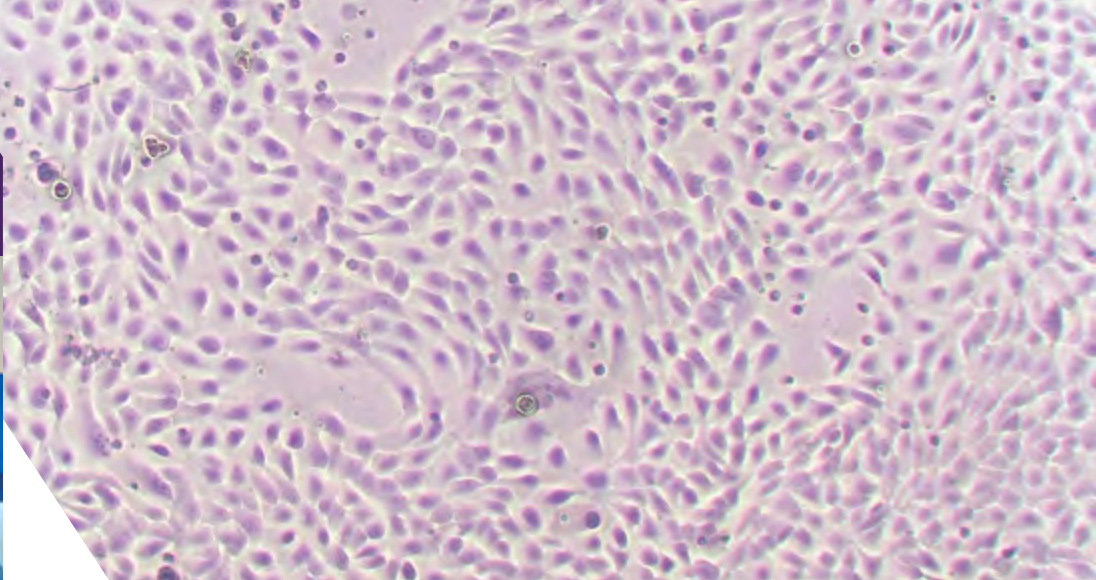




Juan Attard (top)  
Matthias Caruana (bottom)  
*Images courtesy of the authors*



Live cell image of immortalised N/TERT-1 keratinocytes.  
*Image courtesy of the authors*

## To Infinity and Beyond: The Journey of Student Researchers

Juan Attard and Matthias Caruana

Many science students aspire to become researchers from the early days of their studies. As Applied Biomedical Science graduates, both of us (Juan Attard and Matthias Caruana) performed laboratory work within a clinical setting involving the analysis of various human samples. However, it was only during our dissertation work that we started to understand what research was all about. We were both fortunate enough to have our own exciting projects that required a substantial amount of independent work. We designed our own experiments and optimised or troubleshooted them when we got unexpected results, all under the supervision of Dr Sholeem Griffin, Dr Jefferson de Oliveira Mallia, and Prof. Vasilis Valdramidis. Our efforts were greatly rewarded, as our work was published and presented at international conferences.

Being part of a diverse and multidisciplinary research group with multiple national and international research projects further broadened our perspective of what research entails by exposing us to new techniques and areas of study. Going on Erasmus in London and Plouzané, presenting at conferences in Edinburgh and Utrecht, attending workshops in Paris, and participating in local outreach events like Science in the City allowed us to present and discuss our results with a broader audience, helping us with networking and understanding the impact of our work. To continue our journey in research, we asked our supervisors about the prospect of contributing to a project at the postgraduate level. This led us to obtain a scholarship that supported us to pursue a research master's programme within the SANITAS project for our postgraduate studies, focusing on the toxicology of novel disinfectants.

There are a number of skills we are grateful to have gained from pursuing postgraduate work. We learned to schedule experiments as a team and use time management to make it to meetings, all while trying to have a social life. We developed public speaking skills from presentations, appreciating and adapting to linguistic nuances that come with having an international and culturally diverse team, and of course, we learned to deal with inevitable experimental failures and figure out what went wrong in our master plan of well-argued hypotheses and meticulously designed experiments. Wherever our future takes us, we hope to grow within our field of research and aspire for our contributions to have an impact on science, even if it is only infinitesimal. **T**

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