**University of Leicester**

**Future 50 PhD Scholarship**

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| **Project Reference** | PVS Potter |

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**Section 2 – *Project Information***

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| **Project Title** | Coping and adaptation in old age: Psychological challenges of ageing in individuals and dyads |
| **Project Highlights:** | 1. | The identification of key adaptation resources used in everyday life to mitigate the short and long-term impact of health challenges on older adults’ wellbeing |
| 2. | Novel modelling and testing of dyadic health and wellbeing associations to test hypotheses on socio-contextual risk factors for the maintenance of wellbeing across old age |
| 3. | Understanding whether and how patterns of (within-person and within-dyad) health—wellbeing associations differ in older adults with diverse health needs (i.e., pathological vs. non-pathological ageing populations) |
| **Project Summary**  |
| Declining health constitutes a major risk factor for the maintenance of wellbeing across old age. Understanding this risk is particularly urgent in the face of an ageing population and growing evidence of ‘expanding morbidity’ (people living longer in poor health). To date, most research focuses on trait-level health—wellbeing associations within the individual. Yet, lifespan developmental theory maintains that wellbeing unfolds as a result of health vulnerabilities that manifest in everyday life and that are embedded into a system of multiple contextual layers, from the individual to the dyad (Baltes, 1990). Indeed, initial evidence from the first supervisor’s research indicates that the ability to (emotionally) adapt to health problems in the moments that they occur represents one promising avenue from which to mitigate short and long-term impact on wellbeing (Potter et al., 2021a). Moreover, it is well-established that older adults’ wellbeing is increasingly influenced by close relationships, with new evidence from the first supervisor’s research indicating that the health problems of close others constitute a serious risk to the maintenance of wellbeing (Potter et al., 2021b). It is necessary then to estimate the impact of health on wellbeing among dyads differing in closeness (e.g., spouses; carer-patient) and to identify adaptation resources used to overcome everyday manifestations of (own/others’) health vulnerabilities. To do so, this project will examine (1) adaptation resources (e.g., spousal support) as moderators of within-person health—wellbeing associations in everyday life; (2) within-*dyad* health—wellbeing associations; and (3) whether these within-person and within-dyad associations differ in pathological vs. non-pathological (healthy) ageing populations. Each of these studies will use quantitative analyses and be carried out using open access datasets. Doing so will not only allow for the identification of key adaptation resources but will also provide a much-needed socio-contextual lens from which to view and understand the impact of health on wellbeing among older adults with diverse health needs.  The undertaking of this project will benefit tremendously from expertise in daily wellbeing, lifespan development, and clinical/health-focused psychology. Having demonstrated an excellent track record therein, the supervisory team will provide the optimal environment from which the candidate can thrive. |