

April 2022

BABBLE

THE EAST MIDLANDS PAEDIATRIC SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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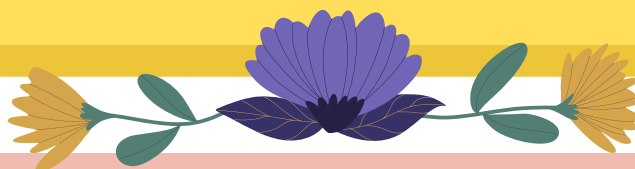
A Word from the Editor and Team Lead...



Dear All,

I hope that you are all well and had a happy, healthy and delightful Easter.

In this edition of the Babble, we have covered a number of handy bits when returning to work after time taken out of a training programme (OOP). This could be in the form of parental leave, sick leave, academic work, travelling and the list could go on. I feel that the principle of returning to work remains the same, whatever the reason for taking a break. There are also some generic feelings that we all share during that daunting time of recommencing clinical work. In this edition, we have alluded to those feelings and have highlighted the support systems and beneficial courses that are available within the deanery to help trainees who are planning their return to work.



Furthermore, there are updates from Dr Fawke about the training programme and the East Midlands South ST4-ST8 TPD. We also bring to you a summary of the East Midlands school conference that was held this year and have also got tips for keeping fit or keeping slim, a book review and words of wisdom from a newly qualified consultant.

There is a Babble survey that we would love for you all to complete by simply following the link provided. By completing this will enable you to share your thoughts about the newsletter and leave any suggestions for further improvement. We would love to hear from you. Until next time, look after yourselves and those around you and remember that....

"Self-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others".

Dimple Minhas



News and Updates from the TPD - Dr Joe Fawke...

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by Dimple Minhas

The training programme directors and Dr Fawke have started to have meetings to plan **Progress+ implementation in the East Midlands** and those meetings will be extended to college tutors and trainee representatives.

Please have a look at the **RCPCH Progress+ webpages** which can be found at <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/education-careers/training-assessment/progressplus>.

Furthermore there is also **principle of the month** section which goes through different aspects of the Progress+ curriculum.

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Trainees in East Midlands South may be aware that **Dr Hemant Bhavsar** has **stepped down as ST4-8 TPD** and a recruitment process is underway to **appoint another ST4-8 TPD** who will work alongside **Dr Rajiv Mohan (ST4-8 TPD)**.

Reflections of a part time parent, part time doctor; full time worrier: Things I wish I had known

By Anna Christou ST6 Less Than Full Time (LTFT) Mama of Three

Obviously, I say that in jest when I refer to myself as a part time parent, as the mum title doesn't disappear as I set off for work; whilst I am not their carer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, I still have their needs and their wellbeing in my mind.

So how do we balance these demands as medical parents?

How do we nurture our families yet retain a part of ourselves and progress in our career?

No-one wants to be in this survival mode, therefore when I was asked, what as a trainee I would like to read about in our Babble Newsletter, I thought about what I have struggled with in the past and what advice I would have found helpful. Asking my five-year-old what I should write, he helpfully suggested, "you just need a 6-minute break mama" and "mama, you are the best doctor in the world cos your nose is so shiny!" Thanks Mr, that's really helpful. I didn't really think about how hard things could get until we welcomed our third during a pandemic. I have been less than full time since 2017 and thought I had been doing alright, but then the third came and then I really realised I had to have my crap together in order to balance all our needs as a family. So, if you are reading this as a new parent beginning maternity leave or coming back from a prolonged absence out of training, I do hope you find it useful.

Going back, I initially thought I would be fine, I got this, no problem. Then I was blessed with a baby who thought sleep was for the weak and that he definitely needed to see me every hour of the night to ensure I and therefore milk still existed. I realised this wasn't sustainable and filled in my application last minute to go Less Than Full Time (LTFT) – I do not recommend this stress inducing experience!

