

## Iraida, PhD Psychology

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**Duration:** 4.43 mins

**Speaker Names** (if given): **S1** Iraida Neira

**S1** My name's Iraida Neira and I study in the school of Psychology.

I chose to study at Birmingham originally because I was attracted to the reputation and as I looked into it further I realised that it actually had a really strong background in psychology research, right up there with Oxford and Cambridge and I contacted my supervisor and she was fantastic and I ended up here. Currently I'm looking into obesity and cognitive function. So basically that's how weight gain and your BMI and things like that can be related to how efficiently your brain works, your executive function, your memory, impulsivity and it's a really interesting area of psychology that's becoming really popular right now because of the obesity epidemic. One really great thing about my PhD is that I get that university experience, I get to work with students, I get to test young people, which is a lot of fun. But also I'm getting clinical experience. So I do work with older patients and people from all walks of life down at the hospital in Stechford and it's just really invaluable when it comes to your CV, being able to show that you have that really diverse background and you can work with all sorts of people.

I would hope, and I do think that, the work that I am doing right now is going to have a pretty big impact on people's lives because obesity is becoming - you know - a really big issue nowadays and obviously psychology plays a really big role in your day-to-day life, your quality of life and bringing those two areas together in research I think is a really good way to develop interventions and therapies that might really help the population.

Right now I'm based in the Frankland Building which I think it's quite nice that it has a bit of a historical touch to it. I run some experiments there. A lot of them are food experiments, some of them are neuropsychological test and I use the kitchen facilities and it's very organised, very easy to work efficiently together because a lot of people are actually using the same workspace but we have a really good system there and we get a lot of work done. I get a lot of support from my supervisor actually. We meet at least once a week, me and the other PhD students we have our weekly coffee. So we have our separate time with our supervisor but then we also have dinners, like we got out for everyone's birthday, we have department function for Christmas and - you know - even Halloween. So it's a really good balance of that professional relationship but mixing things up and getting social as well. I'm from Miami Florida originally and I've just had a great transition into Birmingham because it's very diverse. If you want to have that - you know - Metropolitan kind of weekend lifestyle you can go right by the Bullring, The Mailbox, Brindley Place, really great, chic places to go to. But then if you want something a bit more laid back, more studenty, there's Selly Oak and lots of lovely little suburbs and then it's not as busy as London can be but you can get there in about an hour and a half. You can go south or you can go an hour and a half north and end up in Manchester - it's just a really great, kind of, central location.

When I finish my PhD I'm hoping to pursue research similar to what I've done here and, once again going back to my supervisors, they've been really supportive and we're already talking about it and postdoc positions have been suggested, so hopefully continue in that vein.

One thing I've noticed that's a pretty big difference between studying in the UK and studying in the US is a lot of time in the UK it's a lot more specialised. So in the US it can be very general, which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but when you study in the UK you really do become an expert in exactly what it is that you've signed up for which I think is very valuable in the job market.

Of course I would recommend it, it's a great community and like I said the staff is really supportive and you're just really well prepared to go on and get that job that you want.

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