



PhD Project: Deciphering gender and ethnic disparity in obesity and cardiometabolic disease.

Supervisor: Dr Jennifer L Miles-Chan, School of Biological Sciences, University of Auckland.

Project Description: New Zealand has the third highest rates of obesity in the world. Despite decades of effort to reduce these rates, they continue to rise, particularly in young women and especially amongst Māori and Pacific. With current "one-size-fits-all" interventions proving ineffective, attention has turned to more individualised approaches. However ethnic- and gender-specific strategies are lacking owing to an absence of unifying explanation for the disparity in obesity prevalence. This project aims to decipher the physiological basis of these health inequalities; combining state-of-the-art techniques of energy balance (including indirect calorimetry) and body composition phenotyping.

This project would suit someone with a biomedical or integrative physiology background. However, enthusiastic and self-motivated candidates from other backgrounds with an interest in nutrition and metabolism are also welcome to apply. Laboratory experience in any of these areas would be advantageous.

Funding: Applications are encouraged from students with potential for obtaining a funded fellowship (typically a grade point average $\geq 8.0/9.0$ (i.e., an "A" equivalent or above)). For candidates that do not meet this benchmark there is the potential for funding via a tax-free PhD scholarship, considered on a case-by-case basis, of NZD \$27,000/year for up to three years plus PhD fees over this period. Both international and domestic students are eligible.

About the University of Auckland: The University of Auckland is ranked within the top 100 of the QS World University Rankings, making it New Zealand's highest ranked university. It is also recipient of a five star plus QS Stars University Rating for excellence in the categories: Research, Employability, Teaching, Facilities, Internationalisation, Innovation and Inclusiveness. The University is located in the harbour city of Auckland, with easy access to stunning beaches and forests. Furthermore Auckland was ranked third out of 230 cities in the 2017 Mercer Quality of Living Survey, and in the top 30 of the QS Best Student Cities 2017 – with a particularly strong score in the Student Mix category, thanks to its large and diverse student community, combined with an inclusive and tolerant culture.

How to apply: Applications should be emailed to Dr Jennifer L Miles-Chan (j.miles-chan@auckland.ac.nz) and include your CV, academic transcript, names and contact details of two referees and a covering letter explaining why you are interested in the project and outlining any relevant experience.