So, my first advice is thinking about what your goals are and what the priorities are at this time in your life, plan for this and put your application in with HEEM early. When I decide that to be LTFT, I factored commuting and what other responsibilities needed to be shared with the other parent. Now then the feelings that came with that decision, the anxiety of the clinical experience I would be 'missing' out on and the lack of continuity of care. I was worried about falling behind compared to my peers with practical procedures and learning opportunities, so I raced to restart work again. And yes, it did take me a little time to regain my confidence, you discuss managements plans more with your seniors, takes you longer to write your prescriptions chart and that it is ok! I wish someone had told me about those feelings of anxiety, those feelings of getting it wrong, discharging the poorly patient, the worry of making a mistake on the drug chart are normal. You will feel stressed initially but one day it will be like you never left. I promise, it will all come back to you, you may be slower initially, but it will pass. And if it doesn't, talk to someone. Tell them your worries, your concerns. Speak to your supervisor, find a support network, please do not suffer only.

The Deanery has a wealth of support available. A scheme called suppoRTT offers practical and financial support along with advice in returning to training safely and confidently. This may include being supernumerary and making that transition slowly if you feel that will help transitioning yourself back into clinical practice (you will need to apply for this so do ask early so that this can be organised).

Reflections....Continued....

By Anna Christou

There is funding for childcare/ travel costs so that you can attend Keep In Touch (KIT) days. These can be used for courses such as APLS, NLS or others and to have some experience on the ward to refresh your memory about prescribing etc. These will need to be organised in advance with the rota coordinator and HR and are best used just prior to returning back to training rather than deducting time off your maternity leave. If you feel that is something that will benefit you, do make use of them but also don't feel bad if you would like to enjoy your remaining days with your baby as it is not mandatory.

It also includes simulations and wellbeing seminars. These can be booked on the Hee Accent Course Manager. I recently attended one of their workshops called 'Supporting Working Parents'. The main reason for attending this was to try to establish ways that I can have a better work life balance and time management. What I found really useful about this course was reframing how I thought about difficult situations both at home and at work. Rephrasing and making situations positive. Although, I maybe struggling with bedtime after a twelve-hour day, I changed the thought process of 'I don't have to do bedtime with the baby', 'I get to do bedtime, I get to read them another story'. I also realised that I am my own worst critic; we need to silence those negative thoughts that are undermining our confidence and think about how we can be more productive with our time and working out solutions to problems instead of ruminating on them. . I also realised whilst trying to balance work and children, you neglect your own personal time and times with your partner. This is important because if you want happy children, you have to look within and change your own behaviour not your children's.

The workshop was also great at meeting other trainees from other specialities, although being virtual, it was still nice to understand what others are worried about. The speaker was really friendly, understanding and easy to listen to. I didn't switch off or get distracted throughout the session. I would really recommend it to anyone who feels they may need some help with transitioning back to work after absence. It was a very small group, so easy to open up about your worries despite them being strangers. By writing this reflection, I wanted trainees returning from time out of training to know that they are not alone. There will be feelings of anxiety, overwhelm, guilt and just not feeling good enough. You are more than good enough, lean on your support network, find ways to unwind and let go of stressful days and unhelpful thoughts. I find where I haven't been on social media or read the news, but instead reset my house ready for the next day and then straight to sleep, I do feel much better for it. What to do when you are in the thick of it at work and overwhelmed? Listen to my 5-year-old; take a 6-minute break, have a drink of water, prioritise. What is important and urgent, what is important but not urgent and what is just distraction adding to the noise in your brain? And like everything, this too shall pass. A great form tutor of mine once said, only worry about the things you can change, if you can't change the outcome in any way allow it to leave your thoughts.

My inbox is always open for anyone that needs it, I can't help you with your baby's sleep though, but we can share a nice latte and cake together.

Top tips for a smooth transition back to work...

By Anna Christou

- Plan your goals and career aims. Look at what you need to achieve ahead of your next ARCP before you go off and ensure you have a plan of action for when you return (safeguarding/NLS/APLS).
- Discuss your plans with your supervisors prior to leave and contact them in good time when returning to work. Ensure you have discussed any anxieties or concerns in mind.
- Make use of KIT days which can also be used for mandatory learning modules. These need to be done in the Trust where you have just left from and need to be done in the unpaid portion of maternity leave.
- If you feel you may struggle because it is a new department/ hospital for instance; talk to your supervisors/ HEEM about a period of being supernumerary / enhanced supervision.
- Accept the transition will be difficult, there will be feelings of guilt, stress and overwhelm. Accept these feelings are normal and all feelings pass!
- Ensure you have a support network to lean on. The Deanery has allocated 'families' for when you may need it.
- Have a contingency plan for when you have emergencies at home; who will take care of the children?
- Put in boundaries for when you are at home. Just because you are less than full time, doesn't mean you are 'off resting' on a day you have your children.
- Most importantly be kind to yourself!
- If you would like more information on SupoRTT. **My SuppoRTT (mysupportt.com)**
- The East Midlands Deanery; **SuppoRTT - Supported Return to Training | Health Education England East Midlands (eastmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk)**

