

PhD studentship

'Randomised placebo-controlled trial methods to test clinical effectiveness of non-pharmacological, non-invasive, interventions for neuropathic pain: design and feasibility'

An opportunity has arisen for a full-time PhD studentship position within the Department of Surgery and Cancer at Imperial College London, funded through a grant from the Alan and Sheila Diamond Charitable Trust. This full-time PhD studentship is an innovative and exciting joint undertaking between Imperial College London and University College of Osteopathy, which was recently awarded Partner Research Institution by Imperial College

Project Background:

The Global Burden of Disease study has revealed that chronic pain, along with mental health, is the single biggest contributor to Years Lived with Disability, worldwide. Peripheral neuropathic pain is a form of chronic pain, which is defined as "pain arising directly from a lesion or disease of the somatosensory system" and afflicts about 7% of the UK population. It can complicate a multitude of diseases that impact on the somatosensory system - for example – peripheral neuropathies (e.g. diabetes, drug toxicity and non-freezing cold injury), trauma and nerve compression including amputation, cancer and its treatment and infectious disease (e.g. shingles, leprosy and HIV). The quality of life impact on neuropathic pain is substantial and there is a major impact at a societal level. The current best evidence for the management of neuropathic pain is pharmacological interventions – although these are of modest efficacy with only between 1 in 3 and 1 in 7 patients gaining reasonable benefit often at the cost of adverse effects.

The aims of the research project are to:

- Systematically review existing effectiveness studies testing conservative interventions (including manual therapy, rehabilitation and exercises), their effectiveness and the trial designs conducted in the field of peripheral neuropathic pain.
- Systematically review sham/placebo controls and blinding methods used in trials testing non-pharmacological therapies for neuropathic pain.
- Conduct a Delphi review of methods drawn from the systematic review process.
- Develop a draft protocol for placebo-controlled, double blind RCTs of integrated rehabilitation-based interventions for peripheral neuropathic pain by drawing on the results of the systematic review, with special reference to the placebo control and blinding.
- Test and validate selected key elements of the draft protocol in preparation for a trial.
- Publish draft protocol after a Delphi review.

The successful student will be registered for an Imperial College PhD degree in the Faculty of Medicine where they will be based within the Pain Research Group (Chelsea and

Westminster campus) led by Professor Rice. We warmly welcome applications from excellent candidates from osteopathy and related Allied Health Professions, which are relevant to the aims of the project (e.g. physiotherapy, occupational therapy or clinical psychology), medicine or related sciences.

Supervisors:

Professor Andrew Rice, Professor of Pain Research, Imperial College, London

Dr Jerry Draper-Rodi, Senior Research Fellow, University College of Osteopathy, London
Professor Alison McGregor, Professor of Musculoskeletal Biodynamics, Imperial College, London

Named collaborators: Professor Christopher Eccleston (Bath University); Dr Whitney Scott (King's College London) & Professor Lene Vase, Aarhus University, Denmark

The studentship is for 36 months. **Starting date and PhD enrolment is negotiable but a target date is 1st May 2019.**

Applicants are expected or have permanent leave to remain in the UK and should ideally hold a master's degree (merit or distinction) in addition to a bachelor's degree at UK First or Upper-Second Class Honours level.

The annual stipend will be £18,850/year for 3 years plus Home/EU Tuition fees.

Applicants should submit their CV and a covering letter, including full contact details of two referees, to Professor Andrew Rice (a.rice@imperial.ac.uk). Imperial College PhD entry requirements must be met (see <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/apply/requirements>) and the successful applicant will subsequently need to apply on-line via <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/pgprospectus/howtoapply>.

