

Student Highlight Interview

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How long have you been a Member of ACCP?

I have been affiliated with ACCP since June 2010.

Please describe your studies/research?

My research is focused on both preclinical and clinical studies. I have worked on randomized, controlled clinical trials in infectious diseases. Recent focus has been in the area of antivirals and antimalarial drug screening with an emphasis on tapping natural resources i.e. Indian medicinal plants.

Why did you choose the field of clinical pharmacology?

Being a physician, apart from treating patients the research aspect always attracted me to think differently. During my post-graduate studies in Pharmaceutical Medicine, my interest deepened in the interdisciplinary perspective of Clinical Pharmacology. I am fortunate to have been trained under the guidance of some of India's stalwarts in Clinical Pharmacology like Dr. Nilima Kshirsagar, Dr. Sudeshna Dalvi, etc. I realized the importance of application of this branch of science in infectious diseases, which is a major cause of concern particularly in a country like India. I was fascinated by the beautiful amalgamation of clinical and preclinical approach, with application of principles of statistics, bioinformatics and regulatory aspects.

Who was most influential to you in selecting your career path?

As a post graduate student, Dr. Sudeshna Dalvi, Dr. Dhananjay Sangle and Dr. Manoj Jadhav, my mentors during those days, had a profound influence on me in understanding this science. Their passion was infectious in every way for all the students and this inspired me to pursue doctoral studies in Pharmaceutical Medicine and advance my knowledge in Clinical Pharmacology. During my doctoral studies, Dr. Nilima Kshirsagar, was a constant source of inspiration and driving force to stride against all odds which every student face in research.

What advice would you give to another Student considering membership in ACCP?

One of my first international research exposure was when I attended the ACCP conference to present my research work in Baltimore, Maryland in 2010 and won New Member Award. This achievement inspired and encouraged not only me but many other juniors and opened an avenue for all. As an Assistant Professor working for Pharmaceutical Medicine students, I have witnessed the impact of becoming a member of ACCP very closely, as students were inspired to present their good quality research work on the ACCP platform and were appreciated for the same. Thus I would highly recommend upcoming students not only get associated as a member but get involved with various activities of ACCP. This would

definitely enrich their scientific and research exposure.

What qualities have you worked on during your graduate studies to become a successful scientist?

As a physician, clinical knowledge and handling patients came to me much easily. Yet I have to go an extra mile to develop and learn intricacies involved in *in-vitro* and *in-vivo* research experiments. An interdisciplinary approach warrants for lot of efforts from the student and researcher to assimilate and utilize the skills from various arenas and integrate in the projects. Thus I was inspired by my mentor Dr. Nilima Kshirsagar who was instrumental in inculcating in me qualities apart from science, like organizational, managerial and interpersonal communication skills. Also she encouraged me to present the research work at various conferences at national and international level. While working as an Assistant Professor, mentoring students for various research projects and their execution gave me a better insight to the research methodology. All the experiences assimilated during my graduate studies and early professional career have contributed substantially in shaping me as a scientist.

How has involvement in ACCP helped shape your career and what benefits have you enjoyed as a result of being an ACCP member (Mentoring, Committees, posters at Annual Meetings, etc.?)

ACCP was one of the first international platforms where I presented my post graduate research work and was very fortunate to be awarded with New Member Award in Sept 2010 at Baltimore, Maryland. This was a great opportunity for me to interact with international scientific community. Again, in Sept 2012 ACCP annual meeting at San Diego, I presented a poster on the doctoral study which screened Indian medicinal plants for their potential antiviral activity, which brought me further success in the form of a Student Member Award which I feel is a unique distinction for a budding scientist. All this encouragement from College has a very positive impact not only on me but also on many other colleagues and students back in India, who are inspired to reach out internationally and interact with experts here. I have always felt that the College gives due credit and recognition to the sincere efforts put in by the student while performing a good research work. I am impressed!

How would you recommend that students get involved in the various initiatives of the college?

I am a member (Student Outreach Committee & Scientific Committee) of South Asian Chapter of ACCP in Mumbai, India and also of ACCP, USA. I have been an active member in organization, managing and successfully conducting around five annual conferences of the SAC-ACCP since 2008. The involvement with College activities renders an opportunity to interact with experts in the field and also develop one into a multifaceted personality while performing various activities both scientific and managerial. I would strongly recommend the students from various field of science to join this unique organization and feel the deep and long lasting scientific impact of College in making of a successful researcher.

Please tell us about your experience as a Student at the ACCP annual meeting or

on an ACCP Committee?

The most exciting part of ACCP meetings for me is the interaction with the experts from academia and industry which enables younger scientists and student members to obtain a review of their work. The networking receptions and other interactive sessions create a very cozy atmosphere which made my trip from India to US for the meeting a great experience.

What networking opportunities are available for students attending the ACCP annual meeting?

Coming from India, the warm gesture of the scientists and experts here was a fulfilling experience for me as a student. ACCP meeting has been a great platform for me to initiate and expand the interactions with mentors and follow their work.

What are some of the long term benefits of getting involved in ACCP as a student?

Taking the research to an international level and receiving critical reviews for it, enriches the meeting experience for a researcher. The meeting also polishes the communication skills and networking capabilities of both national and international students. The lecture sessions at the meeting are highly informative. Access to Journal of Clinical Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology in Drug Development, FDA news update and other information provided by the College are important benefits to the students.

What do you do when not working (i.e. other activities like sports, art, music etc.)

I enjoy spending time doing something artistic like painting or sketching, which are my passion since childhood. I also love to practice the Indian classical dance *Bharatnatyam*, which I learned during early years of my life. Yet the best time spent is always with my Husband, Manoj, who adds another favorite activity to my routine by his sense of humor, i.e. laughter.