Kristi Sawyer
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Winner of the BAP/RCPsych Poster Prize

I am currently in the third year of my PhD at King's College London, under the supervision of Professor Carmine Pariante and Dr Patricia Zunszain, and funded by the MRC. My topic is the impact of maternal antenatal depression on subsequent child development. For this, I am jointly running the Psychiatry Research and Motherhood-Depression (PRAM-D) Follow-Up study, following the families of women who were either depressed, or not depressed, during their pregnancy.

Before my PhD, I graduated with a BSc in Pharmacology with First Class Honours from Newcastle University in 2016. During this degree, I undertook an industrial year in the Biological Sciences department at GlaxoSmithKline. I was also awarded an ERASMUS grant to conduct the research for my undergraduate dissertation in a laboratory at the Institut Pasteur, in Paris.

Alongside my PhD, I am particularly passionate about scientific engagement activities. I host work experience placements with students aged 16-18, as well as taking part in initiatives such as 'I'm a Scientist, Get Me Out of Here', where school children can find out more about research and the career of a scientist. I also mentor students in completing academic assignments as part of the 'Realising Opportunities' programme, which assists students in accessing university. Finally, I am a regular blogger on our lab's blog publication 'InSPIre the Mind', sharing scientific concepts in an easy-to-access way.

I feel honoured to have been awarded the RCPsych/BAP poster award for my poster entitled "Maternal antenatal depression is associated with suboptimal foetal and neonatal development". In it, I summarised results from our PRAM-D study, showing that antenatal depression is associated with smaller foetal head circumference, which is in turn associated with lower neonatal development scores, particularly social interaction. I enjoyed discussing these findings at the excellent summer meeting in Manchester and am very grateful for this award.