

# Humans of Medical Research

## MEET A/PROF DEVANSHI SETH

It's colours, textures and the joy of creating something from nothing which lies at the core of Devanshi Seth and her life-long interest in arts and crafts activities. "I've always been very passionate about my hobbies and interests, and remember drawing and painting from an extremely early age," she says.

Over time Devanshi's interests have taken in a wider-range of artistic undertakings including painting, sculpture, pottery, crochet and more. "Painting with watercolours is a particular fascination," she says. This passion for art has seen Devanshi exhibit in both Sydney and Perth with her artwork being recognised with awards on several occasions. "I paint portraits, landscapes, old buildings and even abstracts," she says. "I'm entirely self-taught and just guided by the colours and patterns that I see."

Growing up in Delhi, India, Devanshi's artistic flair likely results from her early childhood environment. "My mother was very good at arts and crafts—she taught embroidery and crochet, and my uncle was a sculptor who made amazing items out of marble including huge statues," she says. "Their influence must have rubbed off on me."

It's this same creativity and passion that Devanshi brings to her career as a medical researcher. Heading up Centenary's Alcoholic Liver Disease Laboratory, Devanshi is focused on studying the genetic mechanisms that underlie alcohol-use generated cirrhosis. "Alcohol-related liver disease has the highest mortality rates amongst all alcohol related disorders and there currently exists no effective treatment," she says. "I want to understand how genes, as well as lifestyle and other contributory factors influence the development and progression of this debilitating disease," says Devanshi. "When we better understand this disease we can better improve patient outcomes and care."



It comes as no surprise that Devanshi is excelling in her chosen area of research. She is currently leading an international consortium which is completing the largest clinical study ever taken of its type—an analysis of genetic and epigenetic factors taken from over 6,000 drinkers. Results from this study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, have the potential to change patient practice on a global scale.

"I'm passionate about my work and my art but also a very passionate advocate for equity and inclusion in the workplace," says Devanshi. "Helping close the gender gap for women in science is vital and an area that I'm also committed to supporting."

It's certainly been an interesting journey for Devanshi. She began her career in agricultural research, moved to industrial biotechnology, then to biomedical research in cancer, and then finally to alcohol. It's also meant that she's lived in multiple cities across three different continents, Asia, Europe and Australia.

"Research—just as is the case with art—requires imagination, perspective and the ability to look at information from a different angle," says Devanshi. "Most importantly, it also requires perseverance and resilience, as well as the ability to evolve what you do and to grasp new opportunities as they arise."

## WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

### CANCER

Cancer is a disease of the cells, which are the body's basic building blocks.

**1 in 3 women and 1 in 2 men will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85.**

### INFLAMMATION

Inflammation is the body's natural response to protect itself against harm. There are two types: acute and chronic.

**1 in 9 Australians have asthma, around 2.5 million people.**

### CARDIOVASCULAR

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) is a collective term for diseases of the heart and blood vessels.

**Almost 1 in 3 deaths in Australia are due to cardiovascular disease.**



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