

Who are the women involved in STEM?

The most rewarding part of my job is

“ Learning something new all the time. I am in awe of how complex the human body is, and I feel lucky to work in an environment where I get to contribute, along with all the other incredible researchers around the world, to increasing our knowledge of how the human body works.

Professional

Top-level responsibilities

Using genetic data to understand the causes of human disease, in particular heart and brain-related disorders.

Day-to-day work and skills

Statistical analysis of genetic data; supervision of PhD and postgraduate students; collaborating on projects with researchers across the world.

Personal

Current location and community

I have Indian ancestry but was born in Kenya and also lived in the United Kingdom for over 10 years before moving to Brisbane.

My interests and hobbies

I love dance – I have learnt Ballet, Indian Classical, Latin and was part of an Arabic dance group in London. I love the outdoors, especially given the awesome Brisbane weather!

I am passionate about

Learning new things either related to or unrelated to my work. When you learn, you grow.

What I would say to 16-year-old me

It's OK not to know exactly what career path you will take and it's also OK to change your career path. Pursue the things that make you happy.



Sonia Shah

NHMRC Early Career Fellow

University of Queensland

In school I really enjoyed biology, but I knew I didn't want to become a medical doctor, which is what I was advised to do.

I chose to study Biochemistry at university, with one year in industry working in the drug discovery team of a small cancer biotech company. I realised during this time that the wet-lab wasn't for me, so I did a Master of Science in Bioinformatics.

I worked as a Bioinformatics consultant for four years and worked with many different people on many different projects, including one in heart genetics.

I decided to pursue a PhD part-time in heart genetics whilst working full-time as a senior research officer.

I was successful at securing an NHMRC early career fellowship, which has helped me establish myself as an independent researcher.