COURSE REVIEW

By - Dimple Minhas

RETURN TO WORK COURSES

I commenced paediatric training as a full time trainee and returned as a Less Than Full Time (LTFT) trainee following maternity leave.

When planning my return to work, my biggest worry was the....**dreadful EQUATION** in my head:

BABY BRAIN + WORK = AMNESIAwhich made me worry about not being able to recall the dose of common medications or being unable to remember which antibiotic to give for XYZ condition and have I become rusty in my cannulation or intubation skills?...etc etc! However, you soon realise that these are all natural feelings and this **does get better with time**. But, I feel that the transition to return to work can be made a more positive experience by being organised, discussing plans with your supervisor in advance and attending appropriate course/es to address those anxieties and **regaining that self confidence** back to help with a more **positive** return to work.

I want to highlight some of the **courses** that I attended/participated and what I learnt from each to help with my confidence and made me a lot more comfortable and even excited to return to work.

1. **Paediatric Return to Acute Clinical Practice (PRACP) course** - hosted by the London School of Paediatrics. This was suppose to be a face-face course but due to COVID-19 had to be conducted virtually. This course is held in London and is free to attend for Paediatric trainees in London but I emailed the organiser who was happy for me to attend. It was a very helpful course because it entailed a very good mixture of simulation scenarios and very useful tips and talks about common paediatric and neonatal topics including PIMSTS which was a new and very frightening concept at that time. It was interactive and the organiser was very good at making each trainee feel at ease and address any worries. This course is now face-to-face and I would recommend if it is still available to trainees outside the London deanery.
2. **Return to training course** - held in Nottingham and available to South and North paediatric healthcare professionals. This was a 1 day course which covered simulation scenarios where each trainee got to play their own training level role alongside another trainee to manage the scenario. This felt very real and I found the simulation to be a very good confidence boost. The course also covered lectures on common paediatric topics which were helpful and a good refresher.

OUTPATIENT SIMULATION

I attended and participated in the **Outpatient based Paediatric Simulation session** and found it a useful session to learn and practice my outpatient skills in a confidential environment. It was held at the Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Course details - four paediatric trainees faced with four different scenarios which are commonly encountered in a paediatric clinic environment. Each trainee lead a scenario (40 minutes in total per scenario with 20 minutes for the simulation followed by 20 minutes for debrief and discussion) with an experienced patient simulator as a parent. Prior to the consultation, the trainee was provided with most of the information that one would get before seeing a child in a paediatric clinic setting. This was then followed by conducting a timed consultation between each trainee and the patient simulator whilst the rest of the team observed and later provided very useful feedback.

This session was mentored by Dr Muhammed Ali (consultant neonatologist), Dr Prem Sundaram (General Paediatrician), Dr Avineet Kaur (Neonatal GRID Trainee) and Adam Bonfield (Paediatric Trainee). As one can imagine, there was a variety of experience in the room to learn from in the form of valuable feedback and discussion of each scenario. It was a good learning opportunity in a supervised environment.

I also found the session very helpful to gain feedback of my communication skills, history taking and most importantly creating a safe management plan in a timely manner. I like to learn from others and felt this session gave me a perfect opportunity to do so from other participating trainees.

