

NIKITA TELKAR

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Vancouver, British Columbia V6H 1M7, Canada



EDUCATION

PhD in Medical Genetics University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada	2019 –
MSc Genetics of Human Disease: Inherited Diseases University College London (UCL), United Kingdom	2017 – 2018
BSc Biomedical Genetics (Honours) Newcastle University (NCL), United Kingdom	2014 – 2017

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

PhD Candidate <i>University of British Columbia – Canada</i>	August 2019 –
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Co-Supervisors: Dr. Wendy Robinson (BC Children's Hospital Research) & Dr. Wan Lam (BC Cancer Research Centre)

Project: Characterizing Small Non-Coding RNAs (sncRNA) in the human placenta and placental cell types, and investigating the biological (sex, ancestry), clinical (depression status, smoking) and technical variables driving variation.

Data: RNA-seq, DNA methylation; **Software:** R/Shiny; **Techniques:** RNA extraction, sample processing, and optimization

Recent Publications / Awards:

- Selected Oral Presentation – European Society of Human Genetics (ESHG) 2023 Conference
- [Small Non-Coding RNAs in the Human Placenta: Regulatory Roles and Clinical Utility](#) – Telkar N et al., 2022
- Overall Excellence Award, UBC Department of Medical Genetics – [The James Miller Memorial Prize](#) 2022
- RStudio [Opportunity Scholarship](#) 2022
- University of British Columbia [4 Year Doctoral Fellowship](#) (4YF) Award

Master's Student <i>UCL Genetics Institute and The Wellcome Sanger Institute – United Kingdom (Supervisor: Dr. Karoline Kuchenbäcker)</i>	January – August 2018
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Master's dissertation project in statistical genetics investigating the heritability, trans-ethnic genetic correlation, and association of lipid variants–biomarkers across several diverse populations

Software: UNIX, R, PLINK, GEMMA, Popcorn

Second-author publication in [Nature Communications](#). Polygenic Risk Scores available on EMBL-EBI's [PGS Catalog](#)

Final Year Undergraduate Student <i>Newcastle University Campus for Ageing and Vitality – Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom</i>	January – March 2017
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Undergraduate Honors project validating candidate genes affecting oxygen concentration in *Drosophila melanogaster*.

Techniques: qPCR, western blot, BN-PAGE, high resolution respirometry.

Summer Undergraduate Researcher <i>Institute of Genetic Medicine – Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom (Supervisor: Professor Susan Lindsay)</i>	July – September 2016
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Received the UK-wide competitive [Genetics Society Summer Studentship](#) Award 2016

Project involved tracking the expression of the WNT5A protein in human embryonic tissue via immunohistochemistry

Software: Linux, MAPaint, Amira

Expression results available on MRC-Wellcome Trust HDBR [database](#). [Report](#) featured, and [poster](#) won awards

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

British Columbia Regional Director and Founding Leadership – Nucleate: Canada Chapter Establishing this non-profit, trainee-run biotech venture creation organization pan-Canada, and locally in Vancouver Initial roles include initiating partnerships, securing sponsors, and locally organizing the flagship Activator program	November 2023 –
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Investment Associate – Front Row Ventures, Canada Canada's leading student-founder focused VC firm with a presence on 20+ university campuses across Canada Deal sourcing, due diligence, and bringing ventures till investment-decision within the BC student-startup ecosystem	October 2023 –
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MedTech Scientific Lead – Nucleate Genesis 1/18 of the final 2024 cohort for this 12-week intensive, hands-on program on the principles of biotech venture creation Developed and pitched an early cancer detection assay through modules on ideation, IP, market entry	February – May 2024
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Biomedical Data Analyst – BenchSci, Toronto, Canada Labelled biomedical data for the platform's machine learning training model (>100k labels till date) Annotated scientific publication figures for image to text (vision) training Contributed to the platform's UX design as part of the internal Discovery and Validation team	April 2022 – October 2023
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BioInnovation Scientist Trainee – adMare BioInnovations, Canada	April – June 2023
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Hands-on training about the Canadian life sciences industry, scaling small molecule and biologics discovery, preclinical and clinical development, and therapeutics commercialization

Biostatistics Expert – *BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, Vancouver, Canada*

January – April 2021

Created beginner-to-intermediate biostatistics videos with a hands-on R tutorial for the [Summer Student Research Program](#)

Teaching Assistant – *University of British Columbia*

September – December 2020

Instrumental in restructuring the course and assignments, assisting course instructors, and holding tutorial sessions.

