Khanh DO

Home Country: Vietnam

Degree: PhD in Neuroscience

Expertise: Neuroscience, Cell Biology, Molecular Biology

Research Focus: Lipid Mediators in Neurodegenerative Diseases

Host University: Louisiana State University, United States

Fellowship Awarded: 2016

Khanh Do was born in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly known as Saigon), Vietnam. Like many people born in the 1980s, she learned of the starvation and other difficulties faced by older generations during the Vietnam wars. She saw her own grandfather, who survived the wars, suddenly becoming forgetful, losing his vision, and within a year dying as a result of Alzheimer's disease. The inability of local doctors to help him fueled Khanh's interest in improving human health, and especially age-related degenerative diseases in her country.

Khanh studied at the University of Sciences in Ho Chi Minh City, an integral part of Vietnam National University (VNU), where in 2011 she received a BSc in Molecular Biology. She then worked in the Laboratory of Molecular and Environmental Biology at VNU, receiving several prizes for a research project about the treatment of patients with abnormally low concentrations of white blood cells, which serve as the body's primary defense against infections. Khanh subsequently worked as an intern at the Franco-Vietnamese Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City, where she learned about the clinical application of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to diagnose degenerative diseases, musculoskeletal disorders and tumors.

In 2013, Khanh was awarded a Vietnam Education Foundation scholarship from the US government to begin studies at the Neuroscience Center at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC) in New Orleans. She is particularly interested in emerging research from LSUHSC demonstrating how lipid therapy, particularly docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), can be used as a low-cost option to prevent and treat neuronal diseases.

DHA-based therapies can also be used in retinal diseases such as age-related macular degeneration and other ocular diseases; however, there is currently little ophthalmology research in Vietnam. Following her PhD and postdoctoral research, Khanh plans to return to VNU to establish the country's first eye research center, leveraging connections she has built with experts in the US.