



FULBRIGHT – A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE



**ANA LÚCIA R. MOREIRA, MD¹
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY,
CENTRO HOSPITALAR DO OESTE, CALDAS DA RAINHA
FACULTY OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA**

Ten years ago my life would change forever. It all started with a search, a search for a scholarship, but not any kind of scholarship. Fulbrighters, would I come to realize months after, bring with them not only a seal of excellence but also the responsibility to continue giving back to the world.

The development of my project in the United States of America began in 2008 and although it was initially predicted to last only one year, it ended up lasting two. Fortunately, I had been granted not one but two scholarships, and for that I have to thank Fulbright too, whose representatives in Portugal – special thanks to Paula Lemos and Otilia Macedo Reis – efficaciously responded to all my questions so that I could accept the Fundação para a Ciência e

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Tecnologia – Portugal scholarship too.

I first developed my project at the Center of Excellence for Research and Treatment of Bipolar Disorder (CERT-BD) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). In my second year the lab moved and I moved as well up North to the Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging in Massachusetts.

During my first year I also had the chance to attend the Fulbright Enrichment Seminar in San Antonio, Texas. Needless to say, for those two years I have learned a lot, I applied several questionnaires, attended several courses, got certifications but, most importantly, I got to know people that I became friends with, that I continue communicating with, that I continue collaborating with.

At the CERT-BD improbable investigators became my most dependable collaborators, years have gone by and we are still publishing, contributing to the bipolar disorder² field³.

At the Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging I acquired several skills that lead me to become member of yet another society, both that membership and contact with some of the investigators at the Martinos Center are key to keep up to date with novelties in neuroimaging.

From the Fulbright Enrichment Seminar I retain incredible experiences and friends, from several different countries. Sometimes, Portugal just seems too small; changing ideas gives the world deep meaning and makes it amicable.

Fulbright is a door open to new and valuable experiences, it is a starting point, it brought us here.... thinking of one of our most cherished poets⁴.... the future, who knows?

² Moreira ALR, Van Meter A, Genzlinger J, *et al.* "Review and meta-analysis of epidemiologic studies of adult bipolar disorder". *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2017;78(9): pp. 1259–1269.

³ Van Meter AR, Moreira AL, Youngstrom EA. "Meta-analysis of epidemiologic studies of pediatric bipolar disorder". *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2011;72(9): pp. 1250–1256.

⁴ Pessoa, F. *Livro do Desassossego: Composto por Bernardo Soares, Ajudante de Guarda-livros na Cidade de Lisboa*. Editora Companhia das Letras. 2006, p. 118.



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