What inspired you to become an engineer?
Engineering came later into my studies – I am a chemist and pharmacist by training. Since I was a child, I have wanted to contribute to cancer treatment. While studying pharmacy, I realised that a major role for resistance to treatment is that the drugs cannot efficiently reach cancer cells. So, I decided that drug delivery would be the topic of my research and this is how biomedical engineering came in.

How did you get started in engineering?
My first contact with engineering was at Oxford, where I got accepted for a DPhil between the department of oncology and engineering.

What is your research area?
My work is interdisciplinary. An overarching theme is the delivery of therapeutic agents to cancer cells using nanocarriers, ultrasound and bubbles.
Ultrasound triggers the release of the therapeutic from its carrier locally at the tumour site.

What is an average day on the job like?
I would say there is no average day… On a regular basis, I need to take care of my cancer cells. Other than that, a day can include any combination of experiments with cells, making particles and testing them, some chemistry mainly analytical, reading, thinking, writing and discussing with colleagues.

What has been your highest achievement to date?
Being accepted for a DPhil at Oxford with a scholarship was a big achievement for me. I couldn’t believe that I would finish it, but I did so I’m glad I managed.

“If you like applying basic science to solve problems, then engineering could be for you. And there are many paths to get there.”

What attributes and skills help you in your role?
I think curiosity, creativity and my hope to have a small positive impact on patients’ treatment in the future are my main drivers. Persistence and resilience are also really important. Experiments fail not only the first time, but many times! But with continuous thinking and trouble-shooting, they might eventually work.
Lastly, teamwork. I am fortunate to work in a team of amazingly intelligent and talented people. Collaborating and discussing with them is invaluable.

What is the best thing about your job?
There are many good things!
Working in such a great and vibrant team is one of the best things.
The variety, freedom and the fact that I’m continuously on a steep learning curve are other things I like about working at IBME.

Why should young women choose engineering as a career?
Why not? If you like applying basic science to solve problems, then engineering could be for you. And there are many paths to get there.

Have you experienced any gender-related challenges?
No, not in the UK. The main challenge I’ve faced is lack of confidence. Men and women colleagues and supervisors have been equally supportive.

What is your top tip for girls considering Engineering?
Don’t hesitate - go for it if you like it.

“Curiosity, creativity and my hope to have a small positive impact on patients’ treatment in the future are my main drivers.”