

Ragav Chona (he/him)

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EDUCATION

Doctor of Medicine Candidate (2023 – 2027)

Aug 2023 - Present

Bachelor of Science (Honours) - Translational and Molecular Medicine

Sep 2019 – June 2023

University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON

- GPA: 10.0/10.0, Summa Cum Laude
- University Gold Medalist and Alex Trebek Leadership Award Recipient

RESEARCH

HoloSim: Use in Crises and Clinical Skills Applications

Jan 2024 - Present

- Supervisor: Dr. Julian Wiegelmann, University of Toronto and Sunnybrook Hospital
- Title of Project: Advancing medical simulation education by integrating AI-driven avatars for dynamic, high-fidelity clinical training.

Advanced Care Planning Internationally and HIV Care Scoping Reviews

Dec 2024 - Present

- Supervisor: Dr. Han Yan, Dr. Andrew Pinto, University of Toronto and Unity Health
- Title of Project: TBD

OMSA Policy Paper: Advocating for the Integration of AI in Medical Curriculum in Canada

Nov 2024 - Present

- Multidisciplinary collaboration between the University of Toronto, University of Ottawa, Western University, McMaster University and NOSM.

LGBTQ+ Primary Care Inequity Research

Sep 2024 – Present

- Supervisor: Dr. Marcus Law, University of Toronto
- Title of Project: Experiences of Older Gay Men in Primary Care: Access, Communication, and Discrimination

Patient Experience Quality Investigation Research

Oct 2023 – Sept 2024

- Supervisor: Dr. Chris Hayes, Trillium Health Partners and University of Toronto (QuEST program)
- Title of Project: Improving the Utilization/Adoption of Voyce for Language Concordant Care.

Regenerative Medicine Research Assistant and Undergraduate Researcher

Feb 2020 – Aug 2023

- Supervisor: Dr. Jing Wang, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, University of Ottawa, Stem Cell Network, and NSERC
- Title of Projects: A Genomic-Integration Free Methodology to Generate Neurons from Pericytes via Reprogramming into Neural Stem Cells in Human and Rodent Models (Honours Thesis)

PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, ABSTRACTS

Seeburruth D, **Chona R**, Hua N, Lapa T, Akuffo-Addo E, Piguet V. Clinical Characteristics, Management and Outcomes of Pemphigoid Nodularis: A Systematic Review. Journal of European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology. Manuscript submitted. 2025 Apr 18.

Chona R & Vey T. Fostering Queer Joy: Proposing a Mentorship Framework for LGBTQ+ Resilience and Flourishing in Medicine. American Journal of Public Health. Manuscript submitted. 2025 Jan 16.

Seeburruth D, Hua N, **Chona R**, et al. Clinical Characteristics of Atopic Dermatitis Across Racial and Ethnic Groups: A Systematic Review. Journal of Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery. 2025;0(0). doi:10.1177/12034754251316540

Loan A, Awaja N, Lui M, Syal C, Sun Y, Sarma SN, **Chona R**, Johnston WB, Cordova A, Saraf D, Nakhle A. Single-cell profiling of brain pericyte heterogeneity following ischemic stroke unveils distinct pericyte subtype-targeted neural reprogramming potential and its underlying mechanisms. Theranostics. 2024 Sep 23;14(16):6110.

Seeburruth D, Chona R, Hua N, Sood S, Yeung J. Sex related differences in PsO biologics outcomes. JAMA Derm. Manuscript in progress.

Seeburruth D, **Chona R**, Hua N, Sood S, Yeung J. 5-FU induced Cutaneous Eruptions. JAMA Dermatology. Manuscript in progress.

Seeburruth D, **Chona R**, Hua N, Sood S, Yeung J. Imiquimod-Induced Cutaneous Eruptions. JAMA Dermatology. Manuscript in Progress.

Chona R, Cildir Z, Pilligawa K. Correcting the R506Q mutation of Factor V Leiden in model-derived iPSCs using CRISPR-Cas9. OSF. 2021 Jun 28. 10.17605/OSF.IO/8V4CU.

Seeburruth D, **Chona R**, Hua N, Mukovozov I. Variations in Clinical Characteristics of Atopic Dermatitis Across Different Racial and Ethnic Groups. Canadian Dermatology Association Annual Meeting. 2024 Sep.

Chona R, Abdool R, Rink E, Kumarakulasingam R, Cruickshank V, Kim D, Hayes C. Improving Language Concordant Care through VOYCE. ICAM Vancouver. 2024 Apr.

Chona R, Abdool R, Rink E, Kumarakulasingam R, Cruickshank V, Kim D, Hayes C. Increasing the Adoption and Utilization of VOYCE. University of Toronto Medical Student Research Day. 2024 Feb.

