



The Vall d'Hebron Research Institute (VHIR) is a public sector institution that promotes and develops the research, innovation and biosanitary teaching of the Vall d'Hebron University Hospital. Through the excellence of our research, we identify and apply new solutions to the health problems of society and we contribute to spread them around the world.



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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## PhD Position

### MSCA-COFUND- TOUCH programme (Psychiatry, Mental Health and Addictions Research Group)

**TOUCH** ("Towards the next generatiOn of excellent yoUng doctoral researchers on mental health by developing an intersectoral & transdisciplinary approaCH") is a new excellent **doctoral programme** led by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) for the recruitment and training of doctoral candidates **in the field of mental health and wellbeing**, providing a new dimension through highly interdisciplinary and intersectoral research while fulfilling all the principles of Open Science and maintaining the highest research quality standards. UAB is the main Beneficiary and coordinator of the programme (**12 doctoral positions offered**) together with 7 institutions from the Sphere UAB-CIE as Implementing partners by recruiting, hosting, and training PhD students.

#### Research Project description:

PhD will investigate mechanisms underlying the intergenerational transmission of risk for psychopathology and mental disorders (parental genotypes).

There is evidence supporting that psychopathology is transmitted across generations. Children with parents with high rates of psychopathology are more likely to inherit both psychopathology-associated genetic factors and psychopathology-associated environments. However, it remains challenging to determine whether children resemble their parents due to the effects of genes shared between them (direct genetic transmission or genetic nature), via genetically influenced parenting environments (genetic nurture) or a mixture of both.

Parents transmit genetic risk for psychopathology and mental disorders to their children not only directly (genetic nature), but also indirectly via genetically influenced parents' phenotype (genetic nurture).

To assess the mechanisms underlying the intergenerational transmission of parent psychopathology to offspring mental health outcomes by exploring the distinction between transmitted and non-transmitted genetic factors from parents to offspring. We will calculate polygenic risk scores (PRS), which aggregate the effects of thousands of genetic variants and provides a quantitative measure of the genetic burden for a particular disease or trait, separately for transmitted and non-transmitted genetic variants for multiple mental disorders (attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism



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spectrum disorder, bipolar disorder, depression, schizophrenia and anxiety, among others) in 1,500 general population family trios and will test their association with behavioural and emotional problems and mental disorders in the offspring.

The impact of the proposal will be substantial in the fields of prevention and intervention. By identifying mechanisms underlying the intergenerational transmission of risk for psychopathology and mental disorders we will provide insights into the role of parents in shaping their children's outcomes and may identify modifiable parental factors that are likely to be effective targets for intervention

Please consult the guidelines for applicants for more details of the TOUCH doctoral programme: [Guideline for applicants](#)

### Research group description:

Our multidisciplinary [Psychiatry, Mental Health and Addictions research Group](#) team has skills and expertise in epidemiology, psychiatry, psychology, genetics, bioinformatics and biostatistics.

Our main objective is to break the stigma associated with mental disorders and to show them as biological conditions by using -omics data and multiple approaches, that include GWAS and omics profiling. Our main contribution to the field has been to identify a) genes involved in mental disorders; b) shared and specific genetic background for comorbid conditions and c) biomarkers for disease, with the final aim to use genetic information to understand the disease mechanism, to predict risk and to improve patients' classification and diagnostic procedures.

## JOB DESCRIPTION

### Eligibility criteria:

In support of equality and non-discrimination principles, gender, age, nationality, race, or any other ethical-related issues will not be considered during the application and selection process. Scientific/academic merits and excellence of the candidates are the only criteria for evaluation. The two eligibility criteria to comply by prospective candidates are related to mobility and experience:

- **Mobility rule:** candidates must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Spain for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately preceding the deadline for the programme call.



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- **Experience rule:** Researchers must be doctoral candidates at the date of recruitment, i.e. not already in possession of a doctoral degree at the deadline of the open calls. Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but have not yet formally awarded the doctoral degree will not be considered eligible. Recruited researchers must be enrolled in a doctoral programme leading to the award of a doctoral degree at UAB at the time of signing the contract.
- **Diversity aspects:** Applications from candidates with disability, special assistance, researchers at risk, LGBTQ+ community, etc. are encouraged: in this respect equal opportunities in terms of diversity will be fully taken into consideration both during the recruitment process and also during the training programme execution. In case of similar CVs, applications from minority or underrepresented groups will be preferably selected.

