ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
First and above all, اللهم ربي العالمين, all the praises be to God, the Lord of the Worlds.

I still remember when I did my research project for my master’s degree five years ago. I had to stay in the lab for 12-15 hours/day for two weeks, collecting the data. I skipped meals most of the time just because I was too busy to sit down and eat. As a consequence, I was hospitalized due to acute gastritis. At the time, I told myself that I would never do any works in the lab or research for my future career. But here I am finishing my doctoral degree after 4.5 years. It was not because I did not have any other options, but more because I know that I love what I do. On the other hand, I would also like to point out that I would never have reached this far (alive!) had I not been surrounded by people who supported me during my PhD. They made this journey possible and even more enjoyable, and for that, I would like to take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to them.

I have been fortunate to work with two great scientists, my promoters: Prof. Geny Groothuis and Prof. Klaas Poelstra. I extend my deepest thanks to them who patiently gave me not only scientific related advice but also taught me about the fundamental values to be a good researcher. Geny, I still do not know how to thank you properly. Without your continuous support and guidance, I do not think I could manage to finish my PhD on schedule. I am always amazed and inspired by your thoughts and criticisms. Not to mention, you are a trustworthy person and a very good listener with whom I can share about everything from works to personal life. Klaas, despite your very tight schedule, you always manage to fit me in when I need to discuss my research with you. In fact, the limited time that we had actually taught me to prepare the meeting well and to make it as efficient as possible. Thank you for believing in me and supporting me in overcoming numerous obstacles I have faced through my research.

To the people back in Indonesia, thank you for giving me the opportunity to study in the Netherlands with the financial support provided by the Indonesian Directorate General of Higher Education (DIKTI). Special thanks to mbak Citra for being very helpful in organizing the funding, which is, obviously, not an easy job. My thanks also to Prof. Wim Quax and Tim Zwaagstra who interviewed me for the PhD position.

I would like to thank the reading committee, Prof. Grietje Molema, Prof. Peter Olinga, and Prof. Ronald Oude Elferink, for their willingness to assess my thesis.

My sincere thanks also go to Leonie and Inge for their kind collaboration and encouragement. Leonie, people always come to you when they need to discuss about immunohistochemical staining, and, indeed, you are the expert in the group. I admire your way of guiding your students and the way you explain things, which reflect your immense knowledge. Inge, I thank you for helping me
to finish the last experiment chapter of my thesis. I know that my research topic is not your field of study, but I really appreciate your valuable feedback and inputs.

To my paronym, Gillian, ‘the godmother’ who is always willing to listen to my stories, even the random ones. I am a firm believer that the first person that I meet in the office will influence my mood for the whole day. And that is the reason why, Gillian, I always started my morning by going to the coffee machine because I know that the first person that I would meet is you, the most cheerful one in the group. To my other paronym who is also my office roommate, Vale, the blue-eyed, smart Italian young woman whom I will miss a lot when I leave. I am grateful to be in the same room with you in the last 2.5 years. Our small talk and the five-minute of doing nothing, just staring at the window will be much missed. You know I always enjoy discussing things with you on different topics, from science to politic. Even better, I like the fact that we never gossiped about people (well, except about Keni :p). If there was one thing that I regret about our friendship, that would be the fact that among so many travelling plans we made, none has been executed. Regardless, I wish you all the best in finishing your PhD and I hope you can come to visit me in Indonesia someday.

Prof. Barbro Melgert and Dr. Anna Salvati, thank you very much for your questions and suggestions about my presentations in the research meetings. Anna, I thank you, (as well Christoffer, and your cute daughter, Sofia) for the international dinners at your home.