Named “the best TA he's ever worked with” by the Head of the Medical Genetics Graduate Program.

“Nikita always responded promptly and thoughtfully to requests for advice. Her input and assistance helped guide the learning process. She did everything I think a good teacher should, and went above and beyond the time and effort I would expect from a TA. She was the best part of the course.”

Visiting Scholar – *MIT-ADT School of Bioengineering Sciences and Research, India*

March – July 2019

Visiting Lecturer in Genetics for first year undergraduate Bachelor of Technology Bioengineering (B.Tech) students

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Graduate Advisor – *UBC iGEM*

November 2022 –

MIT-based non-profit that hosts the annual International Genetically Engineered Machine synthetic biology competition

Assisting with project planning, troubleshooting, and execution (Team 2023, Team 2024)

Co-Chair – *Trainee 'Omics Group, BC Children's Hospital Research Institute*

December 2020 – September 2023

A graduate trainee-led bioinformatics and data analysis support group

Established intra- and inter-UBC outreach, with a ~200% increase in registrations with monthly workshop collaborations

Partnered with [Databinge \(Digital Alliance of Canada's Data Champions\)](#) to provide increased support to our members

Developed the [UBC-wide Precision Health Bootcamp](#), and have [created and taught genomic analysis workshops](#)

Numerous one-on-one project consultations UBC-wide, with 3 full collaborations

Advisory Committee Member – *Department of Medical Genetics, UBC*

2019 – 2022

Recruiting the new Head of Department of Medical Genetics under the Advisory Search Committee

Single-handedly [redesigned and updated the department website](#) using WordPress with CSS and HTML coding

Events Chair – *UBC Medical Genetics Graduate Student Association*

January 2021 – December 2022

Assisting the board with executive decisions for this departmental social and outreach association

Varied roles fulfilled - Recruited panelists and moderated the Alumni Panel at the annual welcome event (received public acknowledgment), directed a fundraiser (raised ~\$300), designed the website, and populated all content

Research Mentor – *NCL and UBC*

2015 – 2016 / 2020 –

BCCHR Summer Student (1st Year undergraduate) – placental epigenetics

3rd Year undergraduate – oncofetal microRNAs in renal cancer

Masters' student – nasopharyngeal carcinoma

Geneskool Volunteer – *Genome British Columbia*

October 2019 – October 2020

Conducting interactive activities at local schools to educate students about genetics and its applications

Committee Member at the Girls and Steam Symposium 2019 hosted by BC Science World

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (14 published, 5 submitted / in preparation): [Link to Google Scholar](#)

1. Kuchenbaecker K, **Telkar N**, Reiker T, Walters RG, Lin K, Eriksson A et al (2019). [The transferability of lipid loci across African, Asian and European cohorts](#). Nature Communications, 10: 4330.
2. **Telkar N**, Stewart GL, Pewarchuk ME, Cohn DE, Robinson WP, Lam WL (2022). [Small Non-Coding RNAs in the Human Placenta: Regulatory Roles and Clinical Utility](#). Frontiers in Genetics; 13.
3. Rees WD, **Telkar N**, Lin D, Peloni C, Fathi A, Kobor M, Zachos NC, Steiner TS (2022). [An in vitro chronic damage model impairs inflammatory and regenerative responses in human colonoid monolayers](#). Cell Reports; 38(3)
4. Marshall EA, **Telkar N**, Lam WL (2021). [Functional role of the cancer microbiome in the solid tumour niche](#). Current Research in Immunology; 2: 1–6
5. Martinez, VD*, Cohn DE*, **Telkar N**, Minatel BC, Pewarchuk ME, Marshall EA, Price ME, Robinson WP, Lam WL (2021). [Profiling the Small Non-Coding RNA Transcriptome of the Human Placenta](#). Scientific Data; 8, 166
6. Souza VGP, Forder A, **Telkar N**, Stewart GL, Carvalho RF, Mur LAJ, Lam WL, Reis PP (2023). [Identifying New Contributors to Brain Metastasis in Lung Adenocarcinoma: A Transcriptomic Meta-Analysis](#). Cancers; 15(18), 4526.

