



Scholarship is strong medicine

By DENISE S. CAHILL

FIFTH year University of Indonesia medical student Rizka Zainudin recently spent five weeks in Perth on an International Skills and Training Institute in Health (ISTIH) elective placement scholarship.

The 22-year-old – ISTIH's first scholarship student – worked at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital (SCGH) and boarded with ISTIH medical director and University of WA Professor of Medicine Bruce Robinson.

ISTIH chairman Michael Henderson, of Peppermint Grove, said the \$2000 scholarship enhanced links between ISTIH – a University of WA-based non-profit group that provides training for medical professionals in countries including Indonesia and Myanmar – and the University of Indonesia.

"She speaks English well and is interested to come and further her education and becomes a long-term mentor within the organisation (ISTIH) in Indonesia," Professor Henderson said.

"The idea is to take someone out of their own environment and give them some extra support so they know what other countries can be like."

Ms Zainudin said she built her skills in diagnosis and treatment during her time at SCGH.

She said Indonesian doctors



Prof Michael Henderson, Rizka Zainudin and Prof Bruce Robinson.

Picture: Andrew Ritchie

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dealt with more infectious diseases, so she was able to learn more about conditions such as cystic fibrosis, which is less common in her country.

"In developing countries we need to learn a lot from developed countries like Australia," Ms Zainudin said. "Things are more modern here where they use a PET scan and CT scan. In Indonesia we focus more on a physical exam."

Winthrop Professor Bruce Robinson, who was recently named West Australian of the Year 2013, said ISTIH's student

exchange program helped build on the next generation of doctors.

Prof Robinson said he was reluctant to accept the West Australian of the Year nomination until his wife told him 'It's all about what you do'.

"If the work I do gets some sort of promotion and people become more aware of it that's great.

"My ancestors are Swan River Colony pioneers so I felt quite moved that five or six generations later I get West Australian of the Year... I felt quite connected."