

Child Health Research CIO

CHILD HEALTH RESEARCH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (CHR CIO) PROGRESS FORM – VACATION STUDENTS

Student's name:	Christy Flora Au
Academic Programme:	Population, Policy & Practice
Project title(s):	The effectiveness of modular treatment for emotional and behavioural difficulties in children with epilepsy

1. Lay Summary

What are you trying to do in this studentship?

Undergraduate Psychology courses - while academically rigorous - do not provide many opportunities to engage in clinical research. As such, this placement presented a rare opportunity to understand what it is like to 'do' Psychology and how a clinical trial functions; with my main aim going into this studentship being to experience as many different novel situations as possible. This included learning about and/or participating in as many different types of studies as I could, participating in clinical work, and both qualitative and quantitative data handling. I was also specifically tasked with analysing pre- and post-intervention measures for the second phase of the Mental Health Interventions for Children with Epilepsy (MICE) project, for which I organised and processed participant data on a wide range of questionnaires.

Why is this research important?

Children and young people with epilepsy have an elevated risk of developing mental health problems - a fact that conflicts with the reality that many of these patients do not receive the necessary treatment. One must also note that these individuals find themselves in the extremely challenging position of having to cope not just with emotional and behavioural difficulties, but also with a long-standing chronic physical condition and all that implies. This unique situation means that many therapies currently in use in the UK are not completely suited to their needs. This research thus aims to develop a novel mental health intervention that is tailored specifically to children and young people with epilepsy.

2. Value of Your Experience

This placement has contributed immensely to my knowledge on, and experience in, mental health research: ranging from the copious amounts of planning needed to execute a clinical trial of this scale, to more mundane, but equally important, tasks of data entry and verification. For a brief two months, I have been given the chance to immerse myself in the minds of academics in the field - and I've seized the opportunity to pick their brains and learn their habits as thoroughly as I can!

Additionally, the placement has been hugely beneficial, not just in terms of experience and satisfying academic curiosity, but also as an opportunity for personal development. Working within such a highly regarded institute, alongside some of the most brilliant minds I've ever met and being *trusted* to contribute to the team has been an immense honour. It has helped

me develop my faith in my own abilities, as well as, giving me the space to explore skills, tasks and situations that were previously unknown to me; a freedom that has allowed me to learn and grow to the point where I truly believe that I have matured as a person just within the duration of this placement.

All in all, these 8 weeks have given me an insight into the world of research and equipped me with skills both specific to academics and those highly transferrable to other workplaces. This placement has given direction, purpose and knowledge to a university student confused as to how to proceed and whose mind was swimming with more questions than answers - so for that, I will always be grateful for this brilliant opportunity.