

Samantha Lee

With travel scholarship funding from the NZFGW, Samantha Lee, a current PhD candidate studying at the University of Canterbury, will attend the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) annual meeting in Baltimore, USA in late April 2016. The title of her paper is "Neurodevelopmental Outcomes of Preschool Children Born to Opioid Dependant Mothers." PAS is the largest international meeting focused on research in child health, and selection for presentation at this conference is considered highly prestigious. Samantha was selected to present previous Master's thesis research findings from a longitudinal study, then led by Professor Lianne Woodward, that investigated neurodevelopmental outcomes of 4.5 year old children born to mothers enrolled in methadone maintenance treatment during pregnancy. Findings from this research highlight the risk of multiple developmental domain impairments for children born to methadone maintained mothers at 4.5 years of age, compared to a regional comparison group. Impairment was observed in the domains of motor development, language, cognition, behavioural adjustment and learning-based skills. Attendance at this conference will provide Samantha with unique professional development opportunities to advance her future career prospects. Attending the conference will also benefit her current PhD research, which will examine educational outcomes at 9.5 years for children born to methadone-maintained mothers from the same longitudinal study, now led by Dr Jacki Henderson.