



# The Academic Woman

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A photograph of a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing glasses and a grey blazer over a black and white striped shirt. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred indoor setting with green and purple panels.

**RIC-KI: the collaborative  
research platform that  
supports healthy lives**

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If you have a research idea you'd love to work on, but you want to bring in additional expertise, techniques or resources, or if you're an early career researcher and haven't yet had the chance to build professional networks and would love the opportunity to work with other researchers – including some of the best brains in the world – it's time for you to make friends with RIC-KI.

The Research Ideas Catalogue – Knowledge & Impact, or RIC-KI for short, is a collaborative research platform from Loughborough University that creates a level playing field that supports researchers from any institution, at any career stage. This is proving to be particularly valuable for less well-represented researchers by giving them access to wider networks. By connecting the unconnected, RIC-KI delivers true equality of opportunity, enabling ideas from early career researchers to sit alongside those from renowned professors.

Already proving popular across a wide audience in the world of academia, RIC-KI is based around the free-to-use website [www.ric-ki.lboro.ac.uk](http://www.ric-ki.lboro.ac.uk). The site features a collection of health, well-being and sports research questions that academics want to share with the global scientific community as potential collaborative research projects. Regardless of what stage they are in their career or which institution and whatever level of funding is at their disposal, researchers who are interested can complete an online expression of interest form then the RIC-KI platform connects both parties so that collaborative research can begin.

The platform is designed to connect like-minded researchers and academics from a wide variety of disciplines who are invited to submit their research ideas under the categories of physical activity and health, weight management and dietary behaviours, health & well-being and sport.

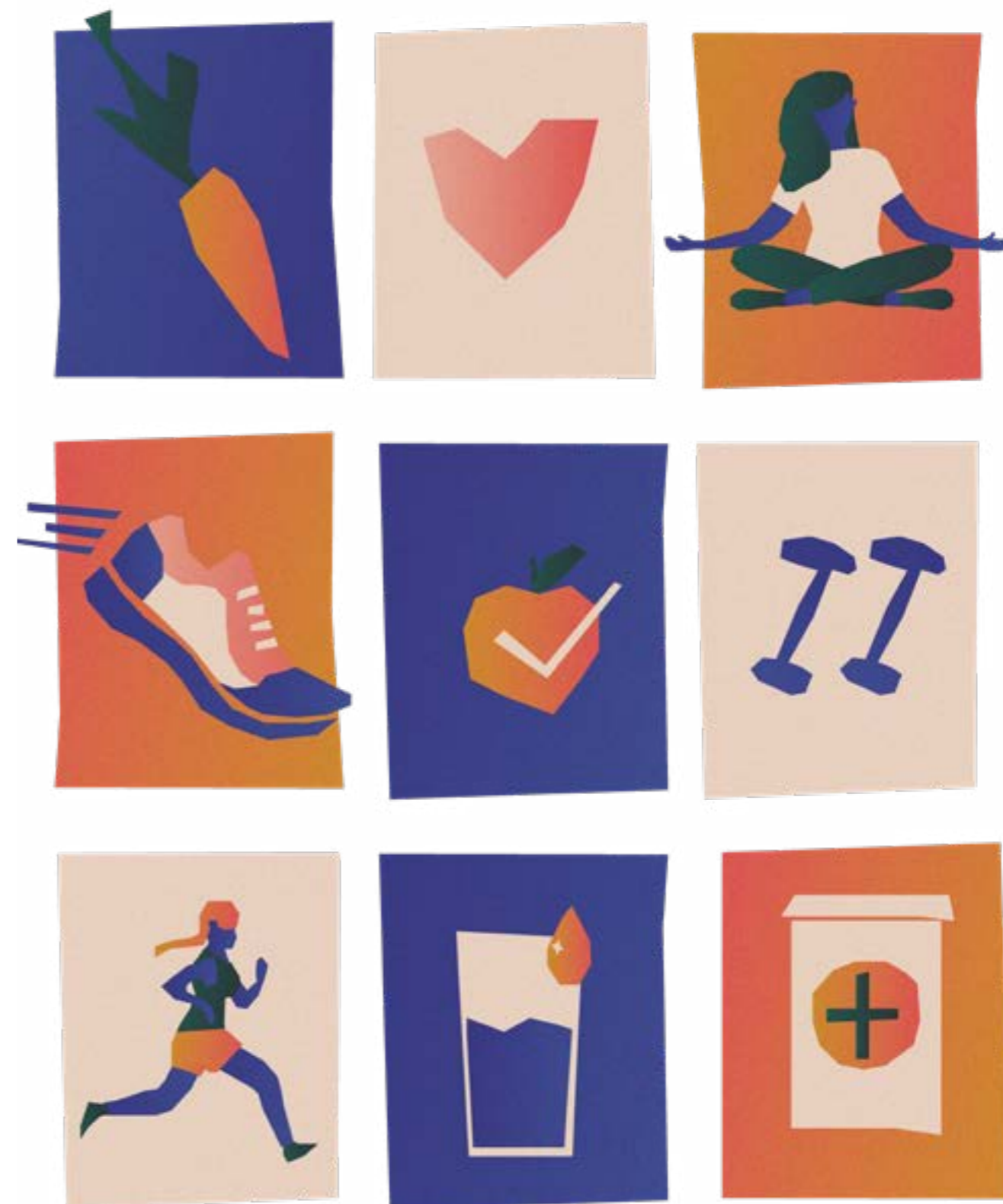
An innovative health and well-being research platform from Loughborough University boosts research collaborations and supports researchers looking to develop their networks.

