

KAREN SAVAGE

Karen Savage is one of our newest members. She works at the Centre for Human Pyschopharmacology in Hawthorn, and is undertaking a PhD in the University of Melbourne's Department of Psychiatry. Here is her description of her research.

Anxiety disorders are pervasive and prominent conditions in the community. They affect productivity, generate high levels of psychological distress, and are under-reported, and therefore receive inadequate treatment.

The etiology of conditions such a Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is complex, but available technologies in modalities such as neuroimaging and genetics assist researchers in discovering biological markers or biomarkers, that define, maintain and are amenable to treatment, in disorders like GAD.

My research involves examining properties of regional brain function involved in anxiety symptoms, and how these differ in sufferers of GAD on a functional, proteomic and metabolic level, to help gain a biomarker profile for GAD.

Secondly, I am examining how these properties will change in the presence of a novel but efficacious anxiolytic treatment. The aim here is to broaden current treatment options for GAD, as well as identify biomarkers of treatment response that may improve future drug development in the anxiety disorders.