I would also like to express my profound gratitude to my best friends, who support me throughout my years of study and through the process of writing this thesis. Nadya, I am extremely grateful to have a genius, beautiful and thoughtful best friend like you or I should call you sister because we are very close. You have been motivating me since we started Wangsa Jelita and you have been helping me with everything, and I will need hundreds of pages if I have to list them. You have always been there, through my ups and downs. I hope you find 'the one' that you have been looking for (soon, inshallah!). You know that you are always in my prayer and I hope our friendship lasts forever. Niar, I am inspired by your dedication to all your works and responsibilities. Although we always speak so loudly (sometimes fiercely) to each other, I somehow believe that that is our unique way to demonstrate how much we care about each other. Frankly, sometimes you annoy me with your curiosities or your “unfiltered remarks,” but I must admit that all the things that you said to me have encouraged me to be a better person. Our friendship means a lot to me and I hope you can finish your PhD soon. Mackenzie, you are the first person whom I met from our research group and we have been friends since then. You taught me a lot about PhD life, about how to deal with different people, and how to cope with the culture shock. You, being a very good listener, are the one whom I always call to seek advice. Some other times, I call you just
simply to talk about random things, and it is amazing how we can spend hours in doing so. I hope we can keep in touch though I will no longer be in the Netherlands. Syarif, our conversations on both serious and random topics were something that I really enjoyed. Now I really miss it since we rarely talk. Nevertheless, just know that I always admire your thoughts and your perseverance in pursuing your dream. Thank you for showing me the most valuable lesson in life that changes my perspectives. I wish you all the best for your life.

I would also like to thank the lab technicians for their great help during my PhD. Eduard, ‘the minion’ :P, thank you for your help with the in vivo experiment. I was fortunate to have you as my office roommate for 3 years. Thank you for helping me with many things, from lab to computer-related stuff. Catharina, thanks for teaching me all the cell-related experiments, staining, and even small yet important things like how to close the lid properly. Marina, you helped me a lot in the final year of my PhD. Thank you, thank you, and thank you! You are always well prepared with the experiments, which inspired and encouraged me to finish it on schedule. Despite the difficulties we had in one of the stainings, you just never gave up. So glad that in the end, we managed to solve the problem. Jan, thanks heaps for your help in the lab. You are one of the most hardworking and meticulous person I have ever known. I am happy that I get to know you and your wife, Riet. Marjolijn and Dorenda, I thank the both of you for the technical assistance in the slicing lab.

My sincere thanks and appreciation also go to my colleagues and people who have willingly helped me out with their abilities. Thanks to those who already left the group, Marlies, Adriana, Karin, Xiaoyu, Inge Westra, Hans Proost, Amit, Kaisa, Christa, Prof. Angela Casini, Benoit, Andrea, Ming, Suresh, Carian, Christina, and Bert Stok. Viktoriia, thanks so much for the Ukrainian lab coat, which really took me by surprise. You are one of the most professional researchers that I have ever met in my entire life, and I believe that you are one of the role models for all the PhDs in our group (including my own self :)). Adhyat, your strength in facing all the problems that you have is truly admirable. You are still smiling even though you are hurt (whilst complaining). You, Nuri and Zidni are like family to me. I really hope we can all stay in touch despite the distance. Keni, your “magical comments” never failed to surprise me. I am sorry that I always teased you. Nevertheless, you must know that having you as my office roommate is one of the best memories in Groningen that I will remember my whole life. Daphne, I thank you very much for helping me with the Dutch summary. For other PhDs in PTT group (Fransien, Roberta, Laura, Anienke, Gwenda, Aldy, Hector, Shanshan), and other groups (Jo, Su, Radit, Nia, Gerian, Mitchel, Zainal, Hegar, and Vessa), all the best in finishing your PhD! Nikolasos, Robert, Hannah, Marilena and Prof. Frank Dekker are thanked for the warm greetings they offered almost every morning or when we met in the corridor. Thea, I had a great time when we travelled together to Indonesia. I was so happy that I got to introduce you to my family. My best wishes to you to
finish your PhD, and I hope you will get a job that you have always dreamt of. I would also like to express my gratitude to other colleagues in PTT, Henk and Sarah, Sylvia, welcome back to the group. I enjoy our conversations and I think it was nice of you to visit me in the office every time you visit the group after you left. To my students, Sanne, Keri, Niels, Safiya, thanks for helping me with the projects, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. Niels, thank you for giving me the opportunity to be featured in “Foliolum”.