Chona R, Wang J. Optimizing the generation of neurons from human pericytes via genomic integration-free cellular reprogramming in vitro. Stem Cell Network Conference. 2023 Aug.

Chona R, Wang J. A Genomic-Integration Free Methodology to Generate Neurons from Pericytes via Reprogramming into Neural Stem Cells in Human and Rodent Models. Translational and Molecular Medicine Honours Seminar. 2023 May.

Chona R, Wang J. A Genomic-Integration Free Methodology to Generate Neurons from Pericytes via Reprogramming into Neural Stem Cells in Human and Rodent Models. Translational and Molecular Medicine Poster Day. 2023 Jan.

Chona R, Wang J. A Genomic-Integration Free Methodology to Reprogram Pericytes into Neural Stem Cells in Human and Rodent Models. Ottawa Hospital Research Institute Research Day. 2022 Nov.

Chona R, Syal C, Wang J. Tamoxifen Enhances Pericyte Reprogramming into Neural Stem Cells In Vitro. Brain Health Research Day. 2022 Jul.

Toex N, **Chona R**, Rudner A. Characterization and annotation of a novel FM-cluster bacteriophage Ottawa. HHMI SEA-PHAGES Symposium. 2022 May.

Chona R, Syal C, Wang J. Tamoxifen's Impact on Peicyte Reprogramming into Neural Stem Cells In Vitro. Translational and Molecular Medicine Rotation Symposium. 2022 Apr.

Chona R, Sun E, Wang J. Pathological reductions in axon connectivity and synaptic function impairs neurogenesis in the SVZ neurogenic niche of 3xTg Alzheimer's Disease mouse models. OHRI Seminar and Tim and McCulloch Conference.

Chona R, Syal C, Wang J. Ajmalicine acts through the alpha1-adrenergic receptor to promote oligodendrocyte precursor proliferation and differentiation in culture. 2021 Feb.

WORK AND RELATED EXPERIENCES

Research Assistant – Jing Wang Lab

Feb 2020 – Aug 2023

Dept. of Cellular and Molecular Medicine, uOttawa & Regenerative Medicine Program,

- Identifying stem cell therapeutics and implementing FDA-approved drugs and drug targets to treat stroke using neuroregenerative approaches.
- Awarded several grants to conduct/support/present neurogenesis research. Collaborate with labs & troubleshoot protocols. Led and mentored two students, proactively resolving their concerns.

Writing Mentor

Aug 2021 – Aug 2022

University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON

- Offer expert guidance to students in enhancing their writing skills through the provision of constructive criticism, compassion, and empathy, fostering a supportive learning environment.
- Empower students to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy by equipping them with the necessary tools and strategies to excel in academic writing tasks.
- Maintain a collaborative team-working environment ensuring effective communication and cooperation.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Vice President of External Affairs

Oct 2023 – Present

University of Toronto Medical Society

- Elected to serve as a pivotal liaison between the University of Toronto Temerty Faculty of Medicine and key external organizations, including the Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) and the Ontario Medical Students' Association (OMSA). Attend regular meetings with VP Externals from across the province and country to facilitate effective communication between the U of T student body, OMSA, and CFMS.
- Act as the primary point of contact for external organizations wishing to share information and events with the U of T student body, such as OMA and CMA. Spearhead discussions and initiatives on undergraduate medical education, focusing on accessibility, equity, diversity, inclusion, truth and reconciliation, innovation, and research advancement.

Queer, Trans, and Allied in Medicine (QTAM) Co-Director (University of Toronto, Toronto)

Oct 2024 – Present

- Co-direct the QTAM group at the University of Toronto, focusing on advocacy, fundraising, and support for LGBTQ+ individuals within the medical community.
- Organize events to provide a platform for LGBTQ+ medical students to share experiences, network, and foster an inclusive environment.
- Implement initiatives aimed at educating and raising awareness about LGBTQ+ health issues within the student body and faculty

Sun and Skin Awareness Program Co-Director (University of Toronto, Toronto)

Dec 2023 – Present

- Pioneering a program to educate children on crucial sun safety practices.
- Established partnerships with local homeless shelters, conducting presentations and distributing sunscreen to promote sun safety in underserved communities.

Executive Director, Passionate Minds Canada (Ottawa and Toronto, ON)

May 2020 – Aug 2023

- Provide strong leadership for a non-profit academic initiative offering educational resources, course videos, mentorship programs, and other tools to cater to the needs of high-school students aiming for excellence.
- Work with the board and other executives to set up and implement short/long-term goals, plans, and strategies.

