

AWARDS FROM LIVERY COMPANY SUPPORT CHILDREN'S HEALTH RESEARCH



Three researchers in children's physical activity and health presented their work at a major international conference hosted by Swansea University, supported by awards from the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales.

The researchers are studying a wide range of topics related to children's health, including how music can increase engagement with physical activity, the influence of air pollution on the lung function of young people, and the role of contact between the generations in improving health and wellbeing.

The Paediatric Work and Physiology conference, founded in 1967 and held every two years, is one of the most important international gatherings of experts in the field of children's exercise and health science. Its aim is to highlight and strengthen research in the subject and to enable a worldwide network of collaborators.

This year's conference, with 90 delegates from 17 countries, was organised by a team from Swansea University's [Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences](#), led by Prof Melitta McNarry and Prof Kelly Mackintosh and supported by Dr Amie Richards and Prof Gareth Stratton.

The awards that helped fund the three researchers to give scientific presentations at the conference were travel scholarships provided by the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales.

Samanta Gudziunaite is conducting PhD research on the relationship between air pollution and lung function in young people with and without asthma:

"The conference was a chance for me to present my research to an audience of leading experts. I was able to get invaluable feedback on my work. It was also an opportunity to establish connections with other researchers in this field from around the world, including Brazil, Switzerland and Canada. All this will undoubtedly benefit my research and my academic and professional journey.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Livery Company as none of this would have been possible without the funding they provided."

Dr Rachel Knight is an early-career researcher working for the [Welsh Institute of Physical Activity, Health and Sports \(WIPAHS\)](#). Her research focuses on physical activity, with a particular interest in how contact between different generations can be used to foster better health:

“As an early career researcher, transitioning into research following a career in the Welsh NHS, being able to attend an international conference of this calibre provided me with a catalyst to pursue my research and clinical aspirations, explore future collaboration opportunities, and highlight an important approach that could benefit population-level health across the lifespan.

Intergenerational contact, as a strategic approach to challenge age stereotypes and positively influence health behaviours in older adults and children, could be a novel way to feed into national policies striving towards achieving a healthier Wales.”

Alex Swain, a PhD student working in collaboration with Polar Electro, was presenting some additional research exploring the links between music and physical activity for increasing children’s understanding of and engagement in physical activity:

“I’m deeply grateful to the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales for their support, enabling my participation at the PWP Conference 2023 in Chepstow. Hosted by Swansea University, this event was pivotal for my research on translating physical activity into music for children. Presenting ‘Moving Our Feet to Make a Beat’, I received a commendation and fostered invaluable collaborations.

This award has enriched my research journey and broadened its reach in the field of paediatric health.”

[The Worshipful Livery Company of Wales](#) was founded in 1993 and one of its aims is to “promote education, science, technology and the arts in Wales”. This it achieves by helping young people throughout Wales to develop their talents and skills by means of an annual awards programme of scholarships and bursaries to students in schools, universities, and technical colleges, as well as to apprentices and young people in the armed forces.

Major John Charles, Master of the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales said:

“We are delighted to have been able to support these three talented young researchers attend this important conference and wish them well in their future careers in paediatric research”.

Professor Melitta McNarry, on behalf of the Swansea University team organising the conference, said:

“We were very pleased to receive the support of the Livery Company which helped three young researchers to attend the conference. PWP is a unique conference, truly focused on fostering the development of the next generation of paediatric research leaders.”