

From an early age I have possessed an instinctive curiosity and been intrigued by the workings of the human mind. The relationship between the underlying biological phenomena and the behaviours brought about by such mechanisms have always fascinated me. It was not until my grandmother was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and ischaemic dementia however, that the link between brain functioning and cognition became a passion. Although a most unpleasant experience, the enormity of the precision at which the brain functions to produce our cognitive abilities, socially acceptable behaviours and intricate physiological processes astounded me. I thereupon found myself questioning the cognitive functions and human behaviours I had previously just accepted, desperate to understand how the unseen and seemingly small entities within the brain could impact our daily behaviour.

Studying Psychology AS level furthered my interest in cognitive psychology, with my enthusiasm reflected in the full marks I obtained on each paper. The prospect of exploring the relationship between biology and psychology led me to study Neuroscience at degree level. This has enabled me to expand my knowledge of neuroanatomy and physiology, as well as developmental, cognitive, social and biological psychology through a psychology open unit. As an interdisciplinary field, Neuroscience often overlapped with psychology covering psychological aspects of learning and memory and stress.

Of particular interest to me are neurological and psychological disorders, most specifically the mood disorder; depression. Having studied the neurochemical changes thought to underlie this disorder, I am particularly interested in exploring the cognitive and psychoanalytic theories of depression. For this reason, the mandatory unit 'Abnormal and Clinical Psychology' initially drew me to the course. Studying the unit 'Neurological and psychiatric disorders' this year has given me a good basic knowledge of the underlying pathology and current clinical treatments available but hope to explore the concepts of 'faulty' thinking and the role of parenting in the development of self worthlessness and hence depression at the postgraduate level.

As an individual who loves to learn, the prospect of studying the Experimental Psychology conversion course at the University of Sussex is extremely exciting. As a resident of West Sussex, I have always been aware of the universities high standards and friendly atmosphere, emphasising my desires to study there. In studying this course, I hope to obtain the Graduate Basis for Registration, so that I may put my knowledge into practice and work as an assistant psychologist, gaining indispensable experience before applying to train as a Clinical Neuropsychologist. I thrive upon challenging situations and enjoy the prospect of both helping others and variety in the day ahead, so feel it is a career that will allow me to combine and utilise my hard working nature as well as my academic passions. In preparation for such a career, I have gained experience of interacting with patients suffering from dementias and other age-related disorders on geriatric wards through a voluntary

library service at a local hospital and am currently awaiting my CRB check to allow me to participate in the 'Barrow project' which will entail spending a few hours each weekend listening and chatting to patients recovering from psychological disorders.