Nadya Ali

PhD Candidate | Cognitive Neuropsychology department | Tilburg University

n.ali@tilburguniversity.edu | +31 658 96 08 31

https://nadya-ali.owlstown.net | https://orcid.org/0009-0007-7036-5776

Education

2023 – current | **PhD Candidate in Developmental Neuroscience**

Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands

- Thesis (working) title: *Growing up in poverty: The role of environmental and family factors in the effect of poverty on child health and the developing brain in the first 1000 days of life*
- Supervisors: Prof. dr. Margriet Sitskoorn and dr. Marion van den Heuvel

2019 – 2022 | **Research MSc in Cognitive and Clinical Neuroscience**

Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands

- **Thesis title:** *Effect of electroconvulsive therapy on depressive symptoms and the mediating role of DNA methylation.*
- **Supervisor:** dr. Ehsan Pishva
- **GPA:** 8.4/10

2016 – 2019 | **BSc in Psychology** (cum laude) | **Cognitive Neuropsychology** major

- **Thesis title:** *Maternal prenatal anxiety and child brain connectivity at age 4*
- **Extracurricular:** Tilburg School of Behavioural Sciences Excellence Program certificate
- **Supervisor:** dr. Marion van den Heuvel
- **GPA:** 8.9/10

Work Experience

2023 – Present | **PhD Candidate** | **Zero Poverty Lab**

Department of Cognitive Neuropsychology, Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands

- Communication: Disseminating research to researchers, students, policymakers and the public and representing the lab at different functions (such as alumni events, UNICEF symposium, workshops, and guest lectures)
- Teaching: BSc thesis supervision, EEG labs supervision, Research skills in Psychology course supervision
- Funding: securing funding through white papers and grant applications

2023 – 2024 | **Research Fellow | ODISSEI Social Data Science Team**

Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

- Supervisor: dr. Erik-Jan van Kesteren & dr. Javier Garcia-Bernardo
- **Project title**: *Population-based study of the effects of poverty on maternal and infant health in the first 1000 days of life*
- Developed a data pre-processing and analysis pipeline within the CBS micro-
- data environment
- Worked with large administrative data to perform non-linear (GAM) analyses of the effects of income on child health at birth, mediated by maternal behavioural and environmental factors (e.g. pollution, substance use, mental health, physical health)

2017 – 2019 | **Research Assistant**

Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands

- Methodology and Statistics department: Teaching seminars in Statistics for courses in the Psychology BSc year 1 through 3
- Cognitive Neuropsychology department: EEG data collection lab supervision

Publications

Ali, N., van der Heijden, F., De Baene, W., van den Heuvel, M. I., & Sitskoorn, M. (2026). The Poverty Ecosystem Framework: An integrative review of candidate mechanisms underlying the effects of poverty on neurocognitive development in the first 1000 days of life. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, *184*, 106605.

van der Heijden, F., Ali, N., van den Heuvel, M. I., De Baene, W., & Sitskoorn, M. (2025). The interplay between poverty and the human brain connectome across the lifespan: A systematic review. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 106532.

Bassil, K., Ali, N., Pishva, E., van den Hove, D.L.A. (2022). Epigenome-Wide Association Studies in Psychiatry: Achievements and Problems. In: Michels, K.B. (eds) Epigenetic Epidemiology. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94475-9_18

Grants and awards

2025 | **HSRI** seed grant, co-applicant (Herbert-Simon Research Institute)

- Seed funding grant for cross-departmental collaboration on the project ‘Rethinking Poverty: Centering on Lived Experiences to Enhance Research and Policy’

2025 | **ENGAGE EU** travel grant

- Funding for travel and accommodation costs to attend ENGAGE EU Summer School for Young Scholars in Rome, Italy

2024 | **ISDP Travel Award** (International Society for Developmental Psychobiology)

2025 | **ENGAGE EU** travel grant

- Funding for travel and accommodation costs to attend ENGAGE EU network Early-career Symposium in Rome, Italy

2023 | **ODISSEI 8-month Research Fellowship** (Social Data Science Team, Open Data Infrastructure for Social Science and Economic Innovations, SoDa ODISSEI)

- The fellowship funded an 8-month research project on 'A population-based study of the effects of poverty on child and maternal health' together with the SoDa team at Utrecht University
- Project advisors: dr. Erik-Jan van Kesteren and dr. Javier Garcia-Bernardo

Technical skills

- R: proficient
- Python: beginner
- MATLAB: beginner
- Longitudinal data analysis, DNA methylation analysis, IHC staining, DNA/RNA analysis, PCR, Western Blotting, stress biomarker analysis (cortisol, cortisone, DHEA)
- Large administrative data analysis
- CBS Netherlands microdata data linkage and analysis
- EEG infant-adult hyperscanning data collection and analysis