ICRS Sachdev Translational Innovation Fellowship 2026

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Fellowship Report

I am deeply grateful to ICRS, Dr. Ranjan Sachdev, and Dr. Daniel Grande for selecting me as an ICRS Sachdev Translational Innovation Fellow 2026 and for providing me with this unique opportunity to spend a week visiting some of the leading centres for cartilage repair, musculoskeletal research, and translational medicine in New York.

As a physician-scientist working in cartilage regeneration and tissue engineering, I found this fellowship particularly meaningful because it allowed me to interact with researchers and clinicians whose work I have followed and cited for many years. Beyond the scientific knowledge gained, the fellowship provided valuable mentorship, new perspectives on translational research, and opportunities to build international collaborations.

Day 1: NYU Langone Health

My fellowship began at NYU Langone Health under the guidance of Dr. John Kennedy and his team. The day included discussions on the challenges of translating laboratory discoveries into clinically meaningful cartilage repair strategies, as well as presentations on preclinical models of osteochondral repair and post-traumatic osteoarthritis.

The laboratory tour was particularly impressive, showcasing advanced imaging facilities including cryo-fluorescence tomography and microCT platforms. What I appreciated most was the emphasis on asking clinically relevant questions and designing research models that directly address unmet patient needs. As someone involved in both laboratory and translational cartilage research, this resonated strongly with me and reinforced the importance of maintaining a close connection between the bench and the bedside.

Day 2: Columbia University

The visit to Columbia University was one of the highlights of the fellowship. I had the opportunity to present my work *"Chondroprogenitor-Based Strategies in Osteoarthritis and Focal Defects"*, highlighting our ongoing efforts in cartilage progenitor biology, extracellular vesicle therapeutics, and osteochondral regeneration and discuss our ongoing cartilage regeneration research at Christian Medical College, Vellore. The discussions that followed were both encouraging and thought-provoking.

Meeting researchers such as Dr. Nadeen Chahine, Dr. Clark Hung, Dr. Gerard Ateshian, Dr. Helen Lu, Dr. Stavros Thomopoulos, and Dr. Treena Arinzeh was inspiring. I was particularly fascinated by the breadth of work underway in tissue engineering, mechanobiology, biomaterials, and tissue-interface regeneration.

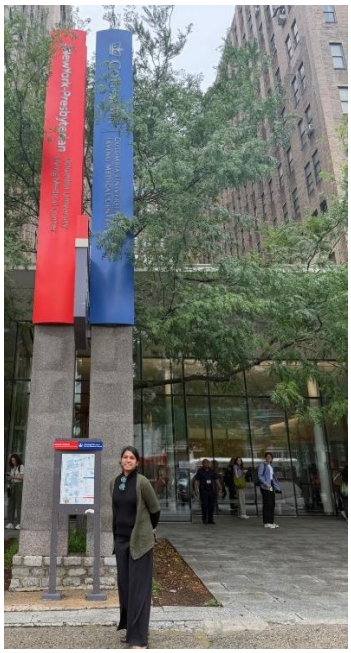
The laboratory visits provided insight into how engineering principles can be integrated with biological approaches to solve complex musculoskeletal problems. Many of the conversations sparked ideas that may be relevant to our own work involving cartilage progenitors, extracellular vesicles, and osteochondral tissue engineering.

Day 3: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

At Mount Sinai, we were warmly welcomed by Dr. James Iatridis and his team. Once again, I had the opportunity to present our research and receive feedback from experts working across different areas of musculoskeletal biology.

The discussions with Dr. Deepak Vashishth, Dr. Eva Gonzalez-Diaz, Dr. Woojin Han, and Dr. Nilsson Holguin exposed me to exciting work spanning bone biology, biomechanics, genetics, and skeletal tissue adaptation. I particularly enjoyed interacting with students and postdoctoral fellows and their enthusiasm and curiosity.

What stood out to me was the highly collaborative nature of the research environment, where clinicians, engineers, and basic scientists worked together to address challenging musculoskeletal problems.



Day 4: Hospital for Special Surgery

The day at Hospital for Special Surgery began early but proved to be one of the most memorable and rewarding experiences of the fellowship. Despite the long schedule, every session offered valuable learning opportunities. I had the chance to observe a wide range of clinical activities, including arthroplasty procedures and tendon repair surgeries, providing insight into the breadth of musculoskeletal care at HSS.

What impressed me most was the seamless integration of clinical practice, research, and education. The close interaction between surgeons, researchers, fellows, and trainees highlighted how clinical challenges can drive meaningful research questions and how research findings are translated back to improve patient care. The day concluded with the West Point Fellows Day Research Symposium, where it was inspiring to witness the enthusiasm for scientific inquiry and innovation among the next generation of orthopaedic surgeons and researchers.

