



Collaborating Across the Nation and the Globe

RENATO LOPES: Hi everyone, this is Renato Lopes, cardiologist and Professor of Medicine at Duke Clinical Research Institute at Duke University.

And today we're going to be talking a little bit about fellowship and the importance of training the next generation and the experience of international and also national collaboration with our fellows when they actually finish their fellowship and go elsewhere to continue their career. And no one better to illustrate that collaboration than Alex Fanaroff, who was a fellow with us at DCRI a few years ago, and now is at UPenn. So welcome, Alex, great to have you here.

ALEX FANAROFF: Great, thanks. I'm excited to be here to talk about the DCRI and the fellowship.

RENATO LOPES: Great. So Alex, as you know, I was a fellow at the DCRI many years ago in 2006, 2007, 8, and then I had the opportunity to come on faculty. And actually, right after coming on faculty I helped to lead the DCRI Fellowship Program for five, six years, which was a great experience because I think the fellows—they are really the heart of the institution and a priority in our mission. And you were a superstar fellow with us here, so tell us a little bit about your experience as a fellow.

ALEX FANAROFF: Yeah, so the fellowship was really a formative experience for me and a real highlight of my medical training. I was a DCRI fellow for two years, a chief fellow the second year. And the wonderful thing about the fellowship is the faculty mentorship and the ability to participate in research projects that are world-class and with really world-class people.

I don't think that that's matched anywhere, the ability to work on, you know, international clinical trials answering really important questions, to write review papers that are going to be in top journals and widely cited, and to do outcomes research with national databases and, more importantly, with the people that really understand the national databases and run the national databases.

It really, as an educational opportunity and as a career-building opportunity, it really is just incredible and and like nothing else that I know exists anywhere in the country.

And I mentioned the people at the DCRI, and especially the faculty mentors, and I think that that's a huge component of that. And I think that what is really striking is how much they invested in me. You know people like you, Renato, and my other mentors—Matt Roe, Tracy Wang, a ton of people—I'm sure I'm forgetting people.

The level of investment in me—not just when I was at the DCRI and you know, working on their projects and helping them out, but you know, beyond that.



RENATO LOPES: I think you're absolutely right, Alex. And that has been—I felt this as I was a fellow, so I can also be a testimony of what we just said.

And Alex, one of the key parts is for us to continue to collaborate when fellows go elsewhere, and I think we have done quite well in keeping collaborating important projects. Tell us a little bit how are we keeping up with the good work even with you not being physically at the DCRI.

ALEX FANAROFF: The ability to sort of bounce ideas off of you and talk to you about the things that I'm doing, and to hear from you about the things you're doing and the opportunities that you have, really, I think, furthers my career and it has helped me sort of get my feet under me here and provided opportunities to do high impact things.

The paper about the importance of randomized controlled trials versus common sense and observational data that that we published in *JACC* is really just I think a really good example of you know both what you learn at the DCRI fellowship and the types of things that you get to do at the DCRI.

You know, in a lot of ways, writing that paper sort of felt like almost a capstone of my fellowship experience, even though I started after, because the things you know things that I wrote are all things that I learned as a DCRI fellow and the people I wrote it with are people that I met as a DCRI fellow and continue to collaborate with.

RENATO LOPES: I think that paper really illustrates what DCRI is all about. And I would just add that that paper, when you look at the authorship list, also show the collaboration and the collaborative spirit that we do clinical research all over the world, and I think that paper really captures not only the quality of doing research, but how we do it and how we interact with people at the same time having fun, which is important.

ALEX FANAROFF: And Renato, you know, I know you have a lot of international collaborations and I know you started the BCRI. Can you tell me a little about the BCRI and how coming to DCRI as a fellow yourself and an international fellow helped you create an entire academic research organization?

RENATO LOPES: Sure, Alex, so that's an interesting story.

When I was a fellow at the DCRI, I experienced everything that is great about the institution that you just highlighted. And then I had the opportunity to come on faculty, was like a dream coming true. And then, of course, I wanted to expand that and give the opportunity to other fellows and to other people in South America and in Brazil to actually experience similar experiences and training.

And that's when you know, in a classic breakfast on a Saturday morning talking to Rob Califf, we decided to go ahead and pursue with the creation of the BCRI in Brazil to really be built as the first academic



research organization, really the first ARO in South America, to really try to be as the sister organization of DCRI in South America to run trials and to train people.

And in the last 13 years, 14 years, I think we have been very successful and lucky to be able to build this institution, have great faculty members, have fellows coming to the DCRI, going back, continue to work with us, run trials together with Duke.

And I think that has been really the next step—creating an entire institution to collaborate with Duke and to really expand and extend our learning and our experience and our footprint to other parts of the world.

ALEX FANAROFF: Yeah I think the impact of the BCRI, I mean you go to any cardiology meeting, there's a big BCRI presentation. It's been cool to see for you, I'm sure.

RENATO LOPES: I think that's the most important proof, if you will, of our spirit at the DCRI to train people to become independent researchers, independent physicians.

And I think you had also a great testimony and true example, a live example of the success of the fellowship program. So I'd like to thank you, Alex, for this great conversation. It's always great to catch up with you and, of course, keep up the great work, and let's continue to collaborate, because there are a lot of work still to be done and to help patients all over the world. Thank you very much, Alex.

ALEX FANAROFF: Thank you.