

A SCIENTIST JUST LIKE ME



Dr Priscilla Day-Walsh
Research Scientist



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Hi there! I am Dr Priscilla Day-Walsh – A research scientist



Where do I work?

I am a Research Fellow at the Centre for Trophoblast Research (CTR), University of Cambridge. I work at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

What did I like doing when I was at school?

I enjoyed searching for lost things, so I could boast about finding something others could not. Although I didn't know it at the time, this was the start of my scientific curiosity.

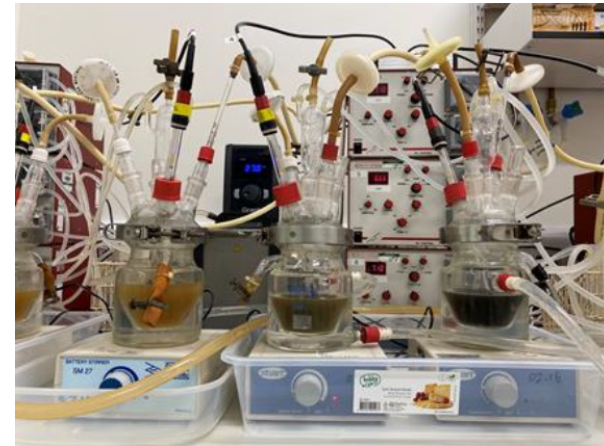
What do I like doing in my spare time?

I like bird watching, although I wouldn't describe myself as a 'twitcher'. I also love reading Thomas Hardy novels and poems.

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What do I do as a research scientist?

I work with microbes to understand how they transform the food we eat into something that can be either toxic or beneficial to our body. I also use human cells to find out how digested food samples affect the development of a baby, and health across the lifespan.



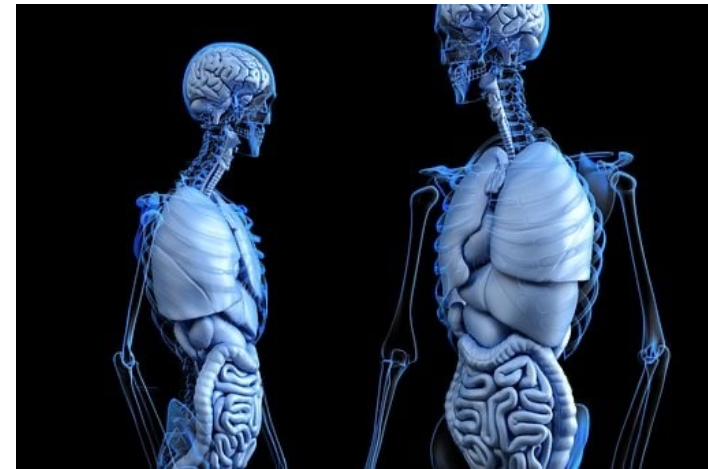
How does what I do make the world a better place?

My research could provide new ways for detecting, preventing and treating problems in pregnancy that may result in the death of the mother, the foetus or the baby. It may also prevent the development of certain diseases and improve quality of life, and it could save governments billions of pounds.

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What I like about my job

I like that I get the opportunity to find out new things about microorganisms and their impact on the human body. I like being able to go to conferences to tell other scientists about it, and also engaging with the public about my work.



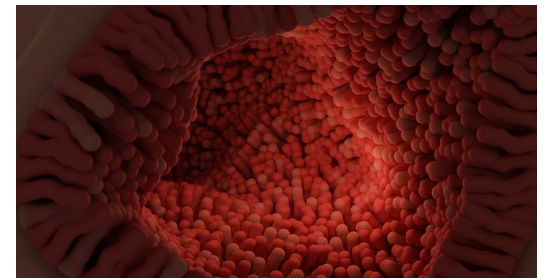
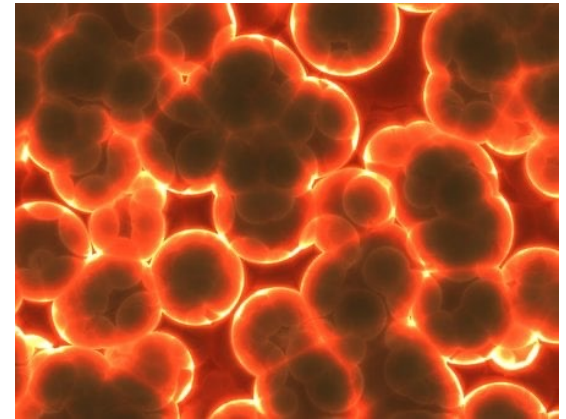
Challenges I have faced

It is very difficult to get funding, so you may have to work in somebody's group for years and never become an independent group leader and in most cases, this means you are investigating somebody else's idea. It is very difficult to be as enthusiastic about other people's ideas, unless their ideas closely align with your own.

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If you want to be a research scientist, you need:

- ✱ a **focused** but also an **enquiring mind** and the ability to get excited by ideas
- ✱ **enthusiasm** to investigate these ideas
- ✱ to have the ability to go back to the drawing board and **try again**
- ✱ **to be able to communicate** and network with people from a wide range of backgrounds (scientifically and culturally)



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Discussion time

- ✦ Would you like to be a research scientist like Dr Priscilla Day-Walsh?

Why? Why not?

- ✦ What skills and interests do you already have that would help you become a research scientist?
- ✦ What new skills and knowledge would you need to develop?



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Free supporting resources for science research on human cells

[I bet you didn't know...](#) articles use cutting-edge science research as a context for learning and Teacher Guides can be used as classroom presentations. See:

- Blood tests could detect cancers
- How to grow a new skin
- Dragons could protect us from bad bacteria

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