

# MBRU 360

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## WELCOME TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019

MBRU Welcomes 86 New Students  
for the Year 2018-2019

Pfizer Grants Dr. Yaj Banerjee an Award to  
Explore Apixaban, the Blood Clot Preventing Drug

First Whole Genome Sequencing of an Emirati Boy  
with Autism Conducted in the UAE at MBRU

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# News



## Pfizer Grants Dr. Yaj Banerjee an Award to Explore Apixaban, the Blood Clot Preventing Drug

Dr. Yaj Banerjee

Associate Professor of Biochemistry at the College of Medicine, Yaj Banerjee, was awarded the Emerging Markets Thrombosis Investigator-Initiated Research Program (EMRISTA) award by Pfizer USA.

EMRISTA is a Pfizer funding opportunity established to fund innovative medical research from researchers across Pfizer's Emerging Markets, including Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. It was a very competitive process with researchers from more than 100 countries eligible to apply. Dr. Yaj's area of investigation of the inflammatory role of this new class of drugs in preventing

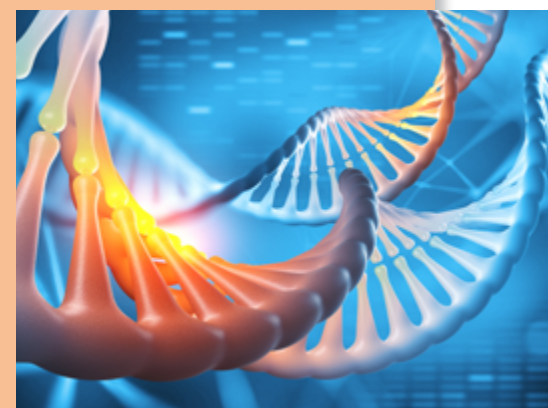
atherosclerosis is relevant and timely with the increased use of factor Xa inhibitors in cardiovascular care today. The research award is about the drug Apixaban, developed by Pfizer, which prevents the formation of blood clots by inhibiting a specific protein, coagulation Factor-Xa. This protein has also been implicated in atherosclerosis, which is buildup of fats and cholesterol in the arteries. The research aims to test the hypothesis that Apixaban by inhibiting Factor-Xa will weaken atherosclerosis, thereby providing a new paradigm to Apixaban's function. Dr. Yaj communicated his idea in the form of a research

proposal to Pfizer USA, upon approval he was awarded the necessary emolument to begin this research. His team is comprised of a post-doctoral fellow, research assistant and visiting researchers from Italy who will be pursuing the research at MBRU. Assco. "When I came across the calls for proposals, I wanted to see if I can explore if Apixaban is able to attenuate, basically weaken, inflammation. I am hoping that through this research we can find out if Apixaban can cure something else than its intended use. Pfizer were very happy with our proposal, because if we are able to show that this drug decreases the formation of proinflammatory cytokines, and if we are able to publish our research, they will be able to cite it and show that the drug has more pleiotropic benefits to it." Dr. Yaj commented. The study commenced in May 2018 and will conclude within a two-year period. The research will be primarily conducted at MBRU, but certain parts of the study such as sample collection will be pursued at Sheikh Khalifa Medical City in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

## First Whole Genome Sequencing of an Emirati Boy with Autism Conducted in the UAE at MBRU

A first for the United Arab Emirates, a whole genome-sequencing of an Emirati Boy with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is currently conducted at Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences (MBRU), as part of collaborative research with the Autism Program at Al Jalila Children's Specialty Hospital. As humans our genome, which is the complete set of genes or genetic material present in a cell, is composed of DNA that are packed within 23 pair of chromosomes. A typical

genome is 3 billion base pair long and has more than 20,000 genes. Reading or sequencing human genome is becoming critical for genetic diagnostic and therapeutic. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is highly genetic and through genome sequencing a good number of cases can have precision diagnosis. A scientific team from MBRU's molecular lab led by Assistant Professor of Human Genetics, Mohammed Uddin, College of Medicine, has sequenced the first whole genome, of an autistic Emirati boy from Al Jalila Children's Specialty Hospital ASD program,



making it the first time in the UAE. MBRU's scientific team, which also includes four students from the College of Medicine, applied a portable nano long-range DNA sequencer provided by Oxford Nanopore Technologies to conduct the sequencing.





# Did you know that MBRU is...

- The first academic institute to have an organ transplant program in the UAE.
- The first to use the Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) in its admissions process in the region.
- The first to introduce and conduct a Summer Studentship Placement Program from year one for medical students.
- The first to have an academic affiliation agreement with Mediclinic Middle East, the first of its kind in the UAE.

## Why study at MBRU?



**Hedaïet  
Ghanem**

**Year 3 student,  
College of Medicine**

"Studying medicine is one thing, but learning how to deal with healthcare professionals locally and internationally is something else, and our professors teach us these skills indirectly. Now I feel like I am very confident to travel anywhere in the world and meet doctors from abroad. My favorite thing about MBRU is its diversity, we have so many different people here that share their experiences with one another, its eye opening. I can say that I am a lot more confident than I was before coming here."



