**UCL RESEARCH Department of Epidemiology AND public Health**

institute OF epidemiology & health care

**PhD STUDENTSHIP IN EPIDEMIOLOGY: Diet and depression**

Applications are sought for a PhD studentship starting September 2014 and based in the **Department of Epidemiology and Public Health** (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/epidemiology>). The student will apply epidemiological perspectives to study of relationships between depression and diet-related factors including obesity over the adult life course. The main research approach will involve statistical analysis of longitudinal cohort studies. The studentship is funded by European Framework Programme 7 as part of the MooDFOOD collaborative project (Multi-country cOllaborative project on the rOle of Diet, FOod-related behaviour, and Obesity in the prevention of Depression).

The successful applicant will be attached to the Whitehall II research group, supervised by Martin Shipley and Professor Eric Brunner. There will be opportunities to analyse large longitudinal datasets in addition to Whitehall II.

The **Whitehall II study** *(*[*http://www.ucl.ac.uk/epidemiology/whitehallII*](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/epidemiology/whitehallII)*)* was set up to determine why people lower down the social hierarchy have higher rates of cardiovascular disease. Over the last 30 years, a cohort of 10,308 male and female civil servants have been followed up, attending medical examinations and completing questionnaires covering a wide range of information including: physical health, mental health, social and demographic factors, health behaviours, and retirement. Whitehall II has been important in providing evidence to support social determinants of health approaches to public health. With participants now in their 7th, 8th and 9th decades, the focus of Whitehall II is shifting towards studies on ageing and health.

The present project will involve analysis of longitudinal data from Whitehall II and other cohorts that examines the bi-directional links of food intake, nutrients and obesity with depression. Dietary intake has been assessed on four occasions over the period 1991 to 2009. Depressive symptoms based on the GHQ-30 were also collected on each of these contacts. These data provide for original and detailed studies of the association between diet and depression over adult life, considering the influence of diet on risk of depression and vice versa. In this context, the longitudinal relationship between adiposity and depression is an important research question. The research student will be expected to prepare two or more original papers for publication during the course of the project.

The **studentship** is for a three year period. Applicants should have a First Class or Upper Second Class degree in a relevant subject area (e.g. biomedical or nutritional science, quantitative social science, statistics) and ideally a Master’s degree (preferably with merit or distinction) in a relevant topic. The student will be able to attend modules of the department’s MSc in Health & Society ([*http://www.ucl.ac.uk/healthandsociety/course-overview*](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/healthandsociety/course-overview)). The stipend is £23,634 in year 1. Applicants must be eligible for work in the UK. The UK/EU full-time MPhil/PhD fee for 2014/15 is £4500.

**Applications**: Please apply with a CV, a statement of research experience and interests, and the contact details of two academic references. Electronic submissions are preferred. Please include a contact telephone number and an email address. Applications should be addressed to: Ms Floriana Bortolotti, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, UCL, 1-19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 6BT (f.bortolotti@ucl.ac.uk).

**Application deadline: 5 pm Friday 30 May 2014. Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed on Tuesday 10 June.** Funds are unfortunately not available for travel to the interview.

If you wish to discuss this studentship opportunity, please contact Eric Brunner (020 7679 1689, e.brunner@ucl.ac.uk).

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**UCL Department of Epidemiology and Public Health**

Much of the work of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health focuses on social determinants of health, with world-leading research across a variety of disciplines. Its 180 members of staff work in eleven research groups: the ESRC International Centre for Life Course Studies in Society & Health; the Whitehall II Study; the MRC Unit for Lifelong Health and Ageing (incorporating the National Survey of Health and Development); the Cancer Research UK Health Behaviour Research Centre; the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre; Dental Public Health, Psychobiology, Central and Eastern Europe Research, Health and Social Surveys, Genetic Epidemiology, and Clinical Epidemiology. There is also a cross-cutting medical and social statistics network.

The department has a vibrant graduate student environment, with currently 95 PhD students and three taught MSc programmes. The PhD programme includes:

• taught methods and statistics courses

• weekly student run seminar series

• annual residential away weekend and workshop

• annual student poster competition

• student mentoring scheme

• supervisory panels to provide multi-disciplinary expertise

The Department is housed in modern offices with laboratories (2) and general meeting rooms (4) over five floors in a single UCL building. The Department is close to the main UCL and University of London sites and facilities, The British Library, the British Museum and Regents Park. In addition there are numerous squares in the vicinity e.g. Gordon and Russell Square.