

AstraZeneca announces R&D Postdoctoral Challenge winners

The six finalists from the R&D Postdoctoral Challenge will be awarded by AstraZeneca with fully funded research positions for two years at one of the company's strategic R&D centres in Cambridge, UK, Gaithersburg, US or Gothenburg, Sweden.



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Unlike traditional pre-defined industry postdoctoral initiatives, the Challenge which launched in March 2022, encouraged early career scientists to submit their own research proposals to accelerate drug discovery for some of the world's most complex diseases.

From more than 120 proposals, six winners were selected by a judging panel of AstraZeneca and external life science leaders, based on scientific merit and potential to create a real impact for patients, society and healthcare systems.

These winners are Dr Ana Filipa Dias Louro, Cátia Alexandra Marques Bonito Ferreira, Dr Gonçalo Emanuel Duarte Rosas da Silva, Dr Mark Waterhouse, Dr Rakhee K. Ramakrishnan and Dr Patience Chihomvu.

Prof. Sir Mene Pangalos, executive vice president, BioPharmaceuticals R&D, AstraZeneca, said: “We launched the R&D Postdoctoral Challenge to promote diversity of thought and stimulate research opportunities across the globe. The final event was successful in bringing together the brightest minds to help them turn their ideas into meaningful benefits for patients and fuel their early career development. I look forward to re-running the programme in future years.”



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The winners from Africa, the Middle East and Europe have been awarded fully funded postdoctoral research positions with access to the company’s expertise, compounds, novel tools and technologies, and mentoring support to turn their ideas into reality.

The research of Ramakrishnan, postdoctoral research associate at the Research Institute for Medical and Health Sciences, University of Sharjah, UAE focuses on microbiome-based therapeutics for asthma.

The project by Chihomvu, postdoctoral fellow, University of the Witwatersrand Medical School, South Africa examines the phytochemical profile of the plant *Lippia Javanica* – a medicinal plant commonly known as the fever tea – and its anti-inflammatory properties.

For more on the winners and their projects, view the full [finalist biographies here](#).

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