I would recommend this course to any trainee who feels they would like to gain more experience in a general paediatric outpatient setting regardless of their training stage and to trainees who plan to do the MRCPCH clinical exams as this would be very useful for the communication and history taking stations. It is also important to highlight that that these sessions are not an assessment and are rather structured towards creating a supportive, non-judgemental and a confidential learning environment. You will also be certified for participating and will be sent a summary of the learning points discussed during the session. Please see the link below for further information.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1olx0i58rVS_9QJtRIAlf_m1IH8rIV1JX3C8fiNkmyZg/edit#

Pearls of Wisdom from Dr BRIONY STONE

*Consultant Paediatrician with a
specialist interest in Paediatric
Allergy at the Leicester Royal
Infirmary*

*Interviewed by
Dimple Minhas*

How and when did you decide that allergy was what you wanted to specialise in during your general paediatric training?

During paediatric training I really enjoyed a few sub-specialties and I think it's really important to spend time exploring different sub-specialties before deciding on a definite career path. My first allergy experiences were during respiratory clinics investigating asthma triggers and attending some DGH allergy clinics. The sub-specialty is growing vastly and my medical school education contained very little allergy. I enjoyed learning and developing my knowledge/skills in allergy during my paediatric training as a relatively new sub-specialty which I previously knew little about. Specifically observing and learning about immunotherapy and the differences that it can make to children's/families quality of life. The growth in the specialty continues as do advances in research and treatments that can be offered which I find really interesting and challenging. My second child had cow's milk protein allergy (CMPA) and at the time there was a lot of scepticism about CMPA as a diagnosis. I therefore ignored a lot of his symptoms until he developed blood in his stool. I found the support and disbelief in CMPA as a diagnosis very difficult as parent. I did further research/training during this time and made enquiries about allergy SPIN training. I felt I wanted to be part of the growing sub-specialty, increasing awareness and improving management and support for children/parents of children with allergic conditions.

How do you relax at the end of the day?

Curling up on the couch with my two children before they go to bed and chatting about our days. After my children are in bed watching trashy television or playing netball/running.

Did you do any preparation/courses for stepping up, if so which ones and were they helpful?

The RCPCH education supervision course was really interactive and useful as educational supervision is not something you get much experience of as a trainee. Otherwise during my last 6 months of training in Northampton I did as much stepping up as possible, including acting as consultant for both the Paediatric wards and admissions unit. I would also advise trying to get as much outpatient experience as possible which can be difficult as Consultant workload contains a lot of this.

What do you wish you could tell yourself before starting?

As a senior registrar you lead ward rounds and work independently. This gives you plenty of experience for inpatient work so we should all feel less anxiety about stepping up especially if we make an active effort prior to CCT to get experience doing this.

Tell us something that surprised you about being a new Consultant?

The consultant contracts and Pas still really confuse me. The job in itself is a lot less defined in terms of specific hours/activity (except for scheduled clinics, on calls etc) as there is unpredictability and fluctuations in workload depending on what happens during on calls/clinics (safeguarding). I was aware of the high amount of outpatient work load and admin created from that, but it is an adjustment from working as a registrar which I am still adjusting to.

What has been the best thing about it?

I am really enjoying spending a lot of time in allergy but have the best of both worlds as I also love acute general paediatrics which I get exposure to through on calls weeks. The flexibility of being able to do admin at home if I need to is also really useful.

What has been the worst thing about it?

Adapting to longer on calls and learning to leave so that you can get enough rest to be able to perform clinical duties the following day for example clinics. As a registrar when on call you know what is happening in the department with patients throughout an entire shift and I think I therefore find it hard not knowing exactly what's going on all the time when on call.

How do you see your Consultant role evolving over the next 5 years?

Allergy is constantly evolving as a sub-specialty and immunotherapy is an ever expanding area. The most recent advances and changes in treatment options available are likely to be peanut immunotherapy. I helped on a research study during my training involving peanut desensitisation. I would hope to be able to further my experience in allergy and continue in a role working in the existing and to expand areas of the allergy service. As I am also a general paediatrician and really enjoy working in acute paediatrics I see myself continuing doing some work as a general paediatrician. Keeping my fingers and toes crossed.