**Hemica  
Hasan**

**Year 3 student,  
College of Medicine**

"I moved from Abu Dhabi to Dubai to attend MBRU. Studying medicine isn't easy, but I found it a lot simpler than I thought when I actually took classes. My professors here are so well experienced in their respective fields, they have a way when conveying their message."



**Mahmoud  
Azzeh**

**Year 3 student  
College of Medicine**

"The student body isn't huge, and that is a real advantage. It makes me feel like I'm at home. I love how close everyone is to one another, I also love how I got to know everyone on a personal level, and whether it's faculty, students or student services, everyone here is a family."



**Mustafa**

**Year 2 student  
HBMCDM  
Pediatric Dentistry**

"I'm born and raised in the UAE and this is by far the best place to continue my studies at. I love the environment, it's homey, and I am close to my family. The pediatric faculty are very supportive, they're always motivating us to do our best. As someone continuing my studies to become a specialist I am very interested in research and at MBRU, I actually get to conduct research, with immense support from faculty. They also always motivate us to publish our findings, which is a huge added value to my professional profile."



**Noora  
Aburahima**

**Year 3 student  
HBMCDM  
Pediatric Dentistry**

"HBMCDM has a fantastic environment. The faculty, and my colleagues are very easy to work with, and of course learn from. As a graduate student, the classes are very important to me, and so far the classes have been very organized so that really impacted my experience."

# Student Corner

## Discover our Student Clubs

REACH Club is about creating a portal of opportunities to give back to the community, with no boundaries, every color, every race, every corner of this world, to "reach"! A club of high aims in implementing the values it holds, that works on the basis of humanitarian acts, and envisions to expand with a united team spirit. REACH plans to cover a variety of events regionally and internationally, associating with various other organizations and pupils that share a similar goal – to REACH.



## MBRU Welcomes 86 New Students for the Year 2018-2019

Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences (MBRU) has welcomed twenty-two postgraduate dental students and sixty-four undergraduate medical students this academic year.

The College of Medicine celebrated its third, and largest cohort to date, at its annual White Coat Ceremony which took place on September 16th. The 64 students representing 18 different nationalities coming from Canada, the United States of America, Kenya, Jordan and South Africa, to name a few, donned their white coats and recited the modern Hippocratic Oath. The Class of 2024 recited the Oath reaffirming their commitment to a professional career in medicine.

The Hamdan Bin Mohammed College of Dental Medicine (HBMCDM) welcomed 22 postgraduate dental students from 8 different nationalities, with UAE Nationals topping the list. As a first for MBRU, six Kuwaiti students joined HBMCDM reaffirming the University's value of connectivity, and its efforts to advance health in the UAE and the region.



ATLAS, Literature and Arts Club focuses on developing and nourishing talents and interests internally and externally. It includes a collection of sub-sections each headed by a student or two - dedicated to aspects of the arts and literature, such as books, movies, art, drama, cinematography, etc.. Plans for the future include an extension of ATLAS events in such a scope that involves networking with other universities and their students; in order to benchmark events for MBRU's ATLAS.

Languages Club widens the horizons of language by allowing students to learn, practice and develop new languages of interest. MBRU being a university of diversity, implementing that element in ourselves is also vital. While expanding the number of languages is beneficial in your career, it also plays a role in mind functioning and growth.



Media Club encompasses the field of media which includes photography, journalism, etc. Students can pursue their hobbies and interest in advocating knowledge via broadcasting it for the public to see, whether this is through imagery or words.

Sports Club keeps the body and mind synced to be a healthier and more competitive version of oneself, and ensuring to have fun while at it! This club will include different sports of interest, hold in-house games, competitions, and aims to grow to be part of larger competitions locally, and potentially regionally too.





# Highlights



## In the Presence of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum MBRU Celebrates its Second Graduation of Dental Postgraduate Students

MBRU celebrated its second graduation of 26 postgraduate dental students from its Hamdan Bin Mohammed College of Dental Medicine (HBMCDM). The ceremony was held at MBRU's campus in Dubai Healthcare City. During the ceremony a special

tribute was paid to His Highness the Late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, honoring his legacy and honoring this year as the Year of Zayed. His Highness Sheikh Ahmed honored the graduates and presented them with their Master Degree Certificates, and

wished them continued success. He urged them to continue their efforts in scientific research, education and continuous improvement to lead and excel by applying the latest innovations and scientific techniques.

## New members of the MBRU Family



**Professor Samuel Ho**  
Chair of the Division of Clinical Sciences College of Medicine



**Professor Thomas Adrian**  
Professor of Physiology in the College of Medicine



**Professor Homero Rivas**  
Professor of Surgery and inaugural "Associate Dean of Innovation and the Future" College of Medicine



Razan  
Word Wizard

Arnel  
Pixelhead

A special thank you to everyone who has contributed and made our newsletter possible. We are happy to hear from you, please send us your suggestions, or story submissions at:  
[MBRUcommunications@mbru.ac.ae](mailto:MBRUcommunications@mbru.ac.ae)