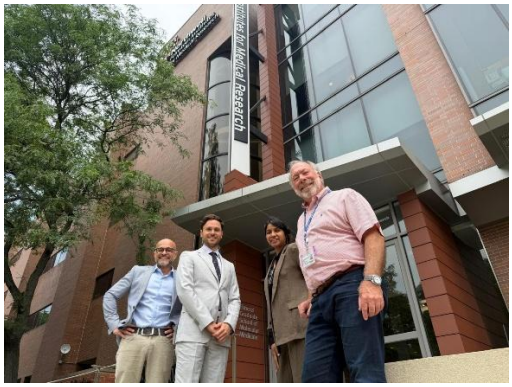
The experience reinforced the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration and strengthened my appreciation for the translational pathway that connects basic science discoveries to clinical impact.

Day 5: Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research

The final day at the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research was particularly special. Being hosted by Dr. Daniel Grande, whose contributions to cartilage repair and regenerative medicine have influenced the field for decades, was both an honour and a privilege.

The institute tour, scientific presentations, and discussions with faculty provided valuable insight into the development of successful translational research programmes. I was grateful for the opportunity to present my work and discuss future directions in cartilage regeneration.

One of the most memorable aspects of the fellowship was the generosity with which Dr. Grande and his colleagues shared their experiences, not only as scientists but also as mentors. Their passion for advancing the field and supporting the next generation of researchers was evident throughout the week.



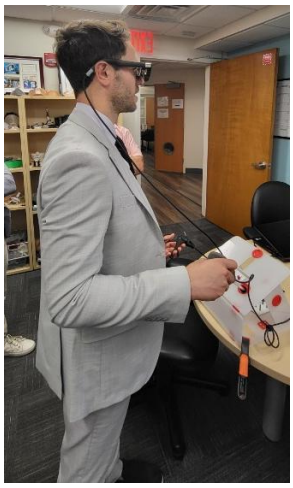
Beyond the Laboratory: Fellowship, Friendship and Mentorship

While the scientific programme was undoubtedly the highlight of the fellowship, some of the most memorable moments occurred outside the lecture halls and laboratories.

I am grateful to Dr. Ranjan Sachdev and Dr. Daniel Grande for their warmth and generosity throughout the week. A particularly special experience was spending time with Dr. Grande outside the academic setting, including a personal drive around the Northwell Health campus and a visit to his yacht club. These informal interactions provided valuable opportunities to learn from his experiences, discuss the evolution of cartilage repair research, and gain insights into building a successful translational research career.

The fellowship also provided opportunities for meaningful interactions with faculty and colleagues in relaxed settings. Our dinner at the Metropolitan Club with members of the NYU Langone team, including Dr. Scott Rodeo and other distinguished faculty, offered a unique opportunity to continue scientific discussions while also learning about their personal journeys, experiences, and perspectives on research and clinical practice.

A special thanks to my co-fellow, Dr. Domenico Franco, whose kindness, professionalism, and willingness to help made the week both enjoyable and memorable. From navigating New York City together to sharing scientific discussions and experiences throughout the fellowship, his companionship added greatly to the overall experience. What began as a professional interaction quickly developed into a genuine friendship, and I look forward to future collaborations and continued interactions within the ICRS community.



Reflections and thank you

As I return to India, I carry back far more than scientific knowledge. The fellowship provided new ideas, renewed motivation, and a broader perspective on how translational research can be structured to maximize patient impact.

Many of the discussions during the week resonated strongly with our ongoing work at the Centre for Stem Cell Research and Christian Medical College, particularly our efforts in cartilage progenitor biology, extracellular vesicle therapies, tissue engineering, and osteochondral regeneration. The exposure to different research models, technologies, and collaborative approaches will undoubtedly influence the direction of my future work.

Perhaps the most valuable lesson from this fellowship was the reminder that meaningful translational research is built not only on scientific excellence but also on collaboration, mentorship, and a willingness to learn from one another across institutions and disciplines.

I would also like to acknowledge Anouk and Anneke, whose meticulous planning, prompt assistance, and constant support ensured that every aspect of the fellowship was exceptionally well organized and seamless. I am equally grateful for the comfortable stay arranged at the New Yorker Hotel by Lotte, conveniently located in the heart of Manhattan, which served as an ideal base for the week's academic and fellowship activities.

I sincerely thank ICRS, Dr. Daniel Grande, Dr. Ranjan Sachdev, and all the faculty members who generously shared their time, expertise, and hospitality. It was truly an unforgettable experience, and I look forward to maintaining the friendships and collaborations established during this fellowship.