



Association of Scientists in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Alicia Koplowitz Foundation

Alicia Koplowitz Advance Training Fellowships – 2020 Call

Centre: Centre for Psychiatry, Imperial College London

Tutor: Dr Dasha Nicholls

Research Area:

- Please list and provide a brief explanation of the research projects that are currently being conducted in your department and in which the future fellows could take part in?

The Unit's research focuses on a number of topic areas and has a number of on-going grant funded research projects. Current research opportunities include:

Disordered eating behaviour across the weight spectrum: Dr Dasha Nicholls works in the field of child and adolescent feeding and eating disorders psychiatry and mental health aspects of obesity. Her work encompasses risk factors, epidemiology and burden, medical risk and complications, and the development and testing of prevention and early interventions for eating disorders and obesity. This work includes experimental studies of neuropsychological factors, such as attention and reward processing, and other biomarkers. Fellows will have the opportunity to work on existing projects or develop their own ideas for research within these areas.

Multimorbidity: Dr Dasha Nicholls is lead for multimorbidity within North West London, overseeing a programme of translational research on the interface between physical and mental health. Research in this area includes potentially working with colleagues in the UK's leading School of Public Health at Imperial College to analyse data from local integrated health datasets, as well as national birth cohorts and twin studies.

Other possible areas of research with Dr Nicholls include the use of artificial intelligence to detect variations in behaviour and emotions in young people, and the impact of social media on young people's mental health.

Adolescent mental health service use: Dr Julia Gledhill is Consultant Child Psychiatrist and Honorary Senior Lecturer. She is the lead for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Research within the Mental Health Trust, as well as joint Training Programme Director. She is investigator on a large national clinical trial investigating the impact of structured assessments on engagement with clinical services. Fellows working with her will have the opportunity to obtain experience in the process of clinical trial management. She also has expertise in research on depression and is well placed to facilitate clinical research with the child and adolescent mental health services linked to Imperial College, including through specialist placements.

Affect dysregulation and self harm: Dr Martina Di Simplicio is Clinical Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry based at the Centre for Psychiatry also works as a Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist.



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Her research takes an experimental medicine and cognitive phenotyping approach to investigate the cognitive processes underlying emotional dysregulation and mood instability across mental disorders. She focuses on young people and vulnerability to mood instability, with the aim of developing innovative early interventions. A special interest of her work is how mental imagery-based cognition, such as episodic future simulation, may contribute to mood instability and self-harm behaviour in young people.

Interface between mental and physical health problems in children: Emeritus Professor Elena Garralda, in collaboration with paediatric colleagues, investigates the psychiatric adjustment of children with a variety of chronic and acute physical disorders who are admitted to hospital. Dr Matthew Hodes investigates psychiatric adjustment in children with allergic disorders, as well as the mental health of unaccompanied refugee children.

Early onset psychosis: Dr Mari Dominguez's research has investigated the epidemiology and clinical presentation of early onset psychosis. By making use of the large Harrow & Hillingdon Early Intervention Service for Psychosis carers dataset, the fellow can get involved in investigating the psychological needs of parents/carers of young people presenting with a first episode of psychosis.

- In relation to those research projects, please specify the activities in which the fellows will be able to take part? (e.g. data collection, hypothesis formulation, data analyses, writing up papers, etc.)

As there are a range of projects running in the unit we are able to offer experience in the full range of research activities outlined (e.g. data collection, hypothesis formulation, data analyses, writing up papers, delivery of therapy in clinical trials, systematic reviewing). We develop a plan with each individual fellow, depending on how their interests and experience best match with the work currently being undertaken in the unit. The vast majority of fellows publish at least one first author paper, and several have gone on to base PhD's on the work they have undertaken at Imperial.

- Please specify statistical support available to the fellows for the development of their research activity? (e.g. statistician input, attendance to statistical courses, skills meetings, etc.)

All the senior academics in the Centre are experienced researchers with the skills & knowledge to support the Fellow in statistical analysis, but in addition the Fellow can access statistical courses, including those for software such as SPSS and STATA. These courses are run at Imperial College and are highly rated by students and staff at Imperial and from other centres in the UK. The Centre for Psychiatry has regular meetings at which all aspects of research are discussed, & this frequently includes statistical queries.

- How much of the fellows' working time will be dedicated to research activities?

The Fellowship at Imperial College is equally split between research & clinical experience, and thus approximately 2.5 days per week are dedicated to research activities.



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Clinical Area:

- Could you list the type of clinical placements the fellows could attend (e.g. generic outpatient services, inpatient units, specialist teams, etc.)?

The clinical component of the Fellowship is linked to the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) which encompasses general child psychiatry clinics, specialist teams such as eating disorders and autism clinics, as well as in-patient services.

