



Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Program
Postdoctoral Fellowship Description
RESEARCH FOCUS

Title: Postdoctoral Fellowship in Adolescent/Young Adult Autism Research

Site: Brown University

APA-accredited: ___YES __X__NO

Supervisor(s): Anthony Spirito, PhD (Primary Supervisor)
Steven Sheinkopf, PhD (University of Missouri, off-site supervisor)

Description

The goal of this fellowship is to provide training in the assessment of a broad spectrum of symptomatology associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in adolescents/young adults. Training goals will be met by participating in a clinical research program. The aims of the proposed research are to 1) establish rates of alcohol and other drug use (AOD) and alcohol use disorders (AUD) in a representative sample of individuals diagnosed with ASD; 2) determine rates of alcohol use onset and progression to heavier use in this sample when benchmarked against national data; 3) determine rates of alcohol use onset and progression in adolescents and young adults diagnosed with ASD across transitions in social context; 4) examine selected risk and protective factors that are correlated with baseline alcohol use as well as predict onset and progression over adolescence and early young adulthood; and 5) examine the prevalence, onset, and progression of cannabis tobacco and prescription drug use in this sample.

The research program is based in the DPHB at Brown University.

Research participants are adolescents and young adults with a confirmed ASD diagnosis aged 12 to 24 years old at the time of enrollment. Participants are verbally fluent in Spanish or English and have an IQ of ≥ 75 (as determined by the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test). Parents and guardians of eligible adolescents/young adults also are eligible to participate.

Fellowship Aims

- To provide exposure to a comprehensive research assessment of adolescents and young adults with ASD
- To provide the fellow with training in the clinical assessment of adolescents/young adults presenting with ASD
- To provide the fellow exposure to structured interviewing with the Social Responsiveness Scale to derive inferences regarding social behavior and social communication.
- To actively participate in analyzing data, presenting results at national meetings, and writing original peer-reviewed manuscripts.

Fellowship Timeline

The duration of the fellowship is 1 year, with a possibility of a second year with an anticipated start date as early as August 1, 2025.

Research Activity (80%)

Eighty percent of the fellow's time will be devoted to research, academic/didactic, and professional training experiences. The fellow will participate in the following activities:

- Study participation: The fellow will participate in the evaluation of adolescents/young adults with ASD. 10%
- Coding observational tasks: The fellow will code parent—youth interactions videotapes. 5%
- Statistical Support: The fellow will participate in the process of reviewing the data bank for accuracy and cleaning and running statistical analysis. 5%
- Review of relevant literature: The fellow will review literature in the areas of adolescent/young adult ASD for the preparation of manuscripts and grant applications. 5%
- Manuscript preparation and submission: The fellow will be encouraged to take the lead and collaborate on manuscript preparation and poster submissions at national conferences. Individually tailored goals will be established in this area. 30%
- Grant preparation and submission. The fellow will be required to participate in mentor grant writing and encouraged to write their own grant application. 20%
- The fellow will be required to participate in weekly research meetings. 5%

Clinical Activity Plan (10%)

Clinical experiences outside of the evaluation of study participants described above is optional. Up to 10% of the fellow's time may be devoted to clinical activities.

Path toward licensure: YES ___ NO X It is not anticipated that the number of clinical hours obtained through the clinical activity plan and research activity described above will be adequate for the fellow to be license eligible at the end of one year. The number of clinical hours may reach the minimum required if the fellowship is extended to a second year.

Didactics Plan (10%)

Post-Doctoral Seminars: The fellow will be required to participate in the post-doctoral research seminar series through the Brown University Postdoctoral Training Program.

Didactics:

Core Seminars (1 per month)

DPHB Academic Grand Rounds (1 per month)

Clinical Ethics – if intending to sit for licensure (1 per month)

RFP Seminar, Grant Writing Seminar, Special Topics in Statistics (optional).

Supervision and Evaluation

Supervision will be provided in the form of one-hour weekly individual research supervision with Dr. Spirito and one hour of group supervision with Drs. Spirito and Sheinkopf (University of Missouri) who are MPIs of the grant. Additional supervision regarding manuscript and grant preparation for an additional hour per week will be provided. The fellow and supervisors will develop individualized training goals and training objectives at the beginning of the fellowship year.

At the conclusion and midpoint of the fellowship, the fellow and the supervisors will provide formal evaluations, and evaluations of the program relative to the goals and learning objectives of the fellowship.

Please visit the [Brown Faculty](#) page to view Dr. Spirito's profile.

Resource Requirements

Fellow will be provided with the following resources:

- Office space:
- A personal desktop computer and project specific software
- Internet access
- Telephone

Reporting and approval

This fellowship will be part of the Research Fellowship Program. The position has been discussed and approved by the RFP faculty and Training Committee.

Associate Director, Research Fellowship Program

Director, Postdoctoral Fellowship Training Program