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: Barna Konkoly-Thege, Ph.D., C.Psych.

Hospital/Research Institution: Division of Research & Academics, Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care (Note: The hospital is located in Penetanguishene, 150 kms North of Toronto. However, students may participate in this project via regular online consultations without being on site)

Email: bkonkoly-thege@waypointcentre.ca

Field of Research (2 keywords): nutritional psychiatry

Department: Department of Psychiatry

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

Project Title: A systematic review of broad-spectrum micronutrient formulas for the treatment of psychiatric symptoms

Brief Project Description (~300 words):

In Canada, it is estimated that one in five people experience mental illness in any given year. Although the determinants of mental health are complex, the emerging and compelling evidence for nutrition as a crucial factor in the high prevalence of mental disorders suggests that diet is as important to psychiatry as to the other fields of medicine. Evidence is steadily growing for the relation between dietary quality (and potential nutritional deficiencies) and mental health, and for the select use of nutrient-based supplements to address deficiencies either as mono- or augmentation therapies (http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(14)00051-0).

Several comprehensive reviews assessing the evidence for nutritional treatments of psychiatric disorders have highlighted the fact that most studies investigated one nutrient at a time (such as folate, zinc or vitamin D) and very few evaluated combinations of nutrients. However, ingesting minerals and vitamins in combination makes physiological sense, and research on the use of broad-spectrum formulations for psychiatric symptoms is increasing rapidly. The aim of this project is to conduct an update to the systematic review on the effectiveness of broad-spectrum micronutrient formulas for the treatment of psychiatric symptoms. The reference review (http://dx.doi.org/10.1586/ern.12.143) considered studies up to 2012, therefore, it is time to collect and summarize the evidence accumulated since then.

The summer student could contribute to the success of this project by searching studies, screening eligibility criteria and extracting data (if interested, the student is welcome to participate in manuscript writing as well but most likely this will not occur within the framework of the summer program). Participation in this project would not only provide knowledge about the importance of nutritional factors in the development and treatment of psychiatric disorders but it would also give an opportunity to gain general skills regarding evidence synthesis and the completion of systematic reviews.