

## Depressive Disorders Fellowship

**Name of Institution:** Douglas Mental Health University Institute

**Location:** Frank B Common, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 6875 blvd LaSalle, Montréal, H4H 1R3

**Type of fellowship:** clinical or clinical-research

**Length:** 1 year

### Program information

- **Academic affiliation:** McGill Department of Psychiatry
- **Name of hospitals involved in training:** Douglas Mental Health University Institute (100% of clinical time)
- **Background:** The Depressive Disorders Program (DDP) is an academic clinical program providing second and third-line clinical care focusing on the assessment and treatment of severe / recurrent / refractory / chronic / complex unipolar depressive disorders in outpatient adults aged 18 to 65 years old. Also check: <http://www.douglas.qc.ca/page/programme-troubles-depressifs>

*Medical staff:* 4 academic psychiatrists who are all faculty in the Dept of Psychiatry at McGill University. They all have active and externally funded research programs, as well as significant experience in graduate and postgraduate training:

- Dr. Gustavo TURECKI M.D. Ph.D. (director of the program; clinical and molecular biology research), <http://www.douglas.qc.ca/researcher/gustavo-turecki>

- Dr. Marcelo BERLIM M.D. M.Sc. (clinical research and TMS), <http://www.douglas.qc.ca/researcher/marcelo-berlim>

- Dr. Eduardo CHACHAMOVICH M.D. Ph.D. (clinical research and Aboriginal mental health research) <http://www.douglas.qc.ca/researcher/eduardo-chachamovich>

- Dr. Fabrice JOLLANT M.D. Ph.D. (clinical research, neuroimaging and neuropsychology) <http://www.douglas.qc.ca/researcher/fabrice-jollant>

*Organization:* Approximately 4 new cases are evaluated each week and most of them are subsequently followed in the program. Each new case is assessed using a battery of structured clinical interviews and questionnaires by a specialized nurse, then seen by one of the psychiatrists of the program, who will organize care and plan the pharmacological and somatic treatments. Each new case is discussed at a weekly clinical meeting where all medical and non-medical staff participate. At these meetings, the most appropriate treatment strategy, including both pharmacological and psychotherapeutic interventions,

is discussed and its implementation is planned. Priority is usually given to combined treatments. This program is the clinical arm of the McGill Group for Suicide Studies ([www.douglasrecherche.qc.ca/suicide](http://www.douglasrecherche.qc.ca/suicide)), and as such it has strong links with several research laboratories and related clinical programs, including the neuromodulation program, which is headed by one of our psychiatrists (Dr. M. Berlim).

*Clinical Journal-club:* Monthly. It includes discussion of articles, meeting with other programs for collaboration, guest speakers and discussion of complex cases. Additional seminars and research and clinical journal-clubs (including the academic affairs' journal-club) can be easily attended at the Douglas Institute.

*Research:* The DDP is related to the McGill Group for Suicide Studies (MGSS, director: Dr. G. Turecki), an internationally renowned research group involved in clinical and basic research on depression and suicidal behavior. Research includes a wide range of approaches, notably clinical trials (pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, somatic therapies), neuroimaging, neuropsychology, psychosocial, transcultural, anthropological, and biological, including psychological autopsies, post-mortem (cellular, molecular, epigenetic) studies, animal studies and cellular models. See [www.douglasrecherche.qc.ca/suicide](http://www.douglasrecherche.qc.ca/suicide)

*Strengths of the program for fellowships:*

- Specialized program with excellent clinical- and research-track records. The medical staff has an academic profile with expertise and experience in specialized care, teaching and research.
- Depressive disorders are frequent and rank among the most significant causes of disability and premature death. Therefore, all psychiatrists must be able to correctly diagnose, treat and prevent them.
- The Douglas Institute is a large facility dedicated to both treating a wide range of mental disorders and conducting high-quality research on mental health. It is the largest research Institute in psychiatry at McGill. It offers a wonderful opportunity to interact with a large number of clinicians and researchers. Numerous seminars are organized locally. Access to journals online is freely provided by McGill.

## **Fellowship**

- **Number of fellowship positions offered:** 1
- **Specific learning objectives:**

During his/her time in the program, the fellow will:

- Develop the ability to carry out detailed assessments of a full range of depressive disorders, and co-morbid mental conditions (including anxiety disorders, alcohol and substance abuse, personality disorders), as well as

somatic disorders, and rule out differential diagnoses (incl. bipolar disorders).

- Learn to use specific questionnaires to best estimate diagnoses and monitor mood changes over follow-up.
  - Learn to recognize and manage suicidal/homicidal risk in an outpatient setting.
  - Learn to establish a therapeutic alliance with all patients.
  - Acquire the capacity to plan and implement detailed treatment plans for diverse presentations of major depression. These treatment plans will include pharmacotherapy algorithms, different psychotherapeutic approaches, somatic treatments (ECT, rTMS) as well as determining the optimal setting where the treatment will take place such as outpatient, inpatient, day hospital.
  - Acquire and develop excellent skills in the pharmacological treatment of depressive disorders: 1) choice of best medication options, 2) strategies to improve treatment effectiveness (augmentation, combination) 3) determination of optimum duration 4) psycho-education 5) management of side effects 6) management of discontinuation.
  - Be exposed to different (individual and group) psychotherapeutic approaches and learn their specific indication: behavioural activation therapy (CBASP), cognitive behavioural therapy, and supportive therapy.
  - Learn to write his/her assessments and communicate the findings with referring physicians and other health professionals.
  - Develop skills to work in a multidisciplinary team and interact with professionals of diverse backgrounds, including psychologists, nurses and social workers.
  - Have the opportunity to be exposed to a unique and large research program on depression and suicide, and work on this research program or pursue his/her own research.
- **Learning modalities:**
    - Reading materials on depression and treatment will be given to the fellow at arrival.
    - The fellow will do initial assessments on the direct observation by the supervisor and will participate in assessment by other team members (psychologists).
    - The fellow will then do assessments and follow-up on his/her own. Each case will be presented to and discussed with the supervisor.
    - Each written assessment will be reviewed and discussed with the supervisor.

- The fellow will learn how to use scales used to assess diagnoses (SCID-I), personality disorders (SCID-II) and traits (BIS...), suicide history and risk (Columbia), depressive level (HAMD, BDI).
  - The fellow will participate in multidisciplinary weekly clinical rounds where he will present and discuss his/her own cases.
  - The fellow will be able to observe psychotherapeutic interventions with psychologists.
  - Time for his/her own research will be secured in agreement with the fellowship director at the beginning of the fellowship. If the fellow is not already involved in a research project, he/she will be asked to write a review paper and/or participate in an ongoing project and/or analyse available data and publish findings and/or develop his/her own small-scale research project.
- **Duties and responsibilities of the fellow:**
    - The fellow will have no call responsibilities and will not be expected to provide clinical supervisions to students.
    - Clinical responsibilities will include assessing 1 to 2 new patients a week, and follow a caseload of 15-20 patients at any time. Assessments and follow-up will be individually supervised each week by the supervisor.
    - The fellow will have to present all newly assessed patients at multidisciplinary weekly clinical round and discuss treatment plan.
    - The fellow will attend the monthly DDP journal-club and the academic affairs journal-club. The fellow will be expected to present at least 4 times a year at the DDP journal-club.
    - The fellow will have to regularly meet his/her research supervisor to discuss the progress of the research work.