

On behalf of A/Prof Rupesh Agrawal, and all international members and collaborators for the PROTON study group, I would like to warmly welcome you, dear reader, to yet another chapter in ophthalmic health research. At PROTON - Programme for Ocular Inflammation and Infection Translational Research, we are pioneering efforts to confront the challenges posed by ocular inflammatory and infectious diseases in a structured manner grounded on international collaboration.

SELF-INTRODUCTION & THE INITIAL SERENDIPITOUS ENCOUNTER

My name is Nicholas, and I am an incoming fifth and final-year undergraduate medical student at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore. My journey in ophthalmic research began when a few years ago, there had been an opportunity that was made publicly to members of the ophthalmology clinical student interest group (CSIG) within NUS. Back then, fellow PROTON member Dr Bjorn Betzler, was still a medical student and also a member of the executive committee of the ophthalmology CSIG. On behalf of Dr Agrawal, he sought to recruit an individual who would be willing to participate in a research project. Despite my interest in ophthalmology, I had not been formally part of any ophthalmology-related project at that point. As such, after

considering the degree of commitment required, I took the leap of faith and contacted Dr Betzler. That initial encounter led to a Zoom meeting with A/Prof Agrawal, and the rest is history. Such was the beginning of my journey as a member of the research team led by Dr Agrawal.

THE FRUIT OF THE JOURNEY

Meeting A/Prof Rupesh Agrawal, the principal investigator of PROTON, opened a new chapter in my academic and professional life. His guidance has been instrumental in shaping my understanding of the complexities of ocular disease. Since our first encounter, I have had the privilege and opportunity to work on multiple projects. To date, I have presented poster and oral abstracts at international and local conferences such as EUVRE-USICON 2023, and the NHGEI 9th IOC 2024, and will also be presenting an abstract at the upcoming ARVO 2024 conference held in Seattle, WA. The multiple projects have also yielded manuscripts that are currently at different stages of peer review such in journals such as 'Eye', 'Acta Ophthalmologica', and the 'British Journal of Ophthalmology'.

BE A PART OF PROTON'S RESEARCH INCUBATOR

For current medical students, medical doctors, ophthalmology residents in either Singapore or abroad, are you driven by a passion for science and innovation? Are you keen in contributing to the broad and noble goal of adding years of healthy life by adding years of healthy vision? If your answer to both of these questions is in the affirmative, then consider being a part of the PROTON Research Incubator.

The PROTON Research Incubator offers a unique research opportunity for eligible applicants. If accepted as a part of the PROTON Research Incubator arm, you'll engage in research that promises to ultimately redefine the standards of the management of ocular inflammation and infection. Apply today to be part of this exciting initiative and contribute to our understanding and treatment of ocular diseases. For more details, please visit the relevant webpage here: <https://protonstudy.org>.

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