POEM

Selected by Mahdieh Malekpour



Season's Greeting

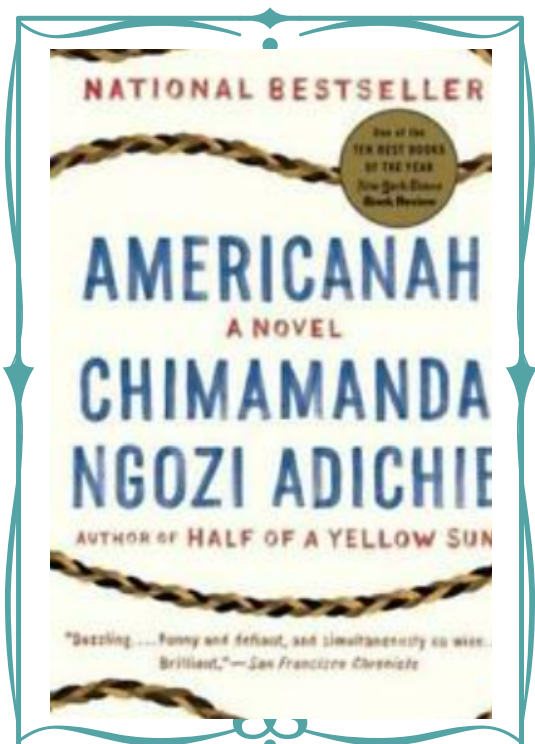
Seasons are like seasonings,
Each a complex taste
Amplifying appetites of
Souls with senses graced.
Open up your windows,
Nestle in your beds,
Scent the scents of wakening fields,
Gaze at golds and reds.
Revel in the tang of time
Even now when night
Ends too soon the caravans
Traveling towards light.
In gratitude for being
Now sing that all might hear!
Give the gift of merriment!
Sing of love and cheer!



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BOOK REVIEW - "Americanah" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche

Review by - Judwin Ndzo



I will most likely be taking you out of your usual realm with this book review by introducing you to Chimamanda Ngozie Adiche, who has been described as the female version of Chinua Achebe (Africa`s greatest writer/novelist). She is more widely known for her very thought-provoking talks on issues such as feminism and race. Mrs. Adiche is such a phenomenal writer with such an ability to transcribe thoughts into words, giving vivid imaginations to her readers - that her work is absolutely to be read!

The first book I read authored by Mrs. Adiche was "Half of a Yellow Sun" – I dabbled on this for a while before finally settling on Americanah, which I felt would be more relatable to my audience. Americanah is a work of fiction set in 3 countries – the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Nigeria. The book introduces its star characters, Ifemelu and Obinze, two teenage lovebirds from middle class Nigerian families who both separately immigrate to the USA and UK respectively, to find a better life. While Ifemelu, the protagonist of the book, becomes a successful blogger in the USA despite her struggles with newfound American racism, Obinze overstays his British visa and gets deported to Nigeria. Despite the shame, he overcomes his adversity and rises to become a successful property developer, getting married to Kosi who he claims not to love. When Ifemelu returns to Nigeria, the once fiery lovers, now excited at a new chance to rekindle their relationship, get entangled in a web of pain, deceit and culturalism.

When Ifemelu returns to Nigeria, the once fiery lovers, now excited at a new chance to rekindle their relationship, get entangled in a web of pain, deceit and culturalism.

One of the reasons why I love this book is how much Ifemelu`s story resonates with me – an African immigrant struggling to rise above the odds in a new country, America; yet her struggles with being labelled "Americanah" back home in Nigeria because she could no longer fit into the Nigerian ideology of life. Americanah embodies Americanization, love, gender, migration, money, cultural and racial issues and cuts across different social classes and societies. It does a good attempt at delving into the concept of blackness in Nigeria, USA and the UK, described with such vividness that you either relate to its scenes and characters or develop a better understanding of these contemporary issues. It will spark your mind and thoughts and take you into the bubbly city of Lagos with its metropolitan "Lagosians" all struggling to hustle – I actually felt like visiting Nigeria after I`d read the book.

If you want to get an insight on race, love, from the perspective of a well-travelled, outspoken and liberal African immigrant, then Americanah is a must read.

Keeping FIT or Keeping SLIM

By Judwin Ndzu



Hands up if you've hoped you could get a fitness routine, but have never actually had one? Or started the process and given up after a few goes? As medics, we all know keeping fit is one of the keys to a healthy life – but we are also human and we, like everyone else, have our own struggles. Most people dream of a fitness routine, but it takes motivation to actually get one. But having the right motivation is also important. Are you getting fit because you want to stay healthy? For weight loss? As a pastime? For company? These are all good reasons, but personally, I think staying fit for health purposes is probably the best reason to get a fitness routine. Many friends ask me why I work out often. "Do you want to lose weight?"

