

## Media Coverage

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**Buchan**

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### Student finds diet link to medication



Student Vidya Perera has won the NSW student excellence award for his research on how diet impacts on medication

THE way you cook your vegies and use spices can affect your medication, a Sydney University student has found.

Working tirelessly out of Concord Hospital, Vidya Perera has won the NSW student excellence award from AusBiotech/GlaxoSmithKline.

For his PhD in pharmacy, Mr Perera found the different diets and lifestyles of South Asians compared with Europeans could lead to them requiring different doses of medicines.

“Apart from grapefruit juice, what you eat is not really taken into account when doctors work out doses,” he said.

He found eating vegies like cabbages, cauliflower and broccoli, traditionally European, increased the level of an enzyme that metabolises drugs used to treat illnesses like depression and psychosis.

South Asians also cook with these vegetables but with spices like cumin and tumeric in curries, which inhibit the enzyme.

This means they could potentially need lower doses of medicines.

“I love the direct application it has in health care and potential to influence policy,” Mr Perera said.

Mr Perera’s PhD supervisor Professor Andrew McLachlan said: “This research, for the first time, unpacks the complex interplay of factors that can affect how people breakdown and eliminate medicines from their body”.

“Understanding the correct dose of a medicine is crucial to achieving beneficial results.”