I would like to express my warm thanks to Roopali Roy, who invited me to visit the lab of the late Dr. Folkman when I attended the conference in Boston. I feel so blessed to meet a person of your caliber. You taught me a lot about life as a scientist during our short meeting in Boston. I hope I can visit you again sometime in the future. Meanwhile, feel free to let me know whenever you want to visit Indonesia. I am more than happy to show you the beauty of my beloved country.

I would like to express my gratitude to my friends in Indonesia. Ina, I thank you so much for designing my thesis cover! You know I always admired your works when I was still working for Wangsa Jelita. I admire you not only because of your amazing talent, but also because you are a very committed designer who always manages to finish your works ahead of schedule. In fact, I admire you so much that I have thought of asking for your help to design my thesis cover even since I started my PhD. Thanks to my best friend, kak Ranov, with whom I have been friends for a decade. You are still the same cheerful person that I first met. You are very persistent with your dream, and that still inspires me until today. I hope you will achieve everything in life you wish for, and always be a good “imam” for Anggi, Kimo and Aimar. Bunga, my ex-roommate who taught me how to be “muncung”, I think you must be proud because I am a lot more “muncung” than you are now :p. Wahyu Adhi a.k.a Unta, thank you for your advice on living in the Netherlands. You always give me valuable advice about life, and I really miss the conversation and discussion that we used to have when we both were studying in Bandung. May you, Anggun, and Azka be blessed with a lifetime of happiness. Ujang, the brilliant and humble guy, I am extremely lucky to get to know you during your time in Groningen. You always bring a positive atmosphere for the people around you. Thank you for your continuous support and please do keep in touch.

Many thanks to my ex-ITB colleague, KK Farmasetika (pak Yeyet, bu Cici, bu Sasanti, bu Lucy, bu Heni, bu Debbie, bu Catur, bu Jessie, pak Saleh, pak Rahmat, pak Sundani, pak Diky, pak Sukma, and teh Nana), pak Daryono, bu Elin, pak Ketut, bu Ima, kang Insanu, teh Neng, bu Marlia, bu Sophi, and Dewi. Bu Cici, you were my supervisor for my bachelor’s and master’s final projects, who introduced me to the research world. I could not thank you enough for your kindness and continuous guidance. Bu Lucy, thank you very much for your brainy advice.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my ITB-Malaysian friends, Farhanah and family, and Yati . Thank you for keeping in touch with me though we are miles away and have not seen each other for years. To my RUG-Malaysian friends, Dzizat, Nadiah, and Reeny, I hope I can visit you someday in Malaysia.

