

VICHY LIYANAGE-ZACHARIAH (PH.D., B.SC.)

A: 127-Traverse Ave, Winnipeg, MB R2H 2G8 | C: 204-960-3280 | E: vichithra.liyanage-zachariah@canfasd.ca,
Vichy.mb@gmail.com; vichyliyanage@academics.biz

SUMMARY

Talented FASD Alcohol Policy Research Assistant with a strong background in Biomedical research on FASD molecular mechanisms, Knowledge Synthesis on Pediatric patients (such as FASD patients) and family engagement in healthcare and health research and Medical Writing (publications, reports, web articles) with nearly 8 years in the health research field. Focused on and aimed at improving and optimizing health research and healthcare services provided to FASD patients and families through evidence-based research, implementation of FASD prevention, diagnosis and intervention strategies, establishment of education methods, raising awareness, and revision of current alcohol policies to address issues related to FASD.

SKILLS

- Hardworking and determined
- Team work and independence
- Evaluations and analysis (policy, research)
- Effective communication (verbal, written)
- Personal and professional integrity
- Sound decision-making
- Teaching (children & adults) & curriculum development
- Disability awareness
- Broad medical terminology knowledge
- Literature searches & knowledge synthesis
- Efficient in research processes (Design, Analyzing and Publishing)
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis
- Excellent in MS Office, Word, Powerpoint, Excel, Illustrations, Referencing
- Project management
- Awareness of mental health conditions

EXPERIENCE

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| 10/2018 to
Current | Research Assistant (Alcohol Policy)
CanFASD – Winnipeg, MB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform in-depth research to find evidence for making recommendation to include FASD and alcohol consumption during pregnancy in the new National Alcohol Strategy • Prepare and edit reports and articles for publication. • Currently contributing to the CanFASD Media and Common Messages Guides, FASD workforce development framework and Issue paper on Father's role in FASD. |
| 12/2017 to
11/2018 | Research Technician (Knowledge Synthesis and patient/family engagement)
Helen Glass Centre for Nursing, University of Manitoba – Winnipeg, MB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performed knowledge synthesis activities on Pediatric patient and family engagement in healthcare and health research leading two systematic reviews. • Collected and extracted data to propose recommendations and implications for healthcare and health research practices. • Prepared and edited reports, grant applications, research proposals and articles for publication. • Oversaw an undergraduate student supporting research. • Supported principal investigators during grants writing, scientific graphic design, editing reports, and prepare publications. |

**01/2015 to
Current**

Owner and Primary Medical Writer

VR Medical and Science Writers – Winnipeg, MB

- Self-starting entrepreneur: Planned business operational mandates and policies, starting with defining customers, services and market.
- Write blog and social media posts related to FASD, other disease conditions and educational tutorials and determined to provide clear and consistent work.
- Network with various industries, institutions, researchers and students to provide accurate, efficient, plagiarism-free writing, editing, proofreading, presentations, grants and resume preparation services.
- Calculate, prepare, and issue bills, invoices and account statements according to established procedures.
- Communicate with customers, employees and other individuals to answer questions and explain information.

**09/2009 to
11/2010**

Assistant Lecturer, University of Peradeniya, Department of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Sri Lanka

Visiting Assistant Lecturer, Department of Pharmacy and Postgraduate Institute of Science, Sri Lanka

- Taught and prepared lecture materials
- Conducted laboratory practical sessions, corrected lab reports
- Examination invigilator
- Assisted students with difficulties with sensitivity and non-judgemental manner
- Assisted with teaching for B.Sc. in Pharmaceutical Biotechnology, M.Sc. in Science Education (Biology education), and M.Sc. in Experimental Biotechnology as a visiting lecturer
- Further expanded my teaching and curriculum development practices with, Canada (07/2014)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2018

Ph.D.: Medical Genetics

The University of Manitoba – Winnipeg, MB, Canada

- Thesis: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Regulation of MeCP2 in Brain Cell Types and Their Implications in MeCP2-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorders (FASD, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Rett Syndrome)
- Conducted biomedical research on FASD and the effects of alcohol on gene expression, epigenetic mechanisms and brain cell morphology.
- Have 13 publications, 2 manuscripts submitted and 2 manuscripts in preparation
- Attended FASD and brain neurodevelopmental disorders conferences and have won travel and poster awards
- Have been awarded with 3 consecutive graduate fellowships to research on FASD, Rett Syndrome and Autism.
- Have won 21 awards in total during Ph.D.

2014

Certificate: International Summer Institute for Scientific Teaching & Educational Leadership for Bioscience Research, Department of Education, University of Manitoba

- Learnt about teaching and curriculum development practices

- Developed a course curriculum during the training period
- Participated in interactive workshops for training & teaching
- Acted as the team lead for the second Summer Institute (2015)

2009

Bachelor of Science: Molecular Biology and Biotechnology

University of Peradeniya – Kandy, CP, Sri Lanka

- Ranked in Top of the class
- Published one article on Molecular Marker-assistant screening
- Joined the same department as an Assistant Lecturer for a year
- Awarded academic excellence of the university

ACTIVITIES AND HONORS

- Career memberships related to FASD: CanFASD; Edmonton FASD Network (EFAN); Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network (FCAN), Manitoba FASD Coalition
- Career memberships related to Medical Writing: National Association of Science Writers; Manitoba Editor's Association
- Reviewer in scientific journals: RNA and Transcription, Clinical Epigenetics, The Journal of Emerging Investigators
- Editorial Board Member of The Journal Pharmacology and Toxicology, Scientific Literature

