

# ISH COMMITTEE, PARTNER AND AFFILIATED SOCIETY REPORTS

## ISH webinar report: Getting the most out of mentorship

### A REPORT FROM THE ISH CAPACITY BUILDING NETWORK

A webinar organised by the ISH Capacity Building Network (CBN) provided early and mid-career researchers with practical strategies for getting the most out of mentorship.

The webinar covered:

- effective techniques for identifying suitable mentors
- making contact with mentors
- some of the complexities around power dynamics
- and ensuring productive mentor-mentee relationships over time.

The speakers were Rahul Chanchlani (Canada), Ana Jelaković (Croatia), and Kehinde Samuel Olaniyi (Nigeria).



Lebo Gafane-Matemane



Kaylee Slater

The session was chaired by Lebo Gafane-Matemane (South Africa), Associate Professor of Physiology at North-West University and Chair of the ISH Mentorship and Training Committee (MTC), and Kaylee Slater (Australia), an early-career researcher focused on sex-specific cardiovascular disease prevention, primary care and health services research. Kaylee is a member of the ISH CBN and MTC.



### Ana Jelaković

“When we talk about mentorship, we should move beyond the idea of a single senior person giving occasional advice. Mentorship works best when it is intentional, structured, and built on mutual understanding. It starts with listening carefully to the mentee. Only then can we offer guidance that is meaningful.

“Good mentorship is not about telling someone exactly what to do. It is about helping them learn how to think, how to prioritise, and how to make informed decisions for themselves. It is also about being honest: about the challenges of an academic career, about setbacks, and about the reality that progress is often slow and non-linear.

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“Capacity building is a long-term commitment. We are not just training people to complete a project or obtain a degree - we are helping to develop independent researchers and clinicians who will in turn become mentors to other

“When mentorship is done well, it becomes a partnership. Both the mentor and the mentee learn from each other, and grow.”

*Ana Jelaković (Croatia) is a nephrologist and hypertensiologist at University Hospital Centre, Zagreb, Croatia, assistant professor in University of Rijeka, Croatia, at Dept. of epidemiology and public health. She is an active member of the Croatian Hypertension League, seeking ways to combine clinical work and public health advocacy.*



## Rahul Chanchlani

“One of the most important messages I want to share is not to underestimate the power of relationships. Many of the opportunities I have had - whether collaborations, training positions, or research projects - started with a simple conversation or a chance meeting.

“Networking means being curious, asking thoughtful questions, and showing genuine interest in the work of other people. Over time, those small interactions can turn into meaningful professional relationships.

“When choosing mentors, look for people who will challenge you. You do not only need mentors who agree with you or who make you feel comfortable all the time. You need mentors who will push you to think critically, and to step outside your comfort zone.

“A research career is full of uncertainty and rejection, and having mentors and peers who can provide perspective and encouragement makes a huge difference. You do not have to navigate this journey alone, and organisations like ISH offer a platform where these connections can happen.”

*Rahul Chanchlani (Canada) is a pediatric nephrologist, clinician-researcher, and epidemiologist at McMaster University, where he is an Associate Professor of Pediatrics and staff nephrologist at McMaster Children's Hospital.*

Continued on next page.

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## Kehinde Samuel Olaniyi

“In many parts of the world, young researchers face enormous barriers - not only limited funding, but also limited access to experienced mentors who can guide them through the complexities of research and career development. That is why mentorship and capacity building are so critical.

“Access to guidance can be just as important as access to financial resources. A supportive mentor can help a young scientist avoid common pitfalls, refine their ideas, and build confidence in their abilities.

“We also need to be intentional about creating environments where early-career scientists feel safe: safe to ask questions, safe to admit what they do not know, and safe to make mistakes. This psychological safety is essential for learning and growth.

When we invest in people in this way, we are not only strengthening individual careers - we are strengthening institutions and health systems. Ultimately, this is how we build a stronger, more equitable global research community.”

*Kehinde Samuel Olaniyi (Nigeria) is an Assistant Professor from Afe Babalola University (Nigeria), specialising in cardiovascular physiology. His research focuses on the pathophysiology of metabolic diseases, including diabetes, obesity, and polycystic ovarian syndrome.*

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