

SRHMRA Submission 150 — Priscilla Auyeung

I am a medical specialist (dual physician and pathologist) who has recently entered research as a PhD student. As a clinician-scientist, I feel that I am in a unique position to bridge the direct care of patients with discoveries in the laboratory. Clinical translational research has proven results in improving the everyday care of patients across the community. However, entering the field of research can be a difficult decision for clinicians despite the potentially exhilarating rewards. We have already undergone many years (15 in my case) of training to become specialists, and starting research as PhD students has a personal financial impact that many clinicians, who have by this stage acquired family responsibilities, cannot afford. I count myself as one of the fortunate clinicians who have received financial help in the form of a NHMRC postgraduate scholarship. This funding is greatly appreciated, and has allowed clinicians like me to start careers in research. For junior researchers the next step in our careers will depend on where research opportunities arise (in Australia or overseas) and, for clinician-scientists, this will be in competition with clinical work opportunities (especially in the private sector). Unfortunately we junior researchers are not in a position to ignore practicalities (such as finances) when making these decisions. Providing good career-building research opportunities in Australia will enable us to make the right decision to contribute locally for the greater good of the community.