Founder and President, Goodwill Initiative (Ottawa, ON)

May 2020 – Aug 2023

- Co-founded a not-for-profit providing support to Ottawa's homeless community through soup kitchens, supply donations, and awareness campaigns, garnering coverage from CBC Radio Canada and CFRA Ottawa
- Secured sponsorships from Clif Bar & Company, L'Oréal Paris, and Metro, serving 800+ meals, donating over 32,000 items, and raising \$5,000 for six shelters.

Prototype Design Project (Toronto, ON)

Oct 2024 – Present

- Participate in a cutting-edge, interdisciplinary team-based design project focusing on developing practical solutions to unmet clinical needs. Developing an EMR Plug-In System to enable ease of accessing costs and contraindications of commonly prescribed medications.
- Collaborate with peers from medical, engineering, and life sciences backgrounds to innovate and prototype devices or systems that enhance healthcare delivery and patient care.

Woodgreen Mentorship Program Volunteer (Toronto, ON)

Oct 2024 – Present

- Engage with children and youth from underrepresented communities and families of domestic violence, providing guidance, support, and mentorship to foster personal and academic growth.

MedLingua Initiative (Toronto, ON)

Oct 2024 – Present

- Translate medical documents and patient information pamphlets into French and Hindi for various hospital units across UHN, TGH, SickKids, and Sunnybrook.

Orbital Groove (Medical Student Band) Performer (Toronto, ON)

Apr 2024 – Present

- Perform in a medical student band, participating in various university events and community gatherings to promote musical expression among peers.

Peer Wellness Educator, uOttawa Health Promotion and Advocacy Team (Ottawa, ON)

Aug 2020 – Jan 2023

- Facilitate respectful, nonjudgmental, and culturally safe discussions with peers about healthy living; advocate for and promote health resources. (300 hours)

Rocketry Team, uOttawa Rocketry (Ottawa and Toronto, ON)

Nov 2019 – Jan 2023

- Conduct biological experiments involving rocket payloads, collaborating with other teams to enhance collective learning, innovation and performance. Maintain networks with various external organizations and businesses for parts.

AWARDS, HONOURS, GRANTS

Zhangbin-Niugensheng Bethune Award (2024) (\$11,000)

Awarded by University of Toronto for outstanding contributions to community service and leadership during medical school.

Alex Trebek Leadership Award (2023) (\$10,000)

Issued by University of Ottawa for academic and community involvement achievements at convocation.

University Gold Medal (2023)

Awarded by University of Ottawa for the highest standing in the Honours Bachelor of Science program.

Stem Cell Network Studentship Award (2023)

Issued by Stem Cell Network, associated with Ottawa Hospital Research Institute for pioneering research in stem cell biology and regenerative medicine.

First Generation Bursary (2023) (\$3,000)

Issued by University of Ottawa to support academically excellent students who are the first in their family to attend university in Canada.

Dr. Normand Léo and Mrs. Ljubica Benoit Bursary (2023) (\$1,000)

Issued by University of Ottawa for outstanding academic achievement and community service.

Gilles G. Patry Student Engagement Scholarship (2023, 2021) (\$3,000 x 2)

Issued by University of Ottawa for students who demonstrate superior academic standing, volunteer service, and leadership in community-building at a local, national, and/or international level.

Drs. Ann and Carl Witus Award (2023) (\$500)

Issued by University of Toronto for academic excellence in premedical studies.

McCall MacBain Regional Award (2022) (\$5,000)

Issued by McCall MacBain Scholars for excellence in leadership and community service.

OHRI Elevator Pitch Runner-Up (2022)

Issued by The Ottawa Hospital, associated with Ottawa Hospital Research Institute for engaging and impactful research presentations.

NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award (2022, 2021) (\$9,000 x 2)

Issued by NSERC, associated with Ottawa Hospital Research Institute for promising research projects.

uOttawa Alumni Association Leadership Scholarship (2021) (\$6,000)

Issued by University of Ottawa, recognizing one undergraduate student whose work and commitment reflect the University's objectives by demonstrating leadership qualities and contributing to the advancement of alumni or University activities in a volunteer capacity.

Canadian Service Corps Certificate of Recognition (2021)

Issued by Government of Canada: Canadian Service Corps & Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau for significant contributions to national service projects and community leadership.

Community Engagement Scholarship (2021) (\$3,000)

Issued by University of Ottawa for demonstrating superior academic standing, volunteer service, and leadership in community-building.

Rising Youth Grant Award (2020)

Issued by TakingITGlobal for youth projects that help drive change to serve their communities.

Longfields Music Medal (2019)

Issued by Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School for outstanding musical talent and contributions to school music programs.

Science Department Award of Excellence (2019)

Issued by Longfields Davidson-Heights Secondary School to the top graduating science student who has shown consistent effort, a keen interest, and a strong commitment to the Science department.