Comprehensive Research Experience for Medical Students
Summer Research Program 2018

Supervisor/Project Information Form
Due February 14 2018 by email to crems.programs@utoronto.ca

PLEASE SUBMIT IN WORD FORMAT ONLY. PDF will not be accepted

Supervisor Name: Dr. Noah Ivers and Dr. Simone Vigod

Hospital/Research Institution: Women's College Research Institute

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Field of Research (2 keywords): 1: Postpartum depression; 2: e-health

Department: N/A

School of Graduate Studies Appointment (IMS, LMP, IHPME etc)? Yes/No: Yes

If YES, please name: IHPME

Project Title: Proactive, Personalized Postpartum Mental Healthcare (P3MH)

Brief Project Description (~300 words):

Mental health symptoms are common in new parents, affecting about 20% of mothers and 10% of fathers. When symptoms progress to severe levels, they can be difficult to treat. Early identification of symptoms and prompt treatment are ideal. Despite broad awareness that mental health symptoms in new parents are common, few systems are in place to automatically assess and monitor symptoms. Evidence-based symptom surveys that identify parents at risk for postpartum mental health disorders exist, and effective medication and non-medication treatment options are available. Yet, most primary care settings have no system to ensure that parents with mental health problems (and especially fathers) are identified and treated. This study will use a digital app with email integration to engage parents in assessing their mental health symptoms within weeks of the birth of their new baby.

Electronic symptom surveys, sent on behalf of family doctors, will be used to support proactive, personalized postpartum mental healthcare. Responses will be used to enable tailored care plans for patients, including options for referrals, treatment, and local community-based psycho-educational and/or social supports. This eHealth intervention includes a web-based application for parents and seamless integration in the electronic medical record, so that when the family doctor sees the patient in clinic, relevant information is ready to be discussed. A co-design process with patients and health professionals will be conducted to refine the eHealth intervention and test whether it effectively enables mental health symptoms to be caught early and managed best for each parent.

The student will help run co-creation workshops, assist with intervention content development (e-surveys, resources, etc.), facilitate User Advisory Panel meetings to improve the intervention prototype, and assist with the development of trial documents (information sheets, informed consent forms, etc.). The student may later have the opportunity of involvement in products of the research.