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March 15th 2024

TTS Scientific Award

Re: Atharva Kale

I am writing in support of Atharva who is in the final year of her PhD.

Atharva completed Honours in my laboratory in 2020, and was awarded High 1st Class the prize for Best Translational Research project. She then enrolled in a PhD, supported by a University Postgraduate Award, and in July 2022 received a competitive JDRF top-up scholarship for high-performing students.

Ms Kale has continued to develop as a basic scientist and outstanding higher degree student, and developing her laboratory skills and progressing her degree despite significant restrictions imposed by the COVID19 pandemic. She is proficient in a broad range of molecular biology skills and cell culture techniques, as well as animal work. Her work in islet biology and islet transplantation has developed a new area of research in my laboratory, and she has contributed to the novel discovery that CD47 is regulating insulin secretory capacity of islets. Atharva has contributed valuable preliminary data to an international patent linking CD47 with insulin secretion, which is now published in *Sci Transl Med*. She is also 1st author on 2 published reviews.

Atharva's research has been recognised by the Transplantation Society of ANZ, including the President's Prize (finalist in 2021, winner in 2023), and Young Investigator Awards in 2021-2023. COVID19 has significantly impacted on Atharva's ability to present at national and international meetings at the start of her PhD. She will benefit greatly from attending an international conference F2F. The Transplantation Society meeting will provide Atharva with networking opportunities and broad exposure to cutting-edge work in islet and pancreas transplantation around the world, especially as she considers postdoctoral opportunities.

This travel award will allow Atharva to continue to mature as an outstanding junior scientist, providing the confidence to develop and test new hypotheses related to islet biology and islet transplantation.

I am happy to be contacted further if required.

Sincerely,

Natasha Rogers

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Head of Transplantation, Westmead Hospital
Professor in Nephrology and Transplantation, University of Sydney
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