

## Sarah Leiter

MB/PhD in Medicine and Scientific Research

Newnham College

Sarah came to Cambridge at the age of 18 to study medicine and then decided to intercalate a PhD as part of the MB/PhD program. She picked up goalball casually as she started her PhD in 2012 and unexpectedly found herself in the national development squad a mere nine months later, taking part in her first European Championships a year after that. As part of the national squad, she narrowly missed out on qualification for Rio finishing 5th at the Paralympic Qualifiers in Seoul in 2015. The highlight of her sporting career to date was winning the European B Championships in September 2016 – she had just handed in her PhD the week before so it was a very busy month!



Sarah feels that she couldn't have succeeded at both goalball and her degrees if she hadn't had the support from her PhD supervisor, the clinical school, and her coach. She arranged time off her studies to compete as needed but agreed with her coach to reduce her training if she was taking exams. In addition to good time management this required openness and negotiation with many different parties.

*“Playing goalball has provided the perfect balance to my PhD and medicine – when you are frustrated by a failed experiment or the ward is super busy, there is nothing better than smashing a ball against a wall repeatedly. Mentally, I had to switch focus completely whenever I went away to train/compete and come back to University on Monday morning.”*

Sarah graduated from Cambridge in June 2018 but still lives locally and works as a junior doctor at Addenbrooke's Hospital. She also now teaches on some of the courses that she used to take herself. On the sporting front, she is working with the national squad towards qualification for Tokyo 2020.