
An Interview with the CRA's 2011 Young Investigator: Dr. Marie Hudson

What has been your proudest

accomplishment in your research to date?

When I look back over the past few years, I am proud of the scleroderma network that I helped develop, the students that I coached and the papers that I published. But I think that when I meet study patients who tell me that the research we are doing is so important to them, that is when I am most proud. In fact, it always impresses me to see how much insight patients have. They understand very clearly that their problems are often chronic, that there are no quick and easy treatments and that their condition is often very serious. But it is important to them that someone somewhere is interested in their problem, is working on it and may find a solution that, even if it is not found in time to help them, might help others in the future. That knowledge in itself is, if not therapeutic, at least very beneficial for the person who suffers from a serious, chronic disease. The respect that patients have for you as a researcher is very rewarding.



clinic patients provide me with all the questions I will ever need. So, embrace the role of clinician.

Second, I often tell trainees that the training opportunities in research are endless. There are so many good training programs around the world and reasonable opportunities to be funded for these programs. I think that going away to pursue additional training for a few years is one of the most enriching career experiences.

Finally, there are many fields of research in rheumatology, such as rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, autoimmune diseases, etc. A lot of the research in these fields is cutting-edge and it has and will continue to have a huge impact on patient care. Find the subject that interests you and go for it. On the other hand, research is not easy. There is a constant pressure to publish and receive funding for your latest endeavor. The best key to success is, first, to be committed. If it does not work at first, try and try again. Second, surround yourself with the best team—your team is the single most important key to your success. The team members encourage you, challenge you, help you and really make you enjoy your work. They keep you coming back the next day.

What direction would you like to see for your future projects?

I am currently very interested in the outcomes of scleroderma lung disease. I am trying to develop an international group to pursue research in this area. In addition, I am also very interested in cross-disease research, such as lung disease in various systemic autoimmune rheumatic diseases.

What are the hurdles that you have faced as a young MD researcher?

Time...I never have enough time. There is so much to do, in addition to being a clinician, a teacher, a mother, a daughter, etc. There are certainly many other hurdles, but most of those are in some way or other under your control. Time is not.

For those wanting to pursue rheumatology and a career in research, what is your advice?

First, I used to think that you were either a clinician or a researcher. But I now realize that it is because I like to be a clinician that I have good research questions. My

What was your first thought when you learned that you would receive this award?

My first thought was certainly the delight that accompanies being rewarded. I spend a lot of time alone behind a computer. It is nice to think that someone is actually paying attention to what I do. However, this first moment of gratification was quickly replaced by another thought: the responsibility that accompanies getting an award. Now that I realize people are paying attention, the bar is set even higher to perform even better. I have to live up to the expectations this award has created.

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