



Dr Kajal Gokal

Senior Research Associate

I explore health-related behaviour change interventions to empower individuals to make positive changes to their health and wellbeing. I have a strong interest in how new approaches involving both digital technology and self-managed physical activity can help achieve this goal.



Physical activity can reduce the risk of cancer, treatment related symptoms and the risk of re-occurrence in some cancers. Yet, most of the population remains inactive and physical activity is not routinely promoted to patients by their cancer healthcare professional during or after cancer treatment.

My work focuses on the implementation of behaviour change interventions to support the uptake and maintenance of physical activity for both primary and secondary cancer prevention. This involves addressing the barriers to physical activity during and after treatment as well as providing support and the tools to manage and monitor progress. Working with patients and health care providers, I aim to tailor digital interventions specifically for adults affected by cancer.

Ultimately, I hope that these digital tools can be embedded within routine cancer care so that all patients are supported to increase their physical activity levels and improve their health and chances of survival.

Post 16 Education:

AS Level Ethics and Philosophy
A Level English Language,
Psychology and Sociology

Higher Education:

BSc Human Psychology at Aston University
PhD focussed on the implementation of a self-managed, physical activity intervention among breast cancer patients during active chemotherapy treatment at Loughborough University

I began researching the impact of physical activity for cancer management and treatment because I was intrigued by the area and wanted to know more about it. The more I looked into the subject the more excited I became, then when I started working with patients and seeing how they benefitted from physical activity it motivated me to work harder and ensure all patients experience the benefits. I also really enjoy the practical implementation of my research.





WHY IT MATTERS... SPORT, EXERCISE & HEALTH



Loughborough
University

Kajal's experience as a student

I specifically chose my undergraduate course because it allowed me to do a placement in my third year. This was one of the best experiences of my life as I chose to work in Australia. I worked in a private practice with a clinical psychologist and learnt and experienced a lot whilst shadowing her. I would highly recommend a placement year as it taught me so much more than I could have ever learnt through lectures and extra reading. I also learnt a lot about living alone and travelled Australia during my time off.

Kajal's Career

After completing my undergraduate degree in Psychology at Aston University I furthered my interest in behaviour change and physical activity through a PhD at Loughborough.

Following a Research Associate post at Coventry University joint with Public Health Warwickshire for three years, I returned to Loughborough in 2019 where I lead on the prevention and treatment of diseases within The Centre for Lifestyle Medicine and Behaviour (CLiMB).

In 2020, I secured a five-year role funded by the National Institute for Health Research to explore innovative lifestyle interventions to improve population health.

I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to explore my passion further whilst working alongside world-leading experts in the field at the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine (NCSEM).

Kajal's advice: It can be difficult and daunting when choosing subjects and trying to decide on what career path you would like to take. From experience, I would recommend choosing areas or subjects that you enjoy the most and are most passionate about. Another thing I have learnt is that I always achieve the most when I break out of my comfort zone and do something that feels like a challenge to begin with.

Believe in yourself and anything is possible with hard work and dedication.

Loughborough University offers undergraduate degrees in

Sport Science, Coaching and Physical Education / Sport and Exercise Science / Sport Management / Sport and Exercise Psychology / Psychology / Sport Technology

Please note: Degrees and their titles change over time. Some graduates may have studied degrees that have evolved and changed in response to changes in demand from employers.