Autism Fellowship

**Name of Institution:** Montreal Children’s Hospital, McGill University Health Center  
**Location:** Montreal Children’s Hospital  
**Number of Positions:** 1  
**Type of Fellowship:** Child Psychiatry, specialization in Autism Spectrum Disorders  
**Number of Fellowship Positions Requested:** 1  
**Academic Affiliation:** 1  
**Name of Hospitals Involved in Training:** Montreal Children’s Hospital  
**Percent time Spent by the Fellow in each Institution:** N/A

**Background:**
The ASD program of the MCH evaluates new patients for diagnostic purposes. Many are complex being of diverse cultural and linguist backgrounds, with other neurological disorders comorbid. The Intervention Clinic makes evaluations and recommendations to the readaptation center of complex patients who already have an autism diagnosis with psychiatric comorbidities. Psychopharmacology and Psychotherapy are significant components to the Intervention Clinic. Patients and staff speak French and/or English.

**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 resource for patients and their families, and to train professionals in the techniques to evaluate and treat autism.

**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 disorder 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 stage 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.

**Name of the Fellowship Supervisors:**
Dr. Mark Zoccolillo  
Dr. Joyce Canfield

**Names of the Teaching Faculty:**
Dr. Mark Zoccolillo  
Dr. Joyce Canfield

**Roles:**
Dr. Canfield has a part-time clinical activity in diagnostic clinics with children and youth ages 7-18. Dr. Zoccolillo is leading the Intervention Clinic of ages 5-17.

**Summary of Clinical Practice:**
Patients are assessed with up-to-standard diagnostic tools. It is recommended that fellows have training in administration of standardized diagnostic interviews such as the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2 and the Autism Diagnostic Interview-R 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 disable population. The fellow will therefore have an opportunity to integrate the information rising for the standardized tools with that deriving from more unstructured clinical observations.

The fellow will be expected to see at least one new case per week for diagnostic purposes which can include ADOS-2/ADI-R examinations as well as interpretation of the results to the child and parents with recommendations and referral for therapeutic interventions. Collation of information from various sources including school, psychology, and other allied health professionals forms part of the assessment process, thus there are opportunities to consult with other members of the child’s community.

**Diagnosis and Management of Behavior Problems and Co-Morbid Psychiatric Disorders in School Age Children:**

The Montreal Children’s Hospital Department of Psychiatry provides clinical consultation for the diagnosis and management of behavior problems and co-morbid psychiatric disorders in school age children with autism. Youth are referred from a designated catchment area (the western half of the island of Montreal) and from other hospital specialists. There are three half day clinics per week. One to three new patients per week along with follow up patients. An outreach clinic at community readaptation service for autistic youth has also been established. Because this is one of the few such specialized clinics in the province of Quebec and its location in a tertiary care medical center a wide variety of cases are seen. Cases seen in the past year include:


The clinic relies on services provided through community health centers. This is typical for most communities and provides valuable training for psychiatrist in how best to use such services. Fellows will also learn how to manage patients who are unwilling or unable to travel to the hospital and must be managed by parent or other informants and by telephone or electronic communications. The fellow will work under the supervision of a senior clinician. For the first part of the fellowship the fellow will learn how to conduct an appropriate evaluation while under direct supervision. Once mastered, the fellow will be expected to see patients alone with consultation with the senior clinician and to take increasing responsibility for decision making. Through readings and discussion it is expected that the fellow will be able to understand and apply the results of cognitive testing (in particular in relation to the evaluation of attention deficit symptoms in autism). The fellow will also be able to interpret common behavior scales used in autism. The fellow will also understand and able to discuss and recommend basic behavioral interventions with appropriate community providers. Weekly readings of the literature will be scheduled. These will include basic textbook chapters and the evidence based treatment literature. Emphasis will be placed on randomized controlled trials as guidance for treatment and on the
importance of reading studies specific to the use of medication in autism. The fellow will be expected to present at least one case at the Departmental Case Conference series.

**Major Strengths:**
The program is well established, has a reputation of excellence and works collaboratively with families and community centers.

**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 a recording facility that can be used as teaching/learning tools.

**Library Access, Materials Relevant to Fellowship Training:**
Montreal Children's Hospital 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. Librarians at the MCH library are available to assist in literature research. Multimedia learning materials available and availability of a skills lab if applicable.

**Fellow Duties and Responsibilities**

**Call responsibilities to cover service:**
There are no on-call requirements. In the absence of the autism consultant, replacement coverage is available with whom the fellow may consult as necessary. 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 resident when he/she has acquired the skills adequate for that.

**Outline whether there are Fixed Rotations at Various Institutions:**
This fellowship 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 residents when he/she has gained appropriate knowledge. The fellow will take part of 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 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.
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, 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.

Curriculum
Intended Percentage of Varieties of Case:
Cases will be chosen amongst school-aged children 7-18.

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 or 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.