

## Cathy Davies

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### Winner of the Hannah Steinberg BAP Conference Bursary

I am currently a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN) at King's College London, working with Professor Sagnik Bhattacharyya on the effects of cannabidiol in people at clinical high risk for psychosis. My research interests centre on using neuroimaging and experimental medicine to develop novel treatments that better target the pathophysiology driving psychosis onset.



Following my undergraduate degree, I worked for two years in an inpatient unit for people with severe and enduring mental illness. It was here that I developed an interest in the neurobiology of psychotic disorders and the idea that early intervention, prior to psychosis onset, might offer a unique opportunity to alter the course of the disorder. I then went on to do an MSc in Psychiatric Research at the IoPPN, where I graduated with the Sir Robin Murray Prize for Academic Excellence.

I recently completed my PhD in Biological Psychiatry, supervised by Dr Paolo Fusar-Poli and Professor Philip McGuire and funded by the IoPPN Excellence PhD Studentship. My doctoral research investigated treatments for people at risk of psychosis using network meta-analysis, MRI and pharmacological challenge with oxytocin. The meta-analytic work, for which I recently received an Early Career Researcher Paper of the Year Prize, revealed a lack of evidence for the efficacy of current treatments for preventing transition to psychosis and reducing symptoms. Results from my MRI studies suggested that an acute dose of intranasal oxytocin modulates hippocampal blood flow in these patients—a key pathophysiological target strongly implicated in psychosis onset—and therefore warrants further investigation as a candidate novel treatment. This was the research I presented at the BAP Summer Meeting and for which I was generously awarded the Hannah Steinberg Bursary. I am thrilled to receive the bursary and take this opportunity to sincerely thank the BAP for making my attendance possible and for hosting such a fantastic and engaging conference!