The clinical training draws from among the following components:

1. **Assessment, formulation and diagnosis** of child and adolescent disorders seen in general child psychiatric clinics at St Mary's CAMHS and at linked (for training) child and adolescent mental health services in West and North West London.
2. Evidence-based **psychotherapies** for children and adolescents, specifically cognitive-behaviour therapy, family therapy, parent training programmes.
3. Child and adolescent **psychopharmacology**.
4. Individual and group non-directive **psychotherapies**, in-patient milieu therapy, **liaison work** with paediatrics, social services and education
5. **Neuropsychiatry**, specifically autism and related disorders, learning disability, attention deficit hyperkinetic disorders, psychiatric disorders linked to brain disorders such as epilepsy or developmental anomalies.
6. **Psychosomatic disorders**, including eating disorders and chronic fatigue syndrome.
7. **Cultural** child and adolescent psychiatry, including the mental health needs of refugee children
8. **Community psychiatry**, through work with primary mental health workers setting up programmes in schools, with social services (for looked after children) and in the management of children who present in crisis at accident and emergency rooms.
9. **Forensic** child and adolescent psychiatry and legal aspects of and court involvement for **family breakdown**.

Elements of the above components of the clinical training programme are individually tailored to the Fellow working alongside colleagues within the British system. Where Fellows have specific training needs, we try to incorporate these into their programme. This can include placements at clinics outside of the scheme subject to negotiation (for example at Great Ormond Street Hospital or the Maudsley Hospital).

Therefore, in discussion with the Fellow the most appropriate type of placements for them to undertake over the 2-year period will be determined.

- Could you describe the fellows' role in relation to participation in assessments and treatments in their clinical placements?

During the first 2-3 months of the Fellowship the Fellow will join a number of CAMHS clinical teams in the local NHS Trust (Central & North West London NHS Foundation Trust - CNWL) to gain general experience of CAMHS in a UK setting (Dr Sharon Taylor, Dr Julia Gledhill and Dr Dasha Nicholls all work in CNWL). After this induction period Fellows are allocated to specific placements in discussion with the Clinical Lead, (Dr Sharon Taylor). The Fellow is encouraged to fully participate in assessments and interventions.



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- What are the requirements for psychiatrists and psychologist in order to be able to have a clinical role?

The Fellowship at Imperial College is best suited for psychiatrists, however we are also able to accommodate psychologists, and have now done this successfully with 4 psychologist Fellows. An individual from either profession must have completed their respective basic qualifications within Spain before they take up the Fellowship in the UK, and before undertaking any direct clinical work with children and families they will be required to have registered with the UK authority for their profession (the General Medical Council for psychiatrists, and the British Psychological Society for psychologists).

- How much of the fellows' working time will be dedicated to clinical work?

The Fellowship at Imperial College is equally split between research & clinical experience, and thus approximately 2.5 days per week are dedicated to clinical activities.

Academic area:

- Will the fellows be able to join a specific academic programme? If so, could you briefly describe the structure of this programme?

The Fellow will join the long established and highly-rated Academic Programme of the St Mary's Higher Training Scheme for Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists. This runs during term time and consists of weekly full morning teaching on psychological treatment interventions and academic reading seminars. The three-year rolling Academic Programme covers, in a systematic way, the rationale and practice of the main therapies used in child and adolescent psychiatry (e.g., behavioural and cognitive behavioural therapy, family therapy, non-directive individual and group therapy, & psychopharmacology) as well as other relevant skills (e.g., evidence based child and adolescent psychiatry, legal aspects of child and adolescent psychiatry and a management course). The academic reading seminars are co-ordinated with the psychological treatment course and, over a three-year syllabus, cover all aspects of developmental psychopathology through presentations by trainees from a carefully selected reading list. The Academic Programme also includes a series of seminars on research methods, as well as clinical and research presentations. In the past year some elements of teaching have been delivered jointly across the three training schemes of North London, with the highest quality speakers contributing to the training.

- Will the fellows be able to attend other training courses outside the specific academic programme (e.g. university courses, therapy workshops, etc.)?

The Fellow will be supported and encouraged to attend a variety of other training courses and academic conferences, including those organised by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Association of Child and Adolescent Mental Health (<http://www.acamh.org.uk>), the Royal Society of Medicine (<http://www.roysocmed.ac.uk/>) and other organisations dedicated to specific psychotherapies. The Fellow will have both a research and a clinical supervisor, and they are very familiar with the courses and conferences that the Fellow will benefit from as they link to both the research and clinical activities the Fellow will be undertaking.

- Please specify annual budget available to the fellow for training.



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The Fellow will have an allocated budget of £1,300 per year to spend on training and conferences.

- Please specify the clinical and research supervision offered to the fellow over the 2-years fellowship.

Dr Dasha Nicholls is the overall supervisor for the Fellowship and will meet regularly with the Fellows. Each Fellow will be allocated an individual clinical supervisor and a research supervisor with whom they will meet on a weekly basis. These are senior professionals – in most cases Dr Sharon Taylor provides clinical supervision and Dr Julia Gledhill, Dr Martina Di-Simplicio, Dr Nicholls or other affiliated research staff provide research supervision. The supervisors will be determined at the start of the Fellowship once the specific clinical and research activities the Fellow will be undertaking have been agreed.