

## Autism Fellowship

Name of Institution: Montreal Children's Hospital, McGill University Health Center  
Location: MCH  
Number of positions: 1  
Type of Fellowship: Child Psychiatry, Specialization in Autism Spectrum Disorders  
Fellowship Director: Dr. E. Lila Amirali

Program Information\_(please append description):

- Number of fellowship positions requested 1
- Academic affiliation 1
- Name of hospitals involved in training 1
  - % time spent by the fellow in each institution N/A
- Background: The ASD Program of the Montreal Children's Hospital is the largest clinical program in the province of Quebec. It currently evaluates about 350 new patients per year for diagnostic purposes. Attached to the diagnostic clinic are different services including a Diagnostic Clinic for Complex Cases (often of diverse cultural background and non-English or French speaking families, with other Neurological disorders or comorbidities) and an Intervention Clinic for Evaluations and Recommendations to the Readaptation Centre of complex patients who already have an Autism Diagnosis with Psychiatric Coorbidities. Psychopharmacology and Psychotherapy are significant components of the Intervention Clinic. Patients and staff speak French and/or English.
- Research activity: Several research programs are currently funded by public and private funding agencies that include CIHR, the Simons Foundation, Autism Speaks, and other Quebec public agencies. The research spans from molecular genetic studies of autism, epidemiological studies in Canada and in other countries, randomized clinical trials of the efficacy of early behavioral interventions, neuropsychological studies, developmental studies, biological studies, and outcome studies.
- Publications: The staff of the ASD Program is involved in both research and clinical activities. Out of the research activities, several publications are published every year.
- Mission: The mission of the ASD Program is to provide an up-to-date service to the population with autism spectrum disorders, to act as a center of resources for patients and their families, and to train professionals to the techniques to evaluate and treat autism as well as to conduct research on the causes and the treatments of this neurodevelopmental disorder.
- Outline how intended fellowship will enhance residency training: This fellowship is providing an area of specialization which has gained public health importance in the last few years. During their training, child psychiatrists usually have little

exposure to developmental disorders in general and autism in particular. It is an area of specialty which requires advanced training to be able to detect and diagnose at different stages of the life and treat this condition. As the numbers are growing, it is important that psychiatrists do have an opportunity to develop more clinical expertise in this area.

Names of the Teaching Faculty: Dr. E. Lila Amirali,  
Dr. Joyce Canfield,  
Dr. Mark Zoccolillo

- Roles: Dr. Canfield has a part-time clinical activity and is involved in diagnostic clinics with school-age children and preschoolers. Dr. Amirali is involved in Psychopharmacology Clinic and Dr. Zoccolillo is involved in the Intervention Clinic.
- Summary of clinical practice: Patients are assessed with up-to-standard diagnostic tools. Fellows will have an opportunity to train to the administration of standardized diagnostic interviews such as the Autism Diagnostic Interview (ADI-R) and the Autism Diagnostic Observational Schedule (ADOS) for which specific training requirements must be met. In addition, the assessments involve a number of other evaluations including audiology, speech and language assessments, occupational therapy assessments, behavioral assessments, and cognitive assessments. The Clinic uses a number of standardized questionnaires which are specific or not to the developmentally disabled population. The fellow will therefore have an opportunity to integrate the information arising from the standardized tools with that deriving from more unstructured clinical observations.
- Major Strengths: The Program is well established, has a reputation of excellence and works collaboratively with families and community centers and other academic centers in Canada and elsewhere.

#### Academic Facilities

- Outline facilities for clinical and academic pursuit: The fellow will be provided with a desk, a computer, and access to the Internet, electronic journals, etc. We have recording facilities that can be used as teaching/learning tools.
- Library access, materials relevant to fellowship training: MCH Library and access to the McGill University Library is performed through the internet. A list of reading material is available from the Program and most professional journals specializing in the field of autism are available through the Faculty.
- Multimedia learning materials available
- Availability of a skills lab if applicable

#### Fellow Duties and Responsibilities

- Call responsibilities to cover service: It is expected that the fellow when confident, could cover some consultants when they are away for holidays or conferences. Otherwise, there is no on-call per se. The Program operates weekdays between 9:00 to 17:00.
- Include whether the fellow is the senior supervisor of residents: The fellow can participate in the supervision of residents when he/she has acquired the skills adequate for that.
- Outline whether there are fixed rotations at various institutions: This fellowships is at the Montreal Children's Hospital. There are rotations into different clinics with different consultants and exposure to faculty from Pediatrics and Neurology with whom we work in close collaboration.
- Outpatient clinic responsibilities need to be outlined: The clinical responsibilities are mostly for outpatient clinics. The ASD Program also provides coverage for emergency room presentations of patients with autism to provide a prompt service for this needy clientele. Similarly, when a child with autism is admitted on a pediatric ward for medical reasons, we provide immediate support to the pediatric team if required.
- Outline role of the fellow towards residents on service: The fellow will be able to teach to residents when he/she has gained appropriate knowledge. The fellow will take part to specific journal clubs on autism, and to the general activities of the Department of Psychiatry that include Grand Rounds, Case Conferences, Mortality & Morbidity Rounds, Research Seminars, etc. There is a yearly event, the Donald Cohen Lectureship, which is devoted to autism and includes a pediatric grand rounds on autism at the MCH and the visit of an international speaker who interacts with staff of the Program for one day.
- Teaching responsibilities towards residents
- Outline participation in academic activities involving the residents: seminars, outcome assessment (morbidity and mortality rounds etc)
- Describe any support staff available to the fellow: program coordinator, nurse clinician, secretarial: The administrative support staff of the Program is available and is shared amongst staff members. The clinical coordinator coordinates the clinical activities and will coordinate those of the fellow.
- Proposed meetings to be attended by the fellow: The ASD Clinic has monthly meetings devoted to clinical issues. We usually review the clinical operations and also invite external speakers to keep us abreast of recent development in services in the community. In addition, Research meetings are held regularly for the various research activities to which the fellow is welcome to attend.

- Research productivity and publications expected by the Fellow: The fellow will have to engage into research under the supervision of one of the faculty. It is expected that in the course of the one-year fellowship, there will be at least one scientific presentation accepted and presented as a first author by the fellow and that at the end of the fellowship, the fellow should have completed a scientific article (either a review article or an empirically-based paper) as a first author that will be submitted to a peer-review journal.

#### Curriculum

- Intended case load: The fellow should be seeing at least three(3) new cases per week and be involved in the follow-up of an appropriate number of cases.
- Intended Percentage of varieties of cases: Cases will be chosen amongst preschoolers, school-aged children. There will be also involvement of the developmental monitoring of children at risk of developing autism such as in the case of a younger sibling of a child already diagnosed.
- Regular reading materials provided (if any): A list of reading material will be provided to the fellow at the beginning of the fellowship.
- Conference weekly schedules: One event is usually scheduled each week (either case conference, grand rounds, research seminar).
- Role of the fellow in attending, presenting, supervising, organization: The fellow will be encouraged to take responsibility in training, research, presentations and organization as he/she develops expertise and confidence in this area of practice and research.

January 26, 2017