Well, I don't, is what I tell people. I won't barge into all the numerous benefits of keeping fit which we are all too familiar with, but my biggest motivation is cardiovascular fitness. For me, this automatically frees me of unrealistic and unsustainable targets. Having that cardiovascular fitness, that ability to take a flight of stairs and not be out of it, that briskness in one's step – is the main reason why I enjoy a fitness routine. Maintaining a good weight to me, comes as a side effect of a consistent fitness routine – which is also helpful for such a foodie like myself. Weight loss targets are good, but sometimes demotivating when one does not achieve the desired target fast enough. However, there is no easy way out if you really want to shed off some weight. Like a friend of mine said, "I have now stopped googling "How to lose weight without trying" and am now actively working out and watching my diet". Atta girl.

I am no fitness guru, but hey, I try. So I have a few tips on getting going. Start slow and gain momentum. When it comes to having a fitness routine, I find that many people suddenly wake up with a burning desire to start getting one, go hard and fast, then burn out and quickly fall back to the "I can't be bothered" mode. For anyone who is just starting, it's probably better to start gradually with regular outdoor walks, then brisk walks, then jogging; or soft fitness classes, etc. Be gentle to yourself! Getting a gym subscription is a good thing, but a waste of money if it's not put to use. For some, it could be a good motivation to go work out. Personally, I prefer outdoor activities as my dark skin could do with some vitamin D. It's also a breath of fresh air, sight seeing, you name it. Again, whatever works for everyone. I also wouldn't go jogging in a snow storm, so a gym subscription is always handy, especially the no-contract ones.

Cycling to work is another excellent way to incorporate fitness into one's routine. It eventually becomes cheap and time-saving. Fortunately, cycling is not hard to learn - with a few bumps and falls, of course. With the new road rules that have just been enforced, cycling will hopefully become safer – however, if you are a novice, map out your cycle route in advance and use cycle lanes as much as you can. If you have been thinking about it, now is probably the time especially with spring/summer coming up!

Lastly, I always say, remember that physical activity (encompasses exercise) is the aim. Activities that raise your heart rate are better, but any is better than none!

Finally, if you can, treat those muscles to a good massage! It gets really sore when you just start out or when you deviate from your routine. A soothing massage may just be what you need to rejuvenate that body and mind

The Babble Survey and the East Midlands School Conference Report

By Mahdieh Malekpour

Add a This year East Midlands School of Paediatric conference was one of the best I had seen. This year, the conference was still under the shadow of COVID-19 and was therefore held online. However, it is reassuring to know that the plan (should COVID permit) is to hold a face-face conference in 2023 as announced by Dr Fawke, the head of the School of paediatrics.

This year, the conference contained a great variety of oral and poster presentations from the presenters from different training levels. The range was from the invention of a low cost dummy for lumbar puncture training to QI projects and case presentations. A good change was that the poster presentations had an allocated slot to give an opportunity for attendees to look in detail.

We also had Dr Chadwick, the RCPCH vice president for training and, who informed everyone about the important updates about Progress Plus, the changes in the paediatric curriculum and hence the assessments and ARCPs. This would come to effect from August 2023.

At the end of the day, the prize winners of the best presentations and PAFTAs were announced in a special ceremony , and then we had a great presentation from external speakers about "Kindness in health care" and how to support each other.
little bit of body text

**The Babble team would love to hear your thoughts
about the Babble Newsletter and any changes or
recommendations that you may have.**

**Please find the link for the Babble Survey below
and provide your feedback.**

<https://forms.gle/Wa77Yj3KABMQJVbk6>

**Anything interesting to share or compliment a colleague?
Want to be a Babble member?
Contact any of the Babble committee members below or,**

Email us at babblenewsletter@gmail.com



Mahdieh Malekpour



**Dimple Minhas
Editor and Team Lead**



Darakshan Razzaq



Judwin Ndzo

**Introducing Our New Babble Member:
Anna Christou**