

PhD position: Psychotherapy for patients with sleep difficulties



Workgroup and Project

The workgroup “Sleep research in psychiatry”, led by Prof. Christoph Nissen, modulates sleep with neurobiological and psychotherapeutic interventions with the overarching aim of improving sleep and health. We are offering a PhD position in the project “Comparative efficacy of bedtime restriction therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia: a randomized controlled non-inferiority trial”. This project is funded via a Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) Ambizione grant to Dr. Elisabeth Hertenstein, psychotherapist and researcher in the workgroup. It is a bicentric clinical trial with 160 patients and will be conducted in Bern and Geneva.

The aim of the project is to optimize psychotherapeutic treatment options for patients with insomnia, a disorder characterized by sleep onset and maintenance difficulties with a negative impact on quality of life. More specifically, the objective of the project is to evaluate if a brief behavioral treatment for insomnia is equally effective as cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), the first-line treatment according to current guidelines.

As a PhD student, you will be part of the workgroup “Sleep research in psychiatry”, with a work focus on the clinical trial outlined above. The project will start in April 2024. The PhD position can start beginning of April or a few months later according to arrangement. The PhD position is funded for 4 years.

Role of the PhD student

- Organize and conduct patient recruitment and screening
- Organize group therapy sessions
- Manage RedCap data base
- Present the project at scientific conferences
- Collaborate with Dr. Hertenstein for data analysis and writing of scientific publications

Your Profile

- M.Sc. in psychology, or equivalent
- Excellent interpersonal communication and organizational skills
- Good writing and presentations skills
- Fluent in English and French, German skills are advantageous
- Ability to travel within Switzerland (SBB train ticket will be provided)
- Interest in sleep and psychotherapy
- If desired, the PhD position can be combined with a clinical training in psychotherapy

Benefits

- combine a scientific and therapeutic interest
- be part of an excellent and supportive workgroup and benefit from ongoing support and supervision
- gain insight into the design, planning, conduct and evaluation of a clinical trial
- learn how to diagnose sleep disorders, under supervision
- gain insight into behavioral therapy for insomnia
- develop skills in data handling, statistical analysis and interpretation
- learn how to present at scientific conferences
- acquire scientific writing skills
- secured funding, including travel, for four years
- Excellent scientific environment at the University of Geneva

Application

Interested students are asked to send a letter outlining their motivation, their CV and a letter of recommendation (if available) to Dr. Elisabeth Hertenstein (elisabeth.hertenstein@unige.ch)