



UNSW Medicine

PhD Scholarship

The psychosocial implications of genetic testing and precision medicine for children and their families, and the healthcare professionals who care for them

Kids Cancer Centre, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and School of Women's and Children's Health, UNSW Sydney is proud to offer a new PhD position dedicated to researching the implications of precision medicine for children, their families and the healthcare professionals who care for them.

Project description:

High-risk childhood cancer patients have a low survival rate with current treatments. The PRISM precision medicine trial makes personalised therapeutic recommendations for these children. Despite great optimism surrounding precision medicine, it will not be possible to cure all children. Precision medicine trials are very complex, meaning that families, and even healthcare professionals, may have difficulties understanding precision medicine. PRISM-IMPACT aims to assess families' and healthcare providers' expectations, hopes, and understanding of PRISM. By better understanding their experiences, we will be able to intervene early, provide educational support, increase satisfaction with care and improve quality of life among families in PRISM. The PhD program will expand upon the work undertaken to date as part of PRISM-Impact, which was commenced in 2017.

The PhD scholar will be a UNSW student, based on the UNSW main campus and at the Kids Cancer Centre. The student will receive the full support of the Behavioural Sciences Unit (BSU) in the Kids Cancer Centre. The BSU was established in 2001. It is recognised as one of the largest paediatric psycho-oncology research groups and is supported by a multidisciplinary team of psychologists, educators, oncologists, nurses, dietitians, exercise physiologists, social workers, biostatisticians and international collaborators.

Description:

A full-time postgraduate scholarship is available for a suitably qualified candidate with a minimum of an honours or master's degree. The research will be conducted under the supervision of the Head of the Behavioural Sciences Unit at the Kids Cancer Centre at Sydney Children's Hospital (Professor Claire Wakefield), a Postdoctoral Research Fellow (Dr Janine Vetsch) and Clinical Oncologist (A/Prof David Ziegler).

Eligibility criteria:

Our ideal candidate will have tertiary education in a health-related area (e.g. psychology, biomedical sciences, genetic counselling). The candidate will have a passion for pursuing a career in psycho-oncology and precision medicine. Previous research experience working with children or parents with children with other chronic illnesses is desirable. The candidate will preferably have training in both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, writing of ethics applications and

preparation of manuscripts. The candidate will have excellent interpersonal skills and will be able to demonstrate empathy working with families affected by cancer. The candidate will be able to meet deadlines and work in a self-directed manner. The candidate will have excellent written and communication skills and will enjoy working in a multi-disciplinary team. The candidate will have experience working with software such as STATA, SPSS, NVivo and Endnote.

Scholarship details:

The successful candidate will be registered as a student at UNSW beginning Semester 1 2019. They will receive an annual stipend of \$30, 000, which will be renewed for up to 3 years pending satisfactory progress. The successful candidate will be required to prepare a 2-page project proposal (with the support of the supervisors) for submission to UNSW in mid-March 2019. While the stipend offered is guaranteed, the candidate will be encouraged to apply for external, competitive, stipends over their candidature.

The scholarship is funded by a grant from Paediatric and the Office for Health and Medical Research, NSW Government.

To apply:

Applications should be sent direct to Dr Janine Vetsch at j.vetsch@unsw.edu.au and should include a cover letter addressing the eligibility criteria, a curriculum vitae, a copy of an academic transcript and the names and contact details of at least two referees. Interviews for the position will be held prior to selection of the successful candidate in mid-February 2019.

Closing date: Wednesday 29th January 2019

Further enquiries:

Dr Janine Vetsch

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Team leader 'ethics and genetics' team, BSU, Sydney Children's Hospital

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