



School of
Public Health



PhD Scholarship Opportunity

The School of Public Health and the National Suicide Research Foundation at University College Cork have initiated a new research training programme: **Early Identification of Suicide and Self-Harm Risk and Comorbid Mental and Physical Disorders: An Interdisciplinary Training, Research and Intervention Programme (MHAIN TAIN)**, funded by the Health Research Board Ireland, led by an interdisciplinary team.

Background

MHAIN TAIN is a research training network addressing the need for doctoral training and career paths, to improve early identification and intervention of self-harm and suicide risk. The Vision of this interdisciplinary consortium is *to improve capacity building in the assessment of risk of suicide and self-harm and evidence-based interventions across patient focused research, health services research and population health research*. The **MHAIN TAIN** research training programme includes four Doctoral Projects, with five PhD Scholars. **MHAIN TAIN** will offer a representative range of research designs and methodological approaches.

The **MHAIN TAIN** Consortium is led by Professor Ella Arensman, two Co-Leads: Professor Eugene Cassidy and Dr Paul Corcoran, and ten Core Partners. The selected candidate will complete the MHAIN TAIN bespoke taught modules together with the SPHeRE training programme. The SPHeRE Network is Ireland's largest population and health services research network connecting individuals working in research, policy and practice. The duration of the PhD project will be four years, until September 2027.

The successful candidate will be required to attend the SPHeRE training programme in person, in Dublin.

Doctoral Project: Effectiveness of enhanced Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for self-harm patients with psychiatric and physical disorders:

This Doctoral Project will comprise a randomised controlled trial (RCT) for self-harm patients with comorbid Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), General Anxiety Disorder and/or PTSD, and physical health comorbidity. Patients who present to hospital with self-harm, MDD, Anxiety Disorder or PTSD and comorbid chronic pain and/or inflammatory disease, will be invited to participate in the randomised controlled trial testing the effectiveness of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. The specific objectives are 1) To examine the impact of an enhanced CBT programme for self-harm patients with psychiatric and physical comorbidities, on both psychological and biological markers and to examine interaction effects, and 2) To determine the requirements for implementation of the optimised CBT treatment programme for mental and physical health comorbidities associated with self-harm as part of national suicide prevention policy. The CBT treatment will be delivered by Psychotherapists and Clinical Psychologists who will be specially trained in the optimised CBT treatment protocols and who are independent from the PhD researchers who are conducting the trial. The successful candidate will work closely with another Scholar on the same project.



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Essential criteria:

- Masters in Clinical Trials
- Work experience in the mental health area
- Experience in epidemiological or interdisciplinary research
- Good communication skills in both written and oral format
- Ability to work independently and take own initiative.
- Ability to work in a team.

Desirable criteria:

- Experience in conducting research into mental and physical health comorbidities
- Experience in conducting quantitative and qualitative data analysis
- Familiarity in working with large databases
- Completed courses in research integrity, research ethics and data protection
- Experience in writing in scientific publications

Funding:

This PhD scholarship provides the following for four years:

- A PhD stipend €25,000
- Full fees (EU) for four years covered by the HRB
- SPHeRE associated travel costs
- Training and dissemination costs

Further Information

If you would like to discuss any of this role informally, please contact Professor Ella Arensman (ella.arensman@ucc.ie).

To Apply:

To apply, please submit the following by email to Ms. Margaret Kenneally at margaretk@ucc.ie with subject heading of 'MHAIN TAIN - Doctoral Project':

- A CV with contact details for at least two referees
- A personal statement (maximum 500 words) outlining why you would like to undertake a PhD in the area and explaining how your research interests relate to the post you are applying for.
- Transcripts of your undergraduate and Masters' results. (If these are not available before the closing date, they may be submitted separately from items above).

The closing date for applications is 2 weeks after publication of the advert, Friday 8th December 2023.