

Career Pathways Feature – Dr Riya Palchaudhuri

Riya commenced at Burnet in 2015 as a PhD student working in our Global Health Diagnostics Development team. Since then, she worked in various roles such as a Research Assistant, Postdoc, Clinical Coordinator, and Business Development Manager until finishing up at Burnet in 2022 to start an exciting new role at Australian National University. Find out more about her exciting career journey at Burnet below!



What attracted you to join Burnet as a PhD student?

After five years of working as a Research Fellow in St John’s Medical Research Institute, India, I first became aware of Burnet Institute through collaborations in the HIV research space. Having grown up in India, I always wanted to contribute to the mission of helping vulnerable communities and people in need; this is something that attracted me to Burnet. What also attracted me to Burnet Institute was the translational research element of the work we do here. Working in the lab you can get lost in the work that you are doing and sometimes wonder if the research you’re doing will ever see the light of day. Finding a PhD project that is working towards the development of a point-of-care test to diagnose sepsis and knowing that the diagnostic test I was working on would actually be used by doctors and clinicians was really motivating for me.

Tell us about your transition from student to employee?

Shortly after my PhD submission, while I was waiting for reviewer comments, I was employed as a Research Assistant. Following the completion of my PhD in 2019, I applied for a position as a Post Doc and Clinical Coordinator within the Quick Development of Solutions (qDOS) Lab. qDOS Lab is an exciting initiative that brings together the principles of an accelerator and incubator and adapts them to a research environment. During this stint, I wore multiple hats as a postdoc, ethics submission manager, and clinical coordinator which allowed me to gain really valuable experience in product development.



What led you to your role as Business Development Manager?

Working in the qDOS lab really opened my eyes to the world of commercialisation and gave me a wholistic understanding of how a product is transferred from the lab into the real world. I realised my skills and interests were more aligned to the component of work that was outside of the lab, so I began to seek relevant opportunities which led to me joining Burnet's Strategic Funding & Partnerships team.

The part of my role I enjoy the most is definitely that eureka moment when we complete the transfer of technology to an external partner and then actually see that product come to life!

What has helped you to expand your professional development at Burnet?

Working in a lab environment can at times feel isolating. Burnet is a great environment to combat that because you're surrounded by not only our own staff but also people from Baker Institute, Monash, and Alfred Health. I have served on the Alfred Research Alliance's Early-Mid Career Researchers Committee for many years now. Having access to this interdisciplinary research community has been great for knowledge sharing, networking, and learning about different career pathways. I have also attended Burnet workshops; the Leadership course that we are offered is really great. It's structured to run once a fortnight which allows the information and teachings to sink in rather than being overloaded with information all at once!

What's next for your career?!

Being able to bring my lab experience to the SF&P team has been extremely rewarding. I want to dig deep into my current role and grow my skills even further in the world of business development and commercialisation which seems to be the right fit for me! I'm excited to facilitate more successful deals and catch those unicorns and get technology licenses to external industries.

Riya left Burnet in 2022 to continue her amazing career in a new role as Commercial Development Manager at Australian National University!

Are you interested in joining Burnet and forging an exciting career with us? View our current opportunities or submit an expression of interest [here!](#)