

ARL/HAJ-B

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Dr. Jeremy Bennett
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Dear Dr. Bennett

Re: Dr. Bushra Ahmed

Dr. Ahmed has asked me to forward a reference to you in connection with a post for which she has applied at Indiana University. The nature of the post is not clear but I assume that it is one with a combination of teaching and research responsibilities.

Dr. Ahmed came to UCL in 2001 after doctoral and postdoctoral research experience in experimental neuroscience in Japan and the USA, and worked in our group for three years as a postdoctoral research fellow, on a research project funded by the Wellcome Trust, the aim of which was to determine the importance of certain genes for neuronal regeneration by knocking out the genes in adult mice, using the Cre-lox P system. Transgenic mice were made, with the key genes flanked by lox P signal sequences, and the genes were then knocked out in specific regions of the nervous system by cre recombinase in viral vectors delivered by local injection. Dr. Ahmed's role was to make the viral vectors carrying the recombinase genes and then participate in analysis of the results of experimental studies in well-established models of CNS injury. She went to Amsterdam for one year to work in the group of our collaborator Professor Joost Verhaagen, a pioneer in the development of methods for viral delivery of genes to the CNS, and with the help of Joost and his group, successfully produced both AAV and LV vectors, a technical achievement which resulted in a nice paper (Ahmed *et al.*, 2004, *BMC Neuroscience*, 5, 4, published online 30/01/04). Because other parts of the project were slower to progress than Dr. Ahmed's part, we were not

able to carry out as extensive an analysis of the role of targeted genes in axonal regeneration as had been anticipated, before the grant ran out. However, that was not the fault of Dr. Ahmed who was both industrious and successful in producing the cre viruses.

Because Dr. Ahmed's post with us was focused purely on research, I can tell you little about her teaching ability. However, soon after she left UCL she secured a post as a Senior Lecturer at another university and from what I know of her and her communication skills, I would expect that she has been doing an excellent job in this role.

In conclusion, Dr. Ahmed is a capable laboratory scientist and a good team player. It is possible that she has (or will develop in time) the capacity to organize, fund, and direct an independent research programme but I cannot be certain on this point. At the personal level, Dr. Ahmed is very nice and was an extremely good colleague. She got on well with everyone in the lab and was invariably helpful and considerate.

I recommend her to you very warmly and will be happy to supply any additional information you require.

Yours sincerely

A.R. Lieberman