



## UICC Fellowships: Spotlight on improving quality of life

Cancer patients and survivors can face enormous challenges as a result of their cancer diagnosis and treatment, and the support and care provided by specialist healthcare workers, including nurses and psychologists, are important to both them and their families.

In this article, we introduce you to former UICC fellows whose fellowships have helped them to improve the much needed support they provide to their patients.

For more information on UICC fellowships, please visit our website: <http://www.uicc.org/what-we-do/capacity-building/grants/fellowships>

**Ms Supriya Mondal** is a clinical specialist nurse from Tata Medical Centre, Kolkata, India, who visited Birmingham University in the UK to study the quality of life and survivorship after ovarian cancer surgery. There, she learned from



Macmillan nurse specialists how to offer supportive care throughout the cancer journey and methods of communication and counselling of patients and their family members, including use of verbal and non-verbal techniques. “This experience will facilitate the training of nursing staff and health care professionals about patient communication and the holistic aspect of supportive care and counselling.” Following this success, Ms. Mondal invited members of the Birmingham Gynae-Oncology nursing team to visit India to initiate exchange programs for long term research and collaboration.

**Dr. Elizabeth Akin-Odanye** is a clinical psychologist working at Ibadan University College Hospital in Nigeria. According to Dr. Akin-Odanye, “There is presently little psychological support for patients and their families at any stage in my country, yet the need for such is critical at all stages.” She visited Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, USA in 2017 for a one-month fellowship aimed at improving psycho-social care for cancer patients in Africa. “I gained psychotherapeutic skills in Meaning-Centred Psychotherapy for advanced cancer patients. I also gained experience in developing communication skills training modules for physicians and other healthcare providers in their interactions with cancer patients and skills in using online facilities and telephone as tools in providing support for cancer patients. I learned about developing different support groups for people affected by cancer, and I have been introduced to professionals (researchers and clinicians) with whom collaborations will be developed in the future.”





**Dr. Shirley Siu Yin Ching (PhD)** is a qualified nurse and assistant professor, working at the school of nursing at Hong Kong Polytechnic University in China. She was awarded a Yamagiwa Yoshida (YY) study grant in 2016 to perform a three-month fellowship at the University of Southampton in the UK on self-management interventions for cancer survivors following primary treatment. “My visits to hospitals and patient support organisations in the UK provided me with the opportunity to learn about their care following the patients’ journey from the time of diagnosis to recovery or end of life. Through meetings with nurses in the hospitals and with

managers of the organizations, as well as through participation in patient activities and discussions with the patients, I gained understanding of cancer survivorship care from different perspectives.” Based on her visit, Dr Ching has developed a culturally adjusted research proposal to set up self-management care interventions in Hong Kong. Her proposal, ‘Online intervention to support self-management of cancer-related fatigue among Chinese breast cancer and colorectal cancer survivors’ was developed with continuous comments and advice from both host and home supervisors.”