GRANTS AND AWARDS (*n* = 14, \$153,000 CAD)

4 Year Doctoral Fellowship (4YF) Award (2020-2024) – University of British Columbia; CAD \$113,000

The James Miller Memorial Prize 2022 – Department of Medical Genetics, University of British Columbia; CAD \$1,000

President's Academic Excellence Initiative PhD Award (2020-2024) – University of British Columbia; CAD \$6,000
 International Tuition Award (2019-2024) – University of British Columbia; CAD \$16,000
 4YF Stipend Award (2020-2024) – Department of Medical Genetics, University of British Columbia; CAD \$6,000
 Genes and Development Summer Studentship 2016 – The Genetics Society UK; £2,350 / CAD \$4,700
 Poster Commendation – Newcastle University Research Scholarships and Expeditions Exhibition 2016; £200 / CAD \$400
 RStudio Diversity Scholarship 2022 – RStudio PBC; USD \$2,500 / CAD \$3,370
 Trainee Travel Grant 2022 – BC Children's Hospital Research Institute; CAD \$1,200
 Registration Grant 2022 – Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory; CAD \$650
 Registration Grant 2021 – EMBO–EMBL; CAD \$210
 Virtual Knowledge Exchange Grant 2021 – BC Children's Hospital Research Institute; CAD \$250
 Second Place Poster Award 2016 – Newcastle University Faculty of Medicine; £50 / CAD \$100
 ncl+ Award – Newcastle University
 Declined: Faculty of Medical Sciences Undergraduate Research Scholarship – Newcastle University; £2,000 / CAD \$4,000

POSTERS

Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD) World Congress 2022 – Vancouver, Canada	August 2022
rstudio::conf(2022) – Washington D.C., USA	July 2022
Regulatory and Non-Coding RNAs 2022 – Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, New York, USA	May 2022
Medical Genetics Research Day 2021 – Department of Medical Genetics, UBC, Canada	November 2021
EMBO–EMBL Symposium: The Non-Coding Genome – Virtual	October 2021
International Federation of Placental Research (IFPA) 2021 – Virtual	August 2021
Healthy Starts Research Day 2021 – BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, Canada	February 2021
Medical Genetics Research Day 2020 – Department of Medical Genetics, UBC, Canada	November 2020
British Columbia Cancer Summit 2019 – Vancouver, Canada	November 2019
Faculty of Medical Sciences Research Poster Presentation 2016 – Newcastle University, United Kingdom	November 2016
Student Research Scholarships and Expeditions Exhibition 2016 – Newcastle University, United Kingdom	November 2016

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

European Society of Human Genetics (ESHG) 2023 Conference – Glasgow, United Kingdom	June 2023
University of Toronto Health Network (UHN) Seminar Series (<i>Invited</i>) – Virtual	January 2022
ONCO548: Knowledge Translation (<i>Invited</i>) – Interdisciplinary Oncology Program, UBC, Canada	October 2020

WORKSHOPS

Instructional Skills Workshop – University of British Columbia	July 2020
A 24-hour professional development workshop to enhance teaching practices and application. Taught 3 short lessons with feedback from peers. “Nikita, your students will be lucky to have you, you make everything so easy to understand.”	
Building Production-Quality Shiny Applications – rstudio::conf(2022), Washington D.C., USA	July 2022
Chose this complimentary workshop awarded under RStudio's Diversity Scholarship	
Learnt best-practices to write user interface (UI) and server-side code for Shiny for R web application development	

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

Founder	April 2019 – Present
Started two small, separate enterprises in Canada and India	
SPIRITFUL – Selling original artwork, independently handling: procuring raw material, assembly, marketing, and shipping – 60% profit margin, 25% of profits directed to the HelpAge India NGO (a non-profit focused on the elderly)	
ScribblezbyNiki – Received multiple 5-star reviews on my custom-made genetics/science-themed merchandise on Etsy	
News Reporter – <i>Health Science Inquiry</i>	2019 – 2020
A News Reporter for the 2019-2020 academic year at this student-run science communication journal for graduate and post-doctoral students within Canada	
Article published in their 2020 issue	

FEATURES

[The Genetics Society Newsletter](#) [Newcastle University Alumni Profile](#) [Science in Vancouver](#) [The Interview Portal](#)