Comprehensive Research Experience for Medical Students (CREMS)

2022 Supervisor and Project Information Form

Please complete and return via email ONLY to crems.programs@utoronto.ca by February 18, 2022.

Supervisor Information

NOTE: CREMS will not support pre-determined pairings of students and supervisors. Supervisors must agree to open their projects to all students and interview all that are interested.

Name: Sanjeev Sockalingam
Email: Sanjeev.Sockalingam@camh.ca

Department: Department of Psychiatry
Hospital/Research Institution: CAMH

SGS Department(s) (if applicable):
Institute of Medical Sciences

ORCID ID (see https://orcid.org/ - If you do not have an ORCID ID we encourage you to sign up for one):
000-0002-9626-1509

Location of Work:
CAMH- Queen St./Remote

Field of Research (up to 4 keywords):
Qualitative research
Vaccine hesitancy
Semi structured interviews
Youth engagement

Student contact time (number of hours per week YOU are available to the student for any concerns or to review progress):
4 hours per week
**Project Information**

*NOTE: If this project is selected, this information will be posted on CREMS website for interested student applicants to view research opportunities.*

**PROJECT TITLE:**
Understanding attitudes and beliefs toward the COVID-19 vaccines among youth with mental illness.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**
Including background, aim(s), methodS and significance of the project. *Maximum 300 words.*

*Background*

People living with mental illness are at increased risk of contracting and dying from SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) compared to the general population. Despite the benefits of vaccine related to COVID-19 infection, youth living with mental illness tend to be vaccine-hesistant based on influenza vaccination studies and reported level of distrust of this patient population with the healthcare system. This CIHR funded qualitative study aims to describe the beliefs and attitudes of youth with mental illness towards the COVID-19 vaccines. This study also will assess youth’s preferred methods for receiving and searching for information on COVID-19 vaccines. The study results will inform the development of targeted, evidence-based public health campaigns for youth with mental illness that are co-designed with youth with mental illness.

*Methods*

The study will involve semi-structured interviews with ~30 youth (16–29 years) who live with mental illness to explore their beliefs, attitudes, and information needs about the COVID-19 vaccines. Interview questions will cover demographic data, self-reported information needs, perceptions of and attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccines, and trust towards the healthcare system and vaccine manufacturers. Following the Health Belief Model, we will also explore patients’ perceived severity of having COVID-19, perceived susceptibility to developing COVID-19, perceived benefits of the vaccine, perceived barriers to the vaccine and cues to action.

*Data Collection*

Interviews will be conducted via video call or over the phone, depending on participants’ preference. Interviews will be audio recorded, lasting up to 45 minutes in length, and transcribed.

*Recruitment Strategy*

Participants will be recruited through various CAMH clinics and networks; community mental health organizations and U of T Health and Wellness.

*Analysis Plan*

Interviews will be qualitatively analyzed, using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis approach, to identify major themes and emerging patterns. Interviews will be transcribed and data will be managed using NVivo. Two team members will familiarize themselves with the transcripts, engage in coding and construct themes. Member checking will be used during data collection with interviewed youth to increase rigor.
Is this project remote-capable (in case of new restrictions) or have an alternative remote option?
☑ Yes, remote capable  ☐ No
☐ Yes, alternate remote option. Please specify (100 words max): Click or tap here to enter text.

If human subjects are involved, have the appropriate Research Ethics Board approvals been obtained?
☑ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Not Applicable
If yes, please list the application submission date:

Do you expect this work will be published?
☑ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Uncertain / Other
**Research Environment and Student Roles and Responsibilities**

Please be specific as possible. Please describe the research environment, including availability of required facilities/equipment/expertise, supervisor’s experience and mentorship plans. Please clearly outline the student role(s) and responsibilities related to the project, potential educational value, and indicate who will serve as the student’s direct report for daily oversight (PI, PHD student, technician, etc.). **Maximum 300 words.**

This is a qualitative research project which will primarily be conducted remotely, any necessary software or equipment will be provided to the student during their placement. A strong research team has been assembled for this project which will provide the student with various learning and professional development opportunities. Dr. Sockalingam has over 200 peer-reviewed publications and is a lead investigator on several peer-reviewed clinical and knowledge translation grants. He has conducted research on the interface between physical and mental illness. His knowledge translation and education research has focused on mental health capacity building using technology and the implementation and evaluation of mental health education programs. He has supervised medical students, CREMS students, residents, fellows and graduate students in research and supported many students to disseminate their scholarly work through publications and/or presentations at national and international conferences.

This will be a valuable opportunity for someone who has interest in interest and/or experience in:
- Co-design projects with people who identify as having lived experience of mental health and/or addiction concerns
- Mental health education
- Knowledge translation and dissemination
- Qualitative research skills (recruitment, managing study documents, recordings and transcripts; virtual interviews)
- Qualitative analysis (thematic coding using qualitative analysis software) and some quantitative analysis (primarily demographic stats)
- Working with diverse and marginalized populations
- Organizing and facilitating online focus groups and workshops, and utilizing related technologies

Some potential activities the student may be involved with include:

- conducting literature reviews and/or other background research activities
- recruiting participants into the vaccine research study
- analyzing interview transcripts using NVIVO or related software
- analyzing demographic data
- planning and organizing co-design workshops
- contributing to manuscript(s), peer-reviewed presentations and co-developed vaccine resource development for youth