

2015/2016 Summer Studentship Project Application Form

Send to: Research Office, University of Otago Christchurch, PO Box 4345, Christchurch, by 5pm on **3 July 2015**

Supervisor Information (First named supervisor will be the contact):

Supervisor's Name and Title(s): Assoc Prof Gillian Abel; Mrs Jen Desrosiers

Department: Population Health

Institution: UOC

Phone: 3643619

E-mail: Gillian.abel@otago.ac.nz

Mailing Address: 34 Gloucester Street

Research Category (Choose one category only – to be used for judging the students' presentations):

Community

Project Title (20 words MAXIMUM):

'I am HIV but I am not a patient': Managing marginalised identities in health interactions

Project Description:

Introduction:

Health and social support interactions play a significant role in the physical and mental health of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Despite the importance of these interactions, many PLWHA experience discrimination and stigma in health and social interactions based on their HIV status. In addition, some PLWHA experience multiple marginalities based on their HIV status in conjunction with other stigmatized characteristics including gender, low socioeconomic status and sexual orientation.

Living with a chronic condition such as HIV long term has enormous consequences on socio-economic status and broader determinants of health. In common with other chronic conditions, HIV involves the management of uncertainty, adherence to a prescribed treatment regimen, a requirement for self-care, changes in roles, employment status, relationships and sexuality, identity changes, psychological distress and stigma (Siegel & Lekas, 2002). However, HIV is different from other chronic conditions in that adherence to antiretroviral treatment is highly complex and fraught with the experience of multiple side effects, daily monitoring is difficult, and the particular stigma of HIV complicates the experience of HIV, prevention and access to care.

Aim:

To explore the strategies that PLWHA use to manage stigmatization and marginalization in their health and support interactions. This research will add to the evidence base that informs healthcare provider/patient interactions and social support networks for PLWHA

Method:

The summer student will be responsible for analyzing already collected and transcribed qualitative interviews with 13 participants living with HIV. These participants were interviewed at least twice over the course of a year (two participants were interviewed four times). The student will carry out a literature review on the topic area. The student will then carry out a thematic analysis of the interviews with a focus on how PLWHA manage stigma and marginalization while they navigate through the health system. A thematic approach will ensure that understandings of general patterns and important issues emerge from participants' own explanations, understandings and descriptions (Hansen, 2006). Codes and

themes will be developed from the constant comparative analysis of participants' words, phrases and explanations. The student will then produce the first draft of a paper for submission to an appropriate academic journal.

This project will provide the student with experience in preparing a qualitative paper for publication and the student will be the first-named author on the paper.

Hansen, E. (2006). *Successful qualitative health research: A practical introduction*. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen and Unwin.

Siegel, K., & Lekas, H.-M. (2002). AIDS as a chronic illness: psychosocial implications. *AIDS*, 16, S69-S76.

Student Prerequisites (eg. Medical Student) if applicable:

Interest in Qualitative Research – experience in qualitative research preferable