



## A Virtual Chat with Lia Casaca



BSc Biological Anthropology  
MA Biological Anthropology



University of Toronto  
McMaster University



Specialty/Research Focus:  
Bioarchaeology

I completed my HBSc in Biological Anthropology at the University of Toronto (U of T) and went on to pursue my MA at McMaster University (MAC). My undergraduate thesis investigated the relationship between a division of labor based on the prevalence and severity of osteoarthritis in the distal humeri of the Kleinburg Ossuary Collection. This collection and experience sparked my love for research and interest in disarticulated, commingled, and fragmented human remains.

My Master's thesis focused on different elements within another type of mass grave: the preservation and representation of human remains from the Battle of Stoney Creek during the War of 1812. A few highlights from my career in Biological Anthropology include: working at the Royal Ontario Museum, volunteering with ossuary collections at UofT, and working as a Teaching Assistant at MAC.

I currently work at AstraZeneca as a Global Study Manager in Research & Development, part of Global Medicines Development. I am responsible for advancing large, global, late stage oncology clinical trials. I primarily work on cancer trials within the head, neck, gastric, and gastroesophageal space, but I have experience in other areas like insomnia, and anxiety related disorders. My favorite parts of my role is budget management, report and manual writing, and building creative materials to train colleagues, hospital staff and doctors.

After I decided I didn't want to pursue a PhD, I started submitting applications for research-related positions at hospitals, clinics, and small contract research organizations. It took over three years before a recruiter offered me an Office Manager/Research Coordinator position at a small biopharmaceutical company called Canopy Health Innovations (now Canopy Growth Corporation). I was surrounded by people who saw my potential and supported my growth. Within one year I became a Clinical Project Manager responsible for global early-stage clinical trials. Through networking, I found my current role at AstraZeneca.

Biological and forensic anthropology taught me the importance of standardization, communication, detail orientation, and critical thinking. I follow SOPs and regulations every day, and I understand their value. I have strong communication skills because in Biological Anthropology I needed to be as clear and concise as possible. It is a skill that took me years to improve. I find it easy to bridge gaps because of my confidence in problem-solving and critical thinking. I know that in order to find the best solution to a problem or challenge, I have to be aware of other perspectives and use data available to me.

Online  
Office Hrs



See our list of  
events to register  
for Lia's upcoming  
office hours.