CERTIFICATIONS/CERTIFICATES

Ongoing

- Mental Health Gap Action Program (mhGAP) Pacific Open Learning Health Net
- Preventing Alcohol-Exposed Pregnancies course, Training and Continuing Education Online (TCEO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Collaborative for Alcohol-Free Pregnancy: Partnering for Practice Change.
- Red Cross Emergency First Aid & CPR AED training (Nov 20, 2018)
- E-learning modules for health professionals involved in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) diagnosis, The University of Sydney and Telethon Kids Institute.
- Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

Completed

- Towards Improved Practice (TIP) training program for FASD by CanFASD.
- Disability Awareness Resource Training, The Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC), Manitoba
- Certificate for ICH Good Clinical Practice E6 (R2) by The Global Health Network.
- Certificate for Children and Clinical Research by The Global Health Network.
- Career in Medical Writing

INTERESTS

- Contribute to prevention of FASD and healthcare and health research to support patients with FASD and their families
- Health policy and healthcare services improvements
- Provide financial, educational or other support to (dis)abled, and/or homeless individuals with
- Participate in research and development conferences and symposiums
- Empower youth for higher education and health research
- Improve medical illustration skills
- Writing With Hope Program <https://vr-writers.blog/2018/11/09/writing-with-hope/>

WEBSITES, PORTFOLIOS, PROFILES

- Professional Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vichyliyanage/>
- Professional Blog: <https://vr-writers.blog/>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/vichithra-vichy-liyanage-zachariah-2b0abb25/>
- Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.ca/citations?user=QfUpGkoAAAAJ&hl=en>

PUBLICATIONS ON FASD

- Xu, W., Liyanage, V. R. B., MacAuley, A., Levy, R. D., Curtis, K., Olson, C. O., Zachariah, R. M., Amiri, S., Buist, M., Hicks, G. G., Davie, J. R., and Rastegar, M. (2018). Genome-wide transcriptome landscape of differentiating embryonic brain-derived neural stem cells exposed to alcohol. Scientific Reports (Accepted)
- Liyanage, V. R., Curtis, K., Zachariah, R. M., Chudley, A. E., & Rastegar, M. (2017). Overview of the genetic basis and epigenetic mechanisms that contribute to fasd pathobiology. Curr Top Med Chem, 17(7), 808-828. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27086780>
- Liyanage, V. R., Zachariah, R. M., Davie, J. R., & Rastegar, M. (2015). Ethanol deregulates mecp2/mecp2 in differentiating neural stem cells via interplay between 5-methylcytosine and 5-hydroxymethylcytosine at the mecp2 regulatory elements. Exp Neurol, 265, 102-117. doi:10.1016/j.expneurol.2015.01.006
- Liyanage, V. R., Jarmasz, J. S., Murugesan, N., Del Bigio, M. R., Rastegar, M., & Davie, J. R. (2014). DNA modifications: Function and applications in normal and disease states. Biology (Basel), 3(4), 670-723. doi:10.3390/biology3040670
- Liyanage, V. R., Zachariah, R. M., & Rastegar, M. (2013). Decitabine alters the expression of mecp2 isoforms via dynamic DNA methylation at the mecp2 regulatory elements in neural stem cells. Mol Autism, 4(1), 46. doi:10.1186/2040-2392-4-46
- Liyanage-Zachariah, V., (Sep 20, 2018) FASD awareness: A multifaceted conundrum, <https://wordpress.com/post/vr-writers.blog/57>
- Liyanage-Zachariah, V., (Oct 10, 2018) FASD and Stigma... Consequences of admission of alcohol consumption. <https://vr-writers.blog/2018/10/18/fasd-and-stigma-consequences-of-admission-of-alcohol-consumption/>
- Liyanage-Zachariah, V., (Nov 1, 2018) FASD: An Intergenerational or Transgenerational Phenomenon. <https://vr-writers.blog/2018/11/01/fasd-an-intergenerational-or-transgenerational-phenomenon/>
- Liyanage-Zachariah, V., (Oct 5, 2018) If you have no roof over your head... have no food to eat... have no clothes to wear... Let's catch up on homelessness in Canada. <https://vr-writers.blog/2018/10/05/if-you-have-no-roof-over-your-head-have-no-food-to-eat-have-no-clothes-to-wear-lets-catch-up-on-homelessness-in-canada/>
- Liyanage-Zachariah, V., (Nov 9, 2018) Writing With Hope. <https://vr-writers.blog/2018/11/09/writing-with-hope/>
- Liyanage-Zachariah, V., (Nov 14, 2018) Confabulations or 'Telling False Stories' Associated with FASD and Resources for Parents. <https://vr-writers.blog/2018/11/14/confabulations-or-telling-false-stories-associated-with-fasd-and-resources-for-parents/>

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Pro bono consulting for grant writing for low cost housing systems and renovations for Indigenous population in Manitoba, Canada
- Judge for 44th-46th Annual Winnipeg School Science Fairs (2014-2016), Grade 9-11, Biology and Sustainable Development
- Teddy Bear Picnic, 2013 Raise awareness of child health research and raise funding for Manitoba Child Health.
- 2016 May-Present: Ad-hoc volunteer in American Medical Writers' Association and its Canada Chapter.

- 2016 June-Present: Member of Coursera Beta Tester Community (provide feedback to help instructors improve course materials)