



Early brain development in children born to depressed mothers in high and low-income settings

Postdoctoral Fellow: research project starting April 2023
Department of Psychiatry & Mental Health; Faculty of Health Sciences

Applications are now invited for a **postdoctoral research project** in developmental neuroscience, which will be embedded in a larger five-year project (2022-2027) that is funded by an NIMH R01 research grant.

Background:

Expectant mothers are 2-3 times more likely to experience depression in low-resource environments and their children are at enduring risk of developing mental health problems. However, whether, when, and the extent to which early brain development contributes to this risk is unknown. Here, data will be combined from six large cohorts with repeated child brain imaging assessments between 0 and 6 years of age, to carefully map trajectories of brain regional growth and brain network integration in children born to depressed mothers. This project will provide important insights into critical periods in brain development for early manifestations of mental ill-health in children exposed to maternal depression.

Requirements for the position include:

- (approaching) completion of PhD degree in psychiatry, neuroimaging, psychology or related field
- applicants should be South African citizens or hold a valid student visa for South Africa
- strong record-keeping, organisational and academic writing skills

Although in-service training will be provided, previous experience in any of the following areas will be advantageous: (1) brain segmentation, (2) early child development, (3) longitudinal data analysis.

Responsibilities of the Fellow include:

- harmonisation of clinical, demographic and neuroimaging data across six large cohorts
- advanced segmentation of child brain MRI scans under supervision of US collaborators
- taking the lead in writing and publication of scientific papers from the NIMH R01 project

The successful candidate will receive a Postdoctoral Fellowship of **R325,000** per annum. Annual renewal is dependent on condition of sufficient progress. Additional funding will be made available for conference attendance and research visits to international collaborators. This position is suitable for a candidate with the ambition to work towards an academic career in neuroscience.

To apply:

Please send a letter of motivation and an up-to-date curriculum vitae with referees **in a single PDF file** before the 31st of March 2023 to: nynke.groenewold@uct.ac.za and jonathan.ipser@uct.ac.za, using the subject heading: "R01 maternal depression: Application postdoctoral fellowship".

Website: <http://www.neuroscience.uct.ac.za/>

Closing date: 31/03/2023