

Alumni Career Snapshots



Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Dr. Lesley Cheng, PhD

Education:

- ❖ Class of 1998, VCE: Specialist Maths, Maths Methods, Biology, Chemistry and IT at Killester College
- ❖ Bachelor of Biomedical Science with Honours in Medical Science and Cell Biology, Monash University
- ❖ Doctor of Philosophy (PhD in Cell Biology and Biochemistry), Monash University
→ Completed my degrees by 2008

After completing my PhD, I worked at:

- ❖ The American Hospital Dubai, U.A.E, as a Clinical Research Scientist where I developed diagnostic tests for newborn babies to detect genetic disorders
- ❖ The University of Melbourne as a Postdoctoral Researcher where I began my current research focus which is to develop a blood-based diagnostic test for Alzheimer's disease
- ❖ La Trobe University as a Senior Postdoctoral Researcher where I now lead a group of researchers to further develop blood-based diagnostic tests for Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative diseases, in addition to cancer and infectious diseases

My career pathway and highlights:

I have taken the 'typical academic pathway' to obtain my career. I loved the time during my Honours and PhD which involved mostly hands on laboratory work, similar to an apprenticeship. I was able to create, innovate and discover new science and technologies that could help the health and well-being of people living with a disease. My work has been published in the world's top scientific journals which has generated interest in the media including a TEDx Melbourne talk. I am now establishing a Biotechnology company to supply my blood tests to the community and I am learning to balance a career in science and business entrepreneurship.

Best things about my job:

1. Always discovering something new
2. Using cutting edge technology and instruments
3. Travelling the world to conferences and meetings

Challenges of my job:

1. Finding funding to financially support my research
2. There are others in the world with the same idea. It's competitive but this drives me to first and not another 'me too'

My advice:

Work on your communication skills together with your studies.

All company goals require a team of people with different expertise. There's no point in being good at what you do if you can't communicate with others or non-experts.