



Symposium Mammographicum Award 2013-14

B3 Lesions and Risk Stratification of Individual Lesions

I was fortunate to be awarded the Symposium Mammographicum Award in 2013, which has allowed me to undertake an MSc in Health Research Methods. I am a Consultant Breast Radiologist in Newcastle, and have aspirations of an academic career. I have a research background, with a BA in physiological sciences and a PhD. I gained my formal health research methods qualifications from the University of Leeds. I achieved a Certificate in Health Research Methods in 2001 and a Diploma in Health Research Methods in 2011, both with merit. Together, these two qualifications allow progression to the MSc course, which will allow me to further explore research methodology and apply it to my clinical area of interest; breast radiology. This is appealing, as I feel there are many areas within breast radiology that could be explored using systematic reviews and meta-analysis. However, these are complex research methods, and whilst most doctors are familiar with the output of this kind of work, few have the experience to do such a study. The MSc course will enable me to access experienced reviewers who will help guide me through the daunting task of a systematic review of breast literature.

As one of my current research interests is the management of B3 lesions, and risk stratification of individual lesions, my MSc research project is a systematic review of the literature concerning these lesions. B3 lesions are those where the diagnosis is unclear. They represent a mixed group of different lesions. Some of these B3 lesions will be found to be cancerous.

A systematic review and meta-analysis of risk of malignancy for individual lesion subgroups within the B3 lesions will generate information about risk profiles of individual B3 lesion subgroups. This will give us a better evidence base to start stratifying and managing B3 lesions in a more sophisticated way. This will improve the experience and outcomes for our patients.

This award has funded my study on the MSc course at the University of Leeds, and contributed to the cost of attending the Symposium Mammographicum meeting in 2014. I officially began my MSc course in September 2014, but I had already had several useful discussions with my University tutors about the project, and began working on the search strategies needed.

The Health Research Methods courses in Leeds have been instrumental in allowing me to explore research themes through my clinical practice. They have taught me good use of statistics, helped me to formulate appropriate research questions and



given me the skills to collect and manage clinical data well. I would recommend them to all health care workers wishing to pursue a research career. The funding for the MSc course, and my research project which is tied to it, would not have been available to me without the Symposium Mammographicum Award, for which I am extremely grateful.

I hope that this award will achieve two things; a well-conducted and informative systematic review of B3 breast lesions, and the knowledge and experience to use these research methods independently in the future!

Dr Nerys Forester