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Resident Spotlight: Jahanavi Ramakrishna

Winner, 2024 Peter Svider Memorial Resident Scholarship Award

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Residency Times: Congratulations on winning the [Svider Award](#) for 2024! Can you tell us a little about your background – where did you grow up, and where did you complete medical school?

Jahanavi Ramakrishna: I was born in the US at Ascension Providence Rochester Hospital (APRH)! Well, it was called Crittenton then. We moved around a fair amount because my parents, both engineers, took several international assignments. Most of my primary education was in Europe. I was back in the US for secondary school and then took some time off trying to figure out what I wanted to pursue career-wise. I eventually decided that I wanted to be a physician. I attended medical school in Chennai, India, obtaining my MBBS in 2019 from Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute. I then completed a research traineeship and fellowship in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the Mayo Clinic in Florida. In 2021, I moved to Michigan to begin my residency training with WSU and APRH, where it (literally!) all began.

RT: So the extensive travel in your youth explains how you came to speak several languages – how many?

JR: I'd consider English, Telugu, and Tamil to be my primary languages; I can also speak French and German and can get by in Hindi. I learned Mandarin when I was based in Shanghai, China for a year and took a formal course at Fudan University.

RT: You're starting an infectious diseases (ID) fellowship this summer – how did interest in this field arise?

JR: By the time I graduated medical school, I was sure I wanted to specialize in ID. It's such a great field and, most relevant to my passions, also the perfect intersection between public health and medicine. From working with nonprofits to manning public health posts in medical school to leading research projects and managing COVID-19 clinical trials, I have been inspired by each ID physician I've seen in action.

RT: You were accepted by WSUSOM's [GLUE](#) [Global and Urban Health Equity] program for 2021-23. Can you tell us about your capstone project for GLUE?

JR: I worked with Haria Henry, a recent graduate of the Family Medicine-Urban Track at APRH, and several other GLUE peers to pilot a project with WSUSOM's Mobile Health Unit (MHU) that disseminated health surveys to all the neighborhoods that the Unit serves. Several community organizations were involved, and the preliminary data is promising. It was interesting to see how different neighborhoods had different health priorities. The MHU is a great resource, but true value

comes from ensuring the communities we serve have a voice in determining the services provided. Dr. Henry and I presented a poster on our MHU outcomes at last year's Michigan Summit on Quality Improvement and Safety. I graduated from GLUE in 2023 and am proud to say that I'm now certified as a Global Health Practitioner.

RT: You also participated in GME's [DART](#) [Developing Active Resident Teachers] program. Could you describe your curricular innovation?

JR: In 2023, I developed a training component to assist residents in recognizing, addressing, and treating the medical sequelae associated with opioid use disorder and later presented the outcomes at locally last year at Southeast Michigan Center for Medical Education's QI Summit as well as regionally at the 2023 MCW Innovations in Healthcare Education Research conference. I am writing a full manuscript and hope to get this work out into the universe soon!

RT: Your portfolio submitted for the Svider Award was exceptional, but especially impressive were your contributions to the training curricula in the IM program: creating IRB and authorship tutorials to enhance peers' research skills.

JR: Yes, APRH changed their IRB process during my residency training and I realized that a lot of my peers were having difficulty navigating the new platform. I thought it was important to develop resources to help make the process easier for residents and faculty. I've also collaborated with other residents on poster abstracts and research manuscripts – the collegiality and community I've found in my co-residents have been highlights of my residency.

RT: What are your current plans?

JR: As you hinted with your earlier question, I'm starting a joint Infectious Diseases/Epidemic Intelligence Service fellowship with Rush/Cook County and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) next month. It's a four-year pilot program just initiated by both IDSA and CDC. After completing my fellowship, I anticipate working in urban public health departments in the US, and subsequently hope to practice in international sites.

RT: Do you have advice for young physicians who aspire to pursue the type of career you've had so far?

JR: Yes, I'd urge practitioners to cultivate active *listening* practices, not just with patients, but also with peers and mentors. My listening skills are still a work in progress, but they've yielded so much for me thus far. You learn the most by listening. Also – and this has been said before but is worth repeating – perseverance pays off. Don't be deterred from you want to accomplish. Hurdles, barriers, being told "there are no resources for that" happen frequently, but what sets someone apart is the grit they demonstrate despite it all.

RT: What's the one book you believe all physicians should read?

JR: The bestselling memoir *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, published posthumously in 2016. Dr. Kalanithi was completing a neurosurgery residency when he discovered he had stage IV metastatic lung cancer. It's a beautiful book that reminds us that the best way to practice medicine is with humanity, to place the dignity of our patients at the forefront of our practice.