



Dr. Mazen Soufi Ph.D.

spent at our Lab from April 2012 to January 2018

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On September 25 2017, I have obtained my PhD in Health Sciences from Kyushu University after 5 years I spent at Arimura Laboratory. I consider those years as one of the best learning periods in my life. Those 5 years were not only a period of knowledge acquisition, but also a tough, and in the same time enjoyable training on research in the field of Medical Physics. This field is multi-disciplinary and incorporates knowledge from applied mathematics, radiation physics, medical imaging, computer science and programming, oncology and cancer biology, thereby requiring a rich environment of theoretical knowledge and technical skills.

The research environment at Arimura Laboratory has a lot of activities and features, and as any educational environment, it also has challenges. The ‘Weekly Research Meeting’ is an essential activity, in which all students are required to present their research projects in English and discuss the results they obtained. Personally, I have acquired the most useful skills as a result of this meeting, such as the critical thinking and scientific communication. That is because Prof. Arimura asks deep questions about the presented ideas and results, and asks other students to propose ideas and discuss with the presenter. The questions might seem easy, but they would be hard to answer since the presenter is required to address them concisely, precisely and honestly. By this intensive follow-up, the research project grows regularly until reaching the important results to publish in scientific meetings and journals.

Besides the regular meetings, I used to discuss with Prof. Arimura my research problems in personal meetings. These meetings were a kind of brain-storming and extensive mentorship sessions. At the beginning of my study, I used to have a rigid way of thinking in which I look at the problems from a narrow perspective. Prof. Arimura has always encouraged me to ‘change my thinking and point of view’ and ‘not to forget the forest for the trees’. Such lessons have changed my thinking strategies, and helped me improve my ways for problem-analysis and generation of ideas. Moreover, I obtained a good experience in mentoring and advising undergraduate students, which is also an important skill for PhD students.

The language barrier was a main challenge for me during studying in Japan. Even though a lot of efforts are done for globalizing high education programs and scientific activities, it was hard for me to acquire up-to-date knowledge from industry and academic presenters in scientific talks. Prof. Arimura encourages students to present and communicate in English within the lab activities, but I believe that learning Japanese language is so supportive and necessary for integration with the Japanese people and academic life in Japan.

I’m getting now prepared for a next step in my research career. Being a member at Arimura Laboratory has granted me with important technical skills as well as life lessons, which altogether paved and will pave new roads to the academic and research goals in my life.