

Student: Emmanuel Lawal

Degree: iBSc in Pharmacology

I am deeply grateful to the British Pharmacological Society and the family of Sir Colin Dollery for selecting me as one of this year's recipients of the Sir Colin Dollery Pharmacology Training Award. This honour profoundly supports my research and career development in pharmacology.

Having been made aware of this national Training Award by my academic supervisor, I was surprised and privileged to be selected as one of three recipients. Throughout this year (2023/24), I completed an intercalated Pharmacology iBSc degree at Imperial College London. Receiving this award alleviated some of the financial burdens of student life and enabled me to fully engage with my pharmacology degree and explore the world of academia and scientific research. I have thoroughly enjoyed this year which has shown me how scientific curiosity fuels research and highlighted the significant role pharmacology plays in healthcare and society. I have developed vital research and clinical skills that will help shape my future medical career.

The pharmacology degree covered a broad range of topics from the global battle against antibiotic resistance or the introduction of personalised medicine to the ethical implications of pharmaceutical trials. One of my earlier projects assessed the pharmacodynamics of ticagrelor and its reversibility at the P2Y₁₂ receptor. The overall aim was to produce a novel ticagrelor reversal agent for patients with major bleeds. This project demonstrated innovative approaches to tackling clinically relevant problems. I gained insight into the processes that shape national guidelines and protocols, which I will implement as a doctor.

This year, I gained valuable laboratory experience by analysing intestinal smooth muscle contraction in isolated guinea pig ileum in response to acetylcholine, atropine, and nifedipine. Being my first opportunity to conduct an extended project in a lab, this experience significantly enhanced my practical skills, deepened my understanding of pharmacological principles, and ignited my passion for research. I quickly became aware of some of the challenges and pitfalls when conducting a practical experiment and I now feel more equipped for future projects. This project highlighted the ethical implications of working with animals, emphasizing the importance of humane and responsible research practices.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the course leaders of Imperial's Pharmacology BSc and my project supervisors in the Endocrine Outpatients Department of Charing Cross Hospital for their continued support throughout the year.

I encourage any student considering applying for the Sir Colin Dollery Pharmacology Training Award or pursuing a pharmacology-related degree to just go for it and enjoy the journey. The experience is incredibly rewarding, providing invaluable insights and opportunities. For those working in labs, embrace every learning moment, stay curious, and always prioritize ethical practices. These experiences will greatly enhance your academic and professional growth.

Thank you once again for this incredible opportunity. I am excited to continue my journey in medicine, and I look forward to contributing to the field with the knowledge and experience I have gained this year.