Allostatic load in later life: How does neighbourhood ‘get under the skin’

Principal Supervisor: Prof Alan Marshall  Alan.Marshall@ed.ac.uk
Assistant Supervisor: Prof Jamie Pearce  jamie.pearce@ed.ac.uk, Prof Catherine Ward Thomson  c.ward-thompson@ed.ac.uk

This project sits within the ACRC Academy, a dedicated Centre for Doctoral Training, co-located with the ACRC, whose students will deliver key aspects of the ACRC research agenda through a new doctoral-level research and training programme that will also equip them for careers across a wide range of pioneering and influential leadership roles in the public, private and third sectors.

The PhD with Integrated Study in Advanced Care is a novel, structured, thematic, cohort-based, programme of 48 months duration. Each PhD research project within the Academy has been devised by a supervisory team comprising academic staff from at least two of the three colleges within the University of Edinburgh. Each annual cohort of around twelve will include students with disciplinary backgrounds spanning from engineering and data science to humanities, social science, business and commerce, social work, medicine and related health and care professions. This unique level of diversity is a key attribute of our programme.

Project:

Aim

The overarching aim of this project is to examine how the stresses associated with social circumstances and place operate across the life course to ‘get under the skin’ and have enduring effects on allostatic load in later life.

Objectives

- Do we see variation in levels and trajectories of allostatic load in later life that are influenced by characteristics of place (e.g. deprivation, green space, crime or pollution) independent of individual socio-economic circumstances?
- Are there critical periods in the life course where exposure to neighbourhood characteristics is particularly important in setting later life allostatic load?
- Do trajectories of allostatic load alter as older people experience a move of home and neighbourhood in later life?
- What are the lessons for the planning and design of environments conducive to healthy ageing that flow from this research

Description

The overarching aim of this project is to examine how the stresses associated with living in particular neighbourhood at particular parts of the life course ‘get under the skin’ and have enduring effects on allostatic load in later life. It is well known that health outcomes are strongly associated with neighbourhood characteristics, but the mechanisms that underpin this association are contested. Recent advances in survey data combining social and biomedical information enable the links
between social circumstances, stress, allostatic load and subsequent health outcomes to be formally
tested and this represents an emerging area of research.

Eligibility:

We are specifically looking for applicants who will view their cutting-edge PhD research project in
the context of the overall vision of the ACRC, who are keen to contribute to tackling a societal grand
challenge and who can add unique value to – and derive great benefit from – training in a cohort
comprising colleagues with a very diverse range of disciplines and backgrounds. We advise
prospective candidates to engage in dialogue with the named project supervisor and/or the Director
of the Academy prior to submitting an application.

Recruitment:

The current round of recruitment will end on 26 November. Thereafter, if places remain we will
recruit on a rolling basis.

It is essential to read the How to Apply section of our website before you apply:

View Website

Please apply here:

View Website