

The DSH-V Research Assistantship

A Correctional Assessment and Research Project Focused on Risk Estimation

**Brochure
2015-2016 Training Year**

**Department of State Hospitals—Vacaville
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Clinical Research Assistantship Department of State Hospitals—Vacaville

Description

The Department of State Hospitals—Vacaville (DSH-V) psychology service is pleased to offer a research assistantship experience to interested graduate students. This research assistantship offers students experience with applied research with a specialized population of inpatients within a correctional setting.

The research practicum is designed to offer training to students in applied research, while supporting the overall mission of the hospital. The mission of DSH-V is to provide a high quality of care to patients referred from the California Department of Corrections (CDCR) for inpatient mental health care. The mission of the research program at DSH-V is to provide an empirical basis to DSH and CDCR for how suicide and violence risk estimations are made, and to further provide information on culturally competent methods for assessing risk. In addition, the research program seeks to find ways to improve interventions with some of the highest risk patients in the hospital.

Research Assistants help to support these research efforts. Research Assistants work closely with pre- and post-doctoral trainees and senior staff members to manage research materials, code archival data, enter and analyze data, review literature, and prepare presentations and manuscripts.

Current Projects

Suicide Risk Assessment Study (Horon, McManus): This protocol evaluates the use of standardized suicide risk measures and experimental suicide risk measures with correctional patients. The study seeks to establish reliability and validity of these measures within the correctional setting. In addition, the study compares patient results on these measures with historical variables (e.g. number of prior attempts, lethality of prior attempts, trauma history, and neurological history) and criminological variables (e.g. offense history) to develop predictive models regarding suicidal potential. More than 575 patients have participated in this study thus far. Data collection for this study is expected to end in March, 2015.

Violence Risk Assessment Study (Horon, McManus): This protocol evaluates the relative weight of different assessment areas in explaining violence potential. The study compares individuals who are violent in community and institutional settings with those who are violent only in one setting (e.g. only in the community) with those without a history of violence. The variables of comparison include traditional violence risk measures along with measures of impulsivity and reaction to provocation, diagnostic measures, and a battery of neuropsychological tests. The study seeks to develop a predictive model for capturing violence risk potential whether the source of risk is predatory, reactive/ impulsive, or based on cognitive impairment. Data collection for this study was completed in 2013.

New projects are anticipated and will be announced upon approval.

Duties of Research Assistants

Daily activities include:

- Data coding
- Data entry
- Conducting archival data searches
- Conducting literature reviews
- Preparing professional posters and presentations
- Ambitious students may also be involved in collaborating with staff and/or post-doctoral fellows on professional manuscripts. There may be opportunities to work on independent or pilot projects as well.

Application Requirements

The application deadline for our research assistantship is **5/23/15**. Completed applications must be received at the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on the deadline day. Completed applications include the following:

- A cover letter with statement of interest
- A Curriculum Vitae
- Two letters of recommendation
- A completed DSH-V Research Assistant Application

Please send these materials via e-mail attachment to robert.horon@vpp.dsh.ca.gov
Alternatively, materials post-marked by 5/23/15 may be mailed to:

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Questions can be directed by e-mail or phone (707-453-7028).