

Child Health Research CIO

CHILD HEALTH RESEARCH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (CHR CIO) PROGRESS FORM – VACATION STUDENT 2018

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Project title(s):	Characteristics and attitudes to HIV care of young people living with HIV in Ukraine

Summary

What are you trying to do in this studentship?

To explore characteristics of HIV-positive young people in Ukraine, and their attitudes to the HIV care they have received, including differences according to age, sex and study site. These data had been collected in a multi-centre observational cohort study of children and adolescents living with HIV, together with an additional survey of the young people using a tablet computer.

Why is this research important?

This research is important because Ukraine has the second largest number of HIV infected people in Europe, with a large proportion of young people (10-19 years old) who were perinatally infected. This can be largely attributed to the high rates (>10%) of mother-to-child transmission prior to 2003. Other studies have shown that this particular cohort of individuals are more prone to have a poorer treatment outcome and adherence as they transition to adult HIV services, so it is important to identify potential risk factors and trends to shape the clinical strategy and to optimize their treatment outcomes.

Value of Your Experience

With no prior research experience at all, the summer placement at the PPP department has been an amazing time for me to find out how research is carried out at a research institution. The first 3 weeks of my studentship was spent on conducting literature reviews on existing papers on HIV in Eastern European countries, and for the next 4 weeks I was applying the skills that I have acquired the statistics workshop to analyse clinical data of HIV patients in Ukraine. The latter half of my studentship was especially rewarding as I used the SPSS software package to do all kinds of interesting graphs and tables on the data that I was working on. As someone who is always leaning towards the qualitative side of academia, this placement gave me an insight into the importance of evidence based research in improving the healthcare system. Furthermore, it is nice to have the opportunity to occasionally attend research seminars every once in a while to learn about the research study of other academics in the institution. Last but not least, everyone in my office has been very kind and friendly, and I have definitely learned a lot from their personal experiences.