### Education and qualifications:

#### Required:

- Candidates must hold a degree that allows [admission to the official doctoral programme at UAB.](#)

#### Additional requirements for a stronger application are:

- Degree in Biological, Health or Basic sciences (Biology, Genetics, Mathematics, etc).
- Master's Degree in Bioinformatics or Biosciences.

#### Desired:

- Desired experience in Statistical Genetics, Biostatistics, Computational Biology, Bioinformatics or similar field and programming skills (particularly R, Unix/ Linux).



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## Main responsibilities and duties of the candidate:

- Responsibilities will include genetic association analyses of clinical features across mental disorders, application of the novel methods described, manuscript writing, and oral presentations at lab meetings, consortium calls, and scientific conferences.
- The candidate will also engage in regular collaborative meetings with teams of scientists locally and internationally, including the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium. There will also be training opportunities for subject-specific and generic research skills, aiming to help the candidate to enhance his/her employability.

## Labor conditions:

- Part-time position: 37,5h/week
- Starting date: December - March, 2025 (flexible incorporation).
- Gross annual salary: 28.500€
- Contract: Temporary (3 years)

## What can we offer?

- Incorporation to Vall d'Hebron Research Institute (VHIR), a public sector institution that promotes and develops the biomedical research, innovation and teaching at Vall d'Hebron University Hospital (HUVH), the biggest hospital of Barcelona and the largest of Catalan Institute of Health (ICS).
- A scientific environment of excellence, highly dynamic, where high-end biomedical projects are continuously developed.
- Continuous learning and a wide range of responsibilities within a stimulating work environment.
- An excellent training programme, including: Initial workshops, hands-on schools, workshop on research diversity, scientific and communication skills, personal development and secondments.
- Individual training opportunities.
- Flexible working hours.



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- 23 days of holidays + 9 personal days.
- Flexible Remuneration Program (including dining checks, health insurance, transportation and more)
- Corporate Benefits: platform through which you can obtain significant discounts on travel, culture, technology, gastronomy, sports... among many others.
- Healthy Offering: choose from a variety of wellbeing focused activities to be the healthiest you.

### How to apply:

Applicants should submit an application form to the following UAB link: [Application platform – MSCA-COFUND TOUCH \(uab.cat\)](#)

**Deadline to apply: 30-06-2024**

The Fundació Hospital Universitari Vall d'Hebron-Institut de Recerca - "VHIR"-, with NIF G-60594009, address in Barcelona -08035- Passeig Vall d'Hebron 119-129, Edifici Mediterrània, 2a planta and telephone (34) 934 89 30 00 is the data controller for the processing of your personal data. The data will be processed exclusively for the purpose of managing your participation in the selection process, as well as, if necessary, managing your participation in other selection processes.

Unless you give your informed consent to keep your personal data for future selection processes, in the event that the selection process is completed and you are not the person selected, your personal data will be deleted and blocked in order to be able to respond to any possible liabilities that may arise.

The legal basis of the processing is the execution of a contract to which the data subject is party or in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract.

The recipient of the data will be the VHIR's Professional Development personnel and no transfer of personal data is foreseen, except for the fulfilment of legal obligations applicable to the data controller. International data transfers are not foreseen. No automated decisions will be taken, including profiling. In general, personal data will not be communicated to third parties, except for legal obligations in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (GDPR) to persons who are entitled to request them. You have the rights of access, rectification, deletion, portability, limitation and opposition that can be exercised at any time through the email [dpd@ticsalutsocial.cat](mailto:dpd@ticsalutsocial.cat) or [lopd@vhir.org](mailto:lopd@vhir.org). In compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679, the VHIR has appointed a data protection officer, whose contact details are [dpd@ticsalutsocial.cat](mailto:dpd@ticsalutsocial.cat). You can also lodge a complaint with the competent Data Protection Authority by contacting [www.apdcat.cat](http://www.apdcat.cat) or [www.aepd.es](http://www.aepd.es).