Comprehensive Research Experience for Medical Students
Summer Research Program 2019

Supervisor/Project Information Form
Due February 20 2019 by email to crems.programs@utoronto.ca

Supervisor Name: Dr. Sanjeev Sockalingam[1] & Dr. Maria Mylopoulos[2]

Project Title : Fostering adaptive expertise: exploring clinical practice guideline use in mental health care

Hospital/Research Institution: 1. Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, 2. The Wilson Centre for Research in Education

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Field of Research (2 keywords): Medical Education

Department: 1. Department of Psychiatry 2. Department of Paediatrics, University of Toronto

School of Graduate Studies Appointment (IMS, LMP, IHPME etc)? Yes/No: If YES, please name:
1. Institute of Medical Science 2. Institute of Health Policy Management and Evaluation

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Brief Project Description (‹300 words):

Clinicians treating depression are currently supported in their practice by clinical practice guidelines (CPG) such as the CANMAT guidelines and existing clinical care pathways. While these CPGs are broadly disseminated, implementation is influenced by many factors yet non-adherence has been associated with suboptimal care and treatment. The expectation that physicians should apply evidence-based knowledge in their practice to provide optimal care is an oversimplification and is not in line with research on the complex cognitive activity that experts engage in during clinical decision making. Research in adaptive expertise suggests that beyond direct application of knowledge in routine situations, experts build new knowledge in the face of novelty and complexity to solve non-routine problems. This suggests that there are justified cases where physicians must adapt guideline recommendations to improve patient outcomes and

suggests a more nuanced role of CPGs in the way that experts understand, apply and adapt them in practice.

This qualitative study will explore the factors that influence the adaptation of existing depression guidelines (ex. The Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments (CANMAT) and standardized care pathways among mental health specialists and primary care providers in the screening, prevention, diagnosis, education and care management of depression. We will be conducting semi-structured interviews with mental health experts who treat depression in their practice and identify themes that may emerge regarding how they identify complexity, when they adapt guidelines to provide adequate care and what influences their decision-making. We will also evaluate the impact of case characteristics and case complexity on guideline implementation and adaptation.

The results of this study will contribute to the ongoing discussion on the use of guidelines in clinical practice and how expertise research can inform their design and implementation. Students will have an opportunity to work on a manuscript for publication and to present findings at a medical education conference.