

Examples of PhD abstracts and one-sentence summaries

These examples are taken from real PhD research, with names changed.

Mary Jane Poppins

Smoking is the largest cause of preventable death worldwide, but the biology of smoking addiction is still poorly understood. Mary Poppins's study explores how non-nicotine compounds in cigarette smoke are involved in smoking addiction. It examines the effects of nicotine and non-nicotine compounds in cigarette smoke on the molecular transporters in the brain that are involved in feeling reward. Mary's study shows that both nicotine and the tobacco extract alter the function of these transporters, but the effects of nicotine alone differ from those of the tobacco extract. This suggests that nicotine is not the only factor involved in the development of smoking addiction.

One sentence: Mary Poppins's research examines the effects of nicotine and non-nicotine compounds in cigarette smoke on reward systems in the brain, to better understand how smoking addiction develops.

Oliver John Twist

Explosive volcanic eruptions threaten the environment, infrastructure (particularly aircraft) and human health by dispersing hazardous fine ash particles into the atmosphere. Oliver Twist's research demonstrates how field observations of eruption deposits can combine with numerical modeling to reconstruct the behaviour of airborne volcanic clouds from past events. Oliver's study explains how, during the 25,000-year-old super-eruption from Taupo, volcano molten rock mixed with lake water to become one of the most powerfully dispersed deposits on the planet. His results are currently being used to improve the volcanic ash forecasting techniques used during eruption crises.

One sentence: Oliver Twist's research reconstructs the behaviour of volcanic clouds from New Zealand's ancient super-eruption deposits, resulting in a new approach to improve forecasts of airborne volcanic ash during explosive eruptions.

Jane Helen Eyre

For decades, tensions between Burma's ethnic minority communities and the Burmese majority government have been a dominant feature of the country's political and social landscape. Religious identity has played an important role in these tensions, reinforcing difference and a social hierarchy in the multi-religious nation. Jane Eyre's research surveys the relationship that has developed between Buddhism (the majority religion), politics and ethnic identity, both historically and in present day Burma. Jane's thesis analyses how Burmese governments have incorporated Buddhism into their political policies, the impact this has had on ethnic and religious minority communities and how it has influenced ethnic and national identity.

One sentence: Jane Eyre's research analyses the relationship between Buddhism, politics and ethnic identity in Burma, examining the impact of politicised Buddhism on ethnic minority communities.