Project: The cognitive development of infants in the E-cigarettes on Childhood Health Outcomes (ECHO) study

The Babylab at the School of Psychology, University College Dublin (UCD) is collaborating with UCD School of Medicine, Children's Health Ireland, Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital, and Royal College of Surgeons Ireland on a long-term project exploring the outcomes of young children exposed to electronic cigarettes in utero.

We are looking for a self-motivated student interested in a project examining potential long-term cognitive and behavioural outcomes of children whose mothers used electronic cigarettes in pregnancy.

Funding

This project is funded by the Science Foundations Frontiers for the Future Program. The position will provide funding for a four-year fulltime PhD (tuition fees plus annual stipend of 18,500 euro and research laptop supplied).

Supervisory Team

Primary Supervisor: Assoc. Professor Michelle Downes (UCD School of Psychology)

Secondary Supervisor: Professor Des Cox (UCD School of Medicine and Children's Health Ireland)

Start date: January 2024

The problem

Tobacco smoking remains a leading risk factor for adverse outcomes in pregnancy. There is a well-established body of research linking prenatal exposure to factors such as tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption and drug use to neurobehavioral and cognitive outcomes. However, we currently lack information on the potential impact of e-cigarettes on child outcomes. This project will form part of a larger study that investigates the outcomes of children born to mothers who use e-cigarettes in pregnancy. The specific focus of this study will be on the cognitive and neurobehavioral development of infants at 12 and 24 months.

The student will be primarily based within the School of Psychology, UCD. The successful applicant will join a multi-disciplinary research team across multiple sites. They will have the opportunity to acquire new skills through the structured PhD program at UCD and will be expected to disseminate at conferences and to participated in related research activities and public engagement at the UCD Babylab and UCD School of Psychology.

The applicant

The applicant will be a psychology graduate with a relevant MA/MSc and experience of working with neuropsychological assessment and/or experience of working with children/patient populations. The applicant will have a particular interest in the domains of child development and developmental neuropsychology.

Essential Qualities

• BA/BSc honours level degree in psychology from an accredited course (minimum 2.1 award)
• MA/MSc in Psychology subject
• Research assistant experience
• Experience in data analysis (e.g. excel, SPSS, R)
• Experience with child/patient research participants
• Excellent English writing skills
• Strong interpersonal qualities

Non-Essential, Desirable qualities

• Experience with questionnaires and/or neuropsychological tests (e.g., BSID)
• Experience working with medical data
• Experience working in a hospital/educational setting

The awarding of the funding is dependent on the successful applicant being accepted for a PhD by the School of Psychology, UCD.

To Apply

Please send a Curriculum Vitae, academic transcripts, two academic references, and a brief statement of interest outlining what you can bring to the project to michelle.downes@ucd.ie by 5pm ~~September 29th~~ 2023.

Interviews will be held at UCD on the 19th of October 2023.

Applications deadline extended to Oct 6th