

Child Health Research CIO

CHILD HEALTH RESEARCH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (CHR CIO) VACATION STUDENT REPORT 2018

Student's name:	Joseph Lyons
Primary supervisor:	Alice Welch
Project title(s):	Transforming the Mental Health of Children with Epilepsy

Summary

What are you trying to do in this studentship?

I am trying to gain experience and a skill set that improves my competence in psychological research. This project is attempting to develop a treatment which meets the special mental health needs of young people with epilepsy. The modular approach the treatment takes is a relatively recent and innovative development and it would be most exciting and most conducive to my professional development to be part of a team that is working on such cutting-edge research.

The project is also attempting to talk to young people and families to understand what treatment was like and how to improve it. This patient and public involvement is what I am most excited by as it is an extension of my charity work. I have worked extensively with children and their families in a non-research setting and I want to transfer those skills into a research setting and develop them.

Why is this research important?

Epilepsy is a serious long-term illness in young people. At least half of young people with epilepsy also have mental health problems like depression, anxiety and behaviour problems. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommends that the psychological needs of such young people with epilepsy need to be met; but, currently, they are not. This research contributes to the development of a treatment programme for meeting the unique needs of young people with epilepsy.

Value of Your Experience

Please comment on the value of your experience undertaking this CHR CIO vacation studentship.

The experience is incredibly valuable to my development as an academic and researcher. Not only have I learnt great amounts of specific information about epilepsy-related mental health issues, I have learnt broader ideas about clinical psychology and, more importantly, how these ideas are investigated. I have also gained a greater understanding of the patient's perspective in my work with Patient and Public Involvement (PPI), particularly in listening to the concerns and opinions of the primary caregivers of young people with epilepsy.

The internship will inform the quality of my future academic work and my career path. This studentship will tell employers that I have worked within a team of the highest standard and have nurtured a skill set applicable to many work environments, but most particularly those which are centred on academics.