**Funding Source: Wellcome Trust grant**

**Proposed start date: 1 October 2022**

**Closing date for applications: 8 April 2022**

**Eligibility:** UK applicants only

**Department/School:** Health Sciences

**Supervisors:** Dr David Webb ([drw17@le.ac.uk](mailto:drw17@le.ac.uk)), Dr Rachael Evans ([re66@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:re66@leicester.ac.uk)), Jack Sargeant ([jack.sargeant@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:jack.sargeant@leicester.ac.uk))

**Project Title:** Obesity and long-COVID: From epidemiology to intervention

**Project Description:**

Post-COVID19 syndrome (Long Covid) is a poorly understood debilitating condition potentially affecting the physical and psychological health of millions. People living with obesity experience severe symptoms and slower recovery from COVID-19, suggesting a link to adipocyte-derived inflammation in the aetiology of Long Covid. This project addresses whether an adapted specialist multidisciplinary weight loss intervention including the latest pharmacotherapies can improve physical, functional and well-being outcomes in this group. It will also establish the potential role of a class of drugs called the Glucagon-like Peptide-1 agonists in attenuating inflammatory responses and provide important information for service users and providers. Systematic review and data analyses (year1) will inform the design (year 1) of a pilot trial of a patient-centred intervention in Long Covid sufferers drawn from the PHosp cohort (years 2 and 3). Experienced nationally recognised clinical academics will lead this exciting project and supervise a fellow keen to pursue a higher degree in the fields of primary care, obesity, metabolic or respiratory medicine.

The successful candidate will be hosted in the Leicester Diabetes Centre, a leading applied health research unit, with an international reputation for research in the field.

**References:**

[1] Tartfof SY et al. Obesity and Mortality among patients diagnosed with Covid-19: results from an Integrated Health Care organisation. Ann. Int. Med. 2020, 173(10): 773-781. <https://doi.org/10.7326/M20-3742>

[2] Evans RA. on behalf of the PHOSP-COVID Collaborative Group. Clinical characteristics with inflammation profiling of Long-COVID and association with one-year recovery following hospitalisation in the UK: a prospective observational study 2021 <https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.12.13.21267471>

[3] NICE. Obesity management in adults. <https://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/obesity>. Last updated Dec 2021

[4] Davies MJ et al. Semaglutide 2.4 mg once a week in adults with overweight and obesity (STEP2): a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled phase 3 trial. Lancet 2021 <https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00213-0>

[5] Papamargaritis D et al. Effectiveness and cost of integrating a pathway for prescribing Liraglutide 3.0 mg in obesity services (STRIVE): a study protocol of a real-world, randomised controlled trial. BMJ open 2020. 10(2):e034137

**Funding details:**

*Students on this programme will be supported by a generous funding package. This will include:*

* *Postgraduate research fee waiver at standard College of Life Sciences UK rates for three years of the PhD*
* *Wellcome Trust stipend covering your salary for all three years of the PhD*
* *Research grant for training, research and travel costs*

**Entry requirements:**

Applicants are required to hold/or expect to obtain a UK Bachelor Degree 2:1 or better in a relevant subject.

The University of Leicester [English language](https://le.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/entry-reqs/eng-lang-reqs) requirements apply where applicable.

This programme is open to:

* allied health professionals
* nurses
* midwives
* junior doctors
* general practitioners

Fellows recruited to the programme must be practicing healthcare professionals and be registered with a national professional regulatory body (e.g. the General Medical Council, Health and Care Professions Council) in the UK/Republic of Ireland.

Medical graduates must be registered on a UK/Republic of Ireland specialist training programme or must be a registered GP.

All fellows must have completed their undergraduate degree and be registered with the relevant professional body.

**Application advice:**

For full application advice and the link to our online application please go do: <https://le.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/funded-opportunities/leicestershire-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-dtp>

With your application, please include:

* CV
* Personal statement explaining your interest in the project, your experience and why we should consider you
* Degree Certificates and Transcripts of study already completed and if possible transcript to date of study currently being undertaken
* Evidence of English language proficiency if applicable
* In the reference section please enter the contact details of your two academic referees in the boxes provided or upload letters of reference if already available.

In the funding section please specify that you wish to be considered for **Wellcome Trust LHII DTP**

In the proposal section please provide the name of at least one or at most two of the projects you are interested in (please indicate title and name of supervisor).

Upload the Widening Participation form (found on the above link) to the proposal section

**Project / Funding Enquiries to :** [**lhiip@leicester.ac.uk**](mailto:lhiip@leicester.ac.uk)

**Application enquiries to** [**pgradmissions@le.ac.uk**](mailto:pgradmissions@le.ac.uk)

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