

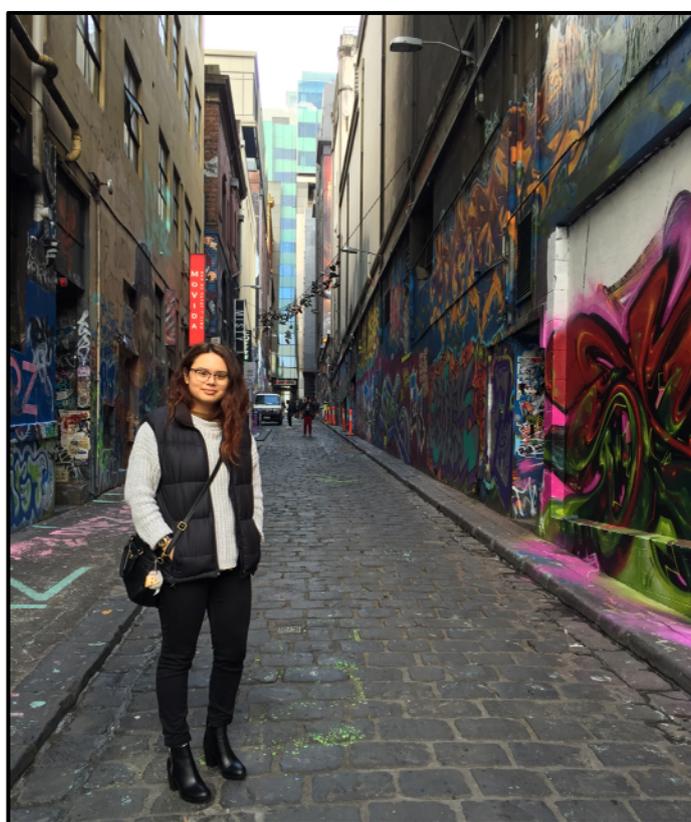


# national science week 2017

## Saranya Costa

### *Keeping it cool?*

Honours Student (Medical Research)  
Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania



When you think of someone who is training to be a doctor, what comes to your mind? Probably someone running around the hospital in a white lab coat, a shiny stethoscope hanging around the neck, talking to patients and saving lives? I'm here to tell you that is not the case, there is so much more to it!

Studying medicine is not commonly associated with being a scientist, but it happens you can really be both. There is a huge amount of research happening behind the scenes in the medical field, which makes the continuous development and improvement of new treatments possible.

My name is Saranya, I am currently studying to be a doctor and at the same time, I'm spending some time doing some medical research. This year I am working with a team specialising in stroke research, a condition affecting millions of people worldwide. A stroke is where blood doesn't flow through a part of someone's brain, usually because of a

blockage somewhere in a vessel (a 'tube' forming a part of the brain's circulation, which supplies oxygen to the brain tissue). Our team are currently doing research to exploring new treatment options for this condition, because the current medications have some serious side effects and don't work for every patient.

Some of this research is exploring what happens to the brain after a stroke with hypothermia (in humans it's a body temperature less than 35°C), and how this temperature affects a cell within the brain, called a pericyte. Pericytes wrap themselves around vessels and are thought to play very important roles in the normal brain, as well as a brain that has had a stroke. We hope this research will lead to some exciting discoveries in the field of stroke medicine.

For further information: [www.menzies.utas.edu.au](http://www.menzies.utas.edu.au)