## Benefiting the nation's health

With the specific goal of enabling research to support healthy lives around the world, RIC-KI was created by Amanda Daley, Professor of Behavioural Science and Director for the Centre for Lifestyle Medicine and Behaviour (CLiMB). Over her career, Prof Daley had seen many new and innovative research ideas peter out because it was "nigh on impossible to pursue them all". Her thinking behind the RIC-KI platform was to prevent quality ideas from going to waste by enabling health researchers to become more connected. Although the focus to date has been on creating "impactful research that will benefit the nation's health", the CLiMB team will be looking to apply the RIC-KI collaborative approach to other areas of research in the future.

As the [www.ric-ki.lboro.ac.uk](http://www.ric-ki.lboro.ac.uk) website says: "All researchers will have excellent ideas with great potential that unfortunately never take shape. It could be that the ideas are too big to get started on, additional expertise is needed, or the researcher doesn't have access to the necessary equipment. Ideas that look 'outside of the box' are most likely to be pushed to one side. But new approaches to ideas like this that look at subjects in new ways, that perhaps no-one has considered previously, have the potential to generate the most exciting results."

One major barrier to collaborative research projects tends to be scheduling, which can make progress difficult because researchers simply aren't available at the same time. This can mean that crucial stages of research can be delayed and projects can be shelved due to lack of progress within certain timescales. However, Prof Daley and her team believe that when a good idea looks to have little chance of going any further, sharing the idea with others can give it a new lease of life.





### Advancing science collectively

Prof Daley says: "One of the most effective ways to advance science is to do it collectively by working together and sharing research ideas [although] many people might wonder why anyone would give their ideas – their key assets – away freely. Confidentiality is still important, and we have several security and privacy measures in place, but our ambition is to change the mindset of researchers to consider sharing their ideas to help their research go further, faster."

She adds: "Ultimately, RIC-KI is enabling new collaborations that would never have come about, producing fresh perspectives on research questions through new combinations of skills and expertise."

In the short time that it has been in operation, the RIC-KI collaborative research platform has attracted the registrations of more than 200 researchers, opening up new channels for collaboration around the world. To date, 45 ideas have been submitted, attracting interest from researchers in the UK, Australia, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, New Zealand, Nigeria, Spain and the USA. New connections have been made between members at 30 institutions, 10 of which are outside the UK. At the time of writing, 15 new projects were live with more potential projects at the detailed discussion stage.

Dr Borja del Pozo Cruz from the University of Southern Denmark believes that this kind of collaborative research is the future, saying: "RIC-KI is your go-to platform if you want to engage in cutting edge collaborative projects with physical activity and nutrition researchers internationally."

In its physical activity and health category, RIC-KI has been instrumental in generating research programmes into the effects of shift work on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep; as well as the effects of physical activity on depression. Currently available are projects to reframe middle-aged women's possible selves to change physical activity and exercise perceptions and behaviours; and whether the time of day plays a role in people adhering to their exercise plans.

In the health and well-being category, RIC-KI has seen research work begin on the effect of social prescribing; and sedentary behaviour interventions in the workplace, with innovative ideas around menstrual health in resource poor communities in Kenya; and birth outcomes in twins compared to singleton pregnancies. Under dietary behaviour, researchers have collaborated via RIC-KI to investigate food labelling in fast food outlets; and how to make fasting more appealing. Current ideas available include child malnutrition in Guatemala; and whether dentists can and should have a role in promoting weight management in the population.

The collaborative concept behind RIC-KI has received the backing of government, with Professor Lucy Chappell, Chief Scientific Adviser for the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), saying: "It is more important than ever that researchers across health and social care work collaboratively to tackle the ever-changing challenges for patients and the public."

### What is RIC-KI?

Research Ideas Catalogue – Knowledge & Impact (RIC-KI) was designed to connect researchers across the world for open collaboration and to create motivations, networks, environments and relationships to allow scientists to collaborate better. RIC-KI inspires researchers to think creatively about developing their best ideas together, for mutual benefit, greater gain and output.

RIC-KI is the brainchild of Professor Amanda Daley (see below) and the platform is supported by the DHSC and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

Find out more at the [www.ric-ki.lboro.ac.uk](http://www.ric-ki.lboro.ac.uk) website or by watching the webinar 'Introducing RIC-KI' at <https://youtu.be/23N8ZRkf5S0>. It's easy to join in the conversation on Twitter @LboroRICKI or to submit research ideas by visiting <https://ric-ki.lboro.ac.uk/idea-sharing-form/>.

### What is CLiMB?

Loughborough University's Centre for Lifestyle Medicine and Behaviour (CLiMB) was established in August 2021 to look at ways to reduce such preventable diseases as obesity, diabetes and several types of cancer. Based in the university's School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, CLiMB brings together experts in behavioural science, clinical medicine and population health.

Working with members of the public, public health organisations, health charities, the voluntary sector, commercial partners and the NHS, CLiMB aims to furnish policymakers and organisations with "robust research evidence to improve population health and well-being". Current research is focusing on developing healthy lifestyles in children, communication and food labelling, women's health and lifestyle behaviours, and making every contact count with the healthcare system (an NHS initiative).

### Who is Professor Amanda Daley?

Amanda Daley is Professor of Behavioural Medicine and an NIHR Research Professor in Public Health. She is also Director of Loughborough University's CLiMB with a strong focus on investigating how lifestyle interventions by healthcare professionals in routine NHS consultations can affect health outcomes. To this end, Prof Daley is the chief investigator in several trials that are looking at the effectiveness of community and general practise based physical activity and weight management interventions. She currently leads a programme of work looking at how physical activity calorie equivalent (PACE) food labelling can affect the purchase and consumption of food and drinks.

As well as leading various research awards, Prof Daley is research advisor panel member at the Yorkshire Cancer Research Fund, is on the editorial board of the International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity and was a REF 2021 panel member focusing on public health, health services research and primary care.