Closing date for application is 15th March 2019. Skype/internet-based interviews will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

Job Title:

PhD studentship

Salary:

A Bursary of **£18,850/year for 3 years plus Home/EU Tuition fees.**

Location:

Primary site: Pain Research Group, Imperial College Faculty of Medicine, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital campus, 369 Fulham Road, London SW10 9NH

Secondary site: University College of Osteopathy, 275 Borough High Street, London SE1 1JE

Principal Supervisor: Professor Andrew Rice, Professor of Pain Research, Imperial College, London

Co-Supervisor:

Dr Jerry Draper-Rodi, Senior Research Fellow, University College of Osteopathy, London

Professor Alison McGregor, Professor of Musculoskeletal Biodynamics, Imperial College, London

Named collaborators: Professor Christopher Eccleston (Bath University); Dr Whitney Scott (King's College London) & Professor Lene Vase, Aarhus University, Denmark

Start Date: 1st April 2019 (36 months)

Research project title: Randomised placebo-controlled trial methods to test clinical effectiveness of non-pharmacological, non-invasive, interventions for neuropathic pain: design and feasibility

This full-time PhD studentship is an innovative and exciting joint undertaking between Imperial College London and University College of Osteopathy, which was recently awarded Partner Research Institution by Imperial College. The studentship is a fully funded (stipend and Home/EU tuition fees) through a grant from the Alan and Sheila Diamond Charitable Trust. The student will be registered for an Imperial College PhD degree in the Faculty of Medicine where they will be based within the Pain Research Group (Chelsea and Westminster campus) led by Professor Rice. A strong and experienced multidisciplinary team of co-supervisors and collaborators, led by Professor Rice, will supervise the student. The student will be admitted to the Imperial College Graduate School and enjoy all the benefits thereof (<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/>). If from a relevant professional background they will also be encouraged to join Imperial College's newly inaugurated Healthcare Professional Academic Group (<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/departmentsurgery-cancer/research/surgery/healthcare-professional-academic-group/>).

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amputation, cancer and its treatment and infectious disease (e.g. shingles, leprosy and HIV). The quality of life impact on neuropathic pain is substantial and there is a major impact at a societal level. The current best evidence for the management of neuropathic pain is pharmacological interventions – although these are of modest efficacy with only between 1 in 3 and 1 in 7 patients gaining reasonable benefit often at the cost of adverse effects.

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- Publish draft protocol after a Delphi review.

The successful candidate for this PhD studentship will be appointed through an open call and competition. We warmly welcome applications from excellent candidates from osteopathy and related Allied Health Professions, which are relevant to the aims of the project (e.g. physiotherapy, occupational therapy or clinical psychology), medicine or related sciences. The appointment will be made solely based on the academic attributes and potential of the applicants and their potential to deliver the research aims.

Should you require any further details on the role please contact Professor Andrew Rice – a.rice@imperial.ac.uk

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications

Essential

- A minimum 2.1 Bachelor's degree, or equivalent qualification in a subject relevant to the aims of the project.
- Clinically qualified and registered in a profession relevant to the aims of the project (e.g. osteopathy, clinical psychology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, clinical psychology, nursing or medicine)

Desirable

- Masters level degree, preferably awarded in distinction or merit class

Experience/Knowledge

Essential

- Previous exposure to clinical research
- Knowledge of statistical methods

Desirable

- Experience in pain, systematic review and/or placebo research
- Peer reviewed publications

Skills and Abilities

Essential

- Ability to search and critically appraise the scientific literature
- Excellent time management skills
- Ability to convey scientific information in written and oral modes
- Good administration and paperwork skills
- Ability to work in a small multi-disciplinary team, whilst taking responsibility for delivering your own project

Desirable

- Statistical methods
- Experience of working clinically with people who have persistent pain

Personal Attributes

Essential

- Team Player
- Flexible
- Proactive
- Resilience
- A desire to learn more about clinical research
- Sense of humour!

The College is a proud signatory to the San-Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), which means that in hiring and promotion decisions, we evaluate applicants on the quality of their work, not the journal impact factor where it is published. For more information, see <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/research-evaluation/>

The College believes that the use of animals in research is vital to improve human and animal health and welfare. Animals may only be used in research programmes where their use is shown to be necessary for developing new treatments and making medical advances. Imperial is committed to ensuring that, in cases where this research is deemed essential, all animals in the College's care are treated with full respect, and that all staff involved with this work show due consideration at every level.

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/research-integrity/animal-research/>

Imperial College is committed to equality of opportunity, to eliminating discrimination and to creating an inclusive working environment. We are an Athena SWAN Silver award winner, a Stonewall Diversity Champion, a Disability Confident Employer and work in partnership with GIRES to promote respect for trans people.

[Complete the information below when emailing advertisement to Penna or submitting to external job boards, then delete this line]

Closing date: **15th March 2019**

Awards

