**2019-2020 Psychology UQ Summer Research Project Description**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project title:** | **An investigation into the role of testosterone in understanding age effects in social cognition** |
| **Project duration:** | * 8 weeks * 28 hours a week on average |
| **Position/s available** | 1 |
| **Description:** | Social cognition broadly refers to how we process social information, and is therefore a critically important predictor of wellbeing, social functioning and mental health. Testosterone (T) is sex hormone that has previously been shown to have a negative impact on social cognitive functioning in younger adults. Interestingly, both social cognitive abilities and T are known to decline in older age. This project will provide the first investigation into the relationship between T and social cognition in late adulthood. The applicant will be asked to obtain a salivary T sample from younger and older adults, as well as administer a well-validated social cognitive assessment. The applicant will therefore learn a range of interesting experimental techniques, as well as biosafety procedures. The applicant will also learn how to effectively recruit participants. The hypotheses are that T will be differentially related to social cognitive function in younger and older adults, and that this relationship will in turn be moderated by participant gender. The results will have important implications for our understanding of potential hormonal influences on social cognitive ageing. |
| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | As detailed, the applicant will gain skills in participant recruitment, data collection (both cognitive assessments, and biospecimens). There would also potentially be the opportunity to be involved in a publication from this dataset. |
| **Suitable for:** | We are looking for students with a background in psychology enrolled at UQ, in their third or fourth year of study. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr. Sarah Grainger and Professor Julie Henry |
| **Further info:** | We are happy for students to contact us prior to making a formal application. Our contact details are: [s.grainger@uq.edu.au](mailto:s.grainger@uq.edu.au), and [julie.henry@uq.edu.au](mailto:julie.henry@uq.edu.au) |