



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

ALICIA KOPLOWITZ ADVANCE TRAINING FELLOWSHIPS - 2024 CALL

Centre: Division of Psychiatry, Department of Brain Sciences, Imperial College London

Tutor: Professor 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 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Research Group focuses on risk factors & early intervention, and seeks practical, scalable solutions, from parent training to policy change, that directly influence outcomes. Particular expertise is in eating disorders (ED) & obesity in children & young people (CYP) although increasingly the group is working on broader CYP population mental health, including research in schools, using cohort and linked healthcare data. Prof Nicholls leads a programme of work to develop capacity and capability in CYP mental health research, which includes creation of a NW London CYP mental health (MH) steering group (with input from our award winning Young People's Advisory Group), a school research network, WSIC (integrated social care, education and NHS data for NW London) analyses on CYP MH, and using WSIC data to identify CYP in schools with high inequalities and assess the uptake of digital interventions following MH screening. Recent projects include examining mediators of mental health outcomes in CYP at higher weight (PhD); the impact of lockdown/trauma/restrictive events on emotional eating in CYP; emotional and behavioural dysregulation as risk factors for adult mental health outcomes (using primary care data); a school survey exploring reflective functioning and disordered eating (PhD); a feasibility study of a Mental Health App (MindCraft) developed to monitor MH symptoms; the impact of COVID on NHS and staff (MeCare). She collaborates with the Departments of Engineering and Computing on a virtual reality adaptation of Self-attachment therapy and on MindCraft, and with the School of Public Health on our population and school based research.

Clinical, Experimental and Intervention studies include studying oxytocin function underlying dysregulation of social cognition in young people with ED; understanding rejection sensitivity and negative interpretation bias in ED; evaluating Best for You - a New Model of acute care for young people in mental health crisis. A mixed methods national study of nasogastric feeding under restraint and a national surveillance study of Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder have recently been completed and data are available for secondary analysis. I am also involved in two projects related to the impact of COVID-19 on CYP, and on Mental Health Admissions to Paediatric Wards (MAPS) Study. Fellows will have the opportunity to work on existing projects or develop their own ideas for research within these areas.



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

A number of projects are undertaken in collaboration with colleagues within the Division, in particular Dr Martina Di Simplicio, whose interest and expertise lies in digital interventions targeting emotional and behavioural dysregulation transdiagnostically e.g. for self harm. Together Nicholls and Di Simplicio are working on adapting these interventions for disordered eating behaviour and for substance misuse.

Emeritus Professor Garralda, Dr Matthew Hodes, Dr Cornelius Ani and Dr Julia Gledhill all have honorary associations with the Division and may be able to support research in areas related to their expertise, which range from paediatric autoimmune disease, refugee mental health and delivery of CYP mental health interventions in Low-Middle Income Countries.

- 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 majority of fellows publish at least one first author paper, and in recent years most have gone on to complete PhD's based 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. 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 Division of 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.

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.



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

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 Ritu Mitra, Dr Tami Kramer, Dr Matthew Hodes and Prof Dasha Nicholls all work in CNWL). After this induction period Fellows are allocated to specific placements in discussion with the Clinical Educational Supervisor, (Dr Sharon Taylor). The Fellow is encouraged to fully participate in assessments and interventions.

- 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 3 psychologist Fellows.



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

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), which will involve passing the relevant English language exam.

- 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 alongside trainees at Great Ormond street hospital and the Tavistock clinic. 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.

- 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.

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



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

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

Professor 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 provides 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.