I would like to thank my Indonesian friends who live in or used to live in Groningen, GengGongGron (Mackenzie, Widi, Ocha, Rieza, Geby, Aulia, Ysbrand, Dotti, and Putri), Ela, Hanhan, Cyndy, mbak Arie, om Herman, mbak Tiur, mas Ronny, mbak Inung, Tgas, mbak Roxel, pak Asmoro, bu Rini, Didin, Guntur, Fean, Rully, and not to forget, my friend Sarlita in Wageningen. Dotti and Putri, we started this PhD journey together and we were known as trio pharma. PhD life is not easy for us, but we kept motivating each other and we knew that we would finish it at some point. I could not thank you enough for your support during my hard time and for listening to me when I have troubles. I still remember when we cried together listening to Takbir during our first Eid al-Fitr in Groningen. I wish nothing but your happiness with the people that you love, in whatever plans you have for your life. Ocha, I feel fortunate to meet you in the first year of my PhD, thank you for the advice that you gave me and for inspiring me with your perseverance. Ela, you always inspire me with your ambition which is reflected from the number of places that you have visited during your PhD ;p, yet you manage to work hard (even working overnight in the lab). I am looking forward to our future adventures in our beloved city, Bandung. Hanhan, I am very proud to have a friend like you, a very kind-hearted man and a great pianist. All the best in finishing your study! Bhimo, the cheerful guy, I thank you for being my photographer on my defense and all the best in finishing your master’s degree. My thanks also go to Grup Sayur Lodeh (mbak Awalia, mas Yayok, mbak Ferro, mas Didik, Neily, Auliya, Niar, mbak Astri, Morita, Dotti and Putri) for the countless lunches and coloring my life with “most of the time not so important” discussions—which helped me a lot when the stress of writing my thesis took its toll. Special thanks to the Suwantika family (Auliya, Neily, Almira, …), with whom I live for the last 9 months of my PhD. The warmth of your family and the way you treat me as if I am a part of it has made my homesick bearable. I hope our friendship will stay forever. And Almira, I thank you for cheering me up whenever I feel down. You are an amazing girl and I wish you a bright future, just as bright as your smile, if not more.

Last but never the least, I would like to thank my family. Om Yebeik and kak Ija, thank you for your kindness and support. Habibi a.k.a Jiji, my super genius brother, whose thoughts, perseverance, and love to Ellen and Rafif have inspired me. Thank you for your unflagging support. Ellen, you are a very thoughtful and talented woman and my brother is the luckiest man in the world to have you as his wife. Bu Enab, Lia tidak tau bagaimana harus membalas kebaikan dan perhatian bu Enab yang selama ini sudah menjaga dan merawat Mama, terima kasih banyak untuk semuanya. Mama dan Aba, terima kasih banyak untuk dukungan dan doa yang diberikan ke Lia selama ini, yang tidak akan
mungkin pernah bisa Lia balas. Terima kasih karena selalu mengingatkan Lia untuk selalu menyeimbangkan kehidupan dunia dan akhirat serta selalu mengingatkan agar tidak meninggalkan sholat. Gelar yang Lia dapat ini tidak ada apa-apanya dibandingkan dengan pelajaran hidup yang mama dan Aba telah tanamkan ke Lia sejak Lia kecil. Hanya Allah yang bisa membalas kasih sayang yang Mama dan Aba berikan ke Lia.

World, I am ready for the new chapter of my life, the future challenges, and the greater life ahead.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Dr. Amirah Adlia
Amirah Adlia was born on November 7th, 1987 in Palembang, Indonesia. In 2004, she moved to Bandung to continue her study after finishing her senior high school. She earned her bachelor’s and master’s degree with *cum laude* in Pharmaceutical Science and Technology from the School of Pharmacy, Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), Indonesia. During her bachelor’s study, she was awarded a scholarship by the Tanoto Foundation. In addition, she obtained her official license as a pharmacist from the same university. After becoming a licensed pharmacist in 2009, she started her social and natural beauty product company, Wangsa Jelita, together with her two friends. She was the chief technical officer of Wangsa Jelita, and at the same time, she did her master’s degree with the research project entitled “Chitosan microbased scaffold for wound healing acceleration”. Immediately after finishing her master’s degree, she served as an academic assistant in the Pharmaceutical Research Group, ITB for one year, and she also worked on the “Community Empowerment” project, funded by the British Council and the Arthur Guinness Fund for Wangsa Jelita. In September 2012, she started her PhD candidacy with a scholarship by the Indonesian Directorate General of Higher Education (DIKTI). She did her doctoral research in the division of Pharmacokinetics, Toxicology and Targeting, department of Pharmacy at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands under the supervision of Prof. Geny Groothuis and Prof. Klaas Poelstra.

Besides doing scientific research, Amirah loves taking pictures and she is particularly interested in the monochrome photography.