2008 CYHRNet Student Interns in Child and Youth Health Research FINAL REPORT

K-Lynn Hogh – Self-Injurious Behaviours

Description
K-Lynn worked on a research project that is part of a greater interdisciplinary research study evaluating self-injurious behaviours within the Interdisciplinary National Self-Injury in Youth Network of Canada (INSYNC).

University/Institution
Biochemistry University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George

Supervisor
Dr. Geoffrey Payne, Assistant Professor, Physiology & Course Director, Foundations of Medicine

Report
During my CYHRNet summer internship, I have a new found appreciation for the work and dedication involved in health research. This summer internship allowed me to continue to work on an ongoing project in our lab in the area of self-injurious behavior; where I worked on the chronic portion of this project. The start of my internship involved a lot of background reading and researching, where I wanted to make sure I had a better understanding of what we were looking for, along with any recent treatment options or animal models to compare our results to. This internship has also opened my eyes to the ups and downs of research, where one of the major obstacles to overcome involved our drug dilutions, however this was easily solved and allowed for 'smooth sailing' for the remainder of the project. The experiments themselves were quite tedious and detail-driven, as we were collecting a new set of behavioral data for each mouse (n = 20) for 60 minutes over for three injections. After the third injection of each mouse, the brains were removed and stored in the freezer until gene expression was carried out.

Upon completing the experimental portion of this project, I continued to do background reading and tried to find recent research on self-injurious behavior, especially articles involving animal models. After a great deal of searching, I have been working on writing the introduction, methods and part of the results for our paper in which we are looking to have published. From this experience I feel like I have made a considerable contribution to the self-injurious area of health research. I do hope that our work on alterations in gene expression can shed some light on the multifaceted disease of self-injurious behavior; thus opening the door to new or improved treatment paradigms. Even with the small obstacles, my CYHRNet summer internship provided me with great insight, and allowed me to truly become more involved in health research. I do hope to continue in the field of research, and with the new skills and qualities I obtained through my summer internship, I hope to use these skills as part of another internship or as part of a Master's degree in the future.

Overall this project has also allowed me to work both independently and closely with my peers; thus allowing me to develop better communication skills along with self-reliance and critical thinking skills. Through my experience I have further developed my analytical, problem solving, improvisational and microsurgical skills; all of which will be useful for me in the future.

Again, I would like to thank CYHRNet for selecting me as a 2008 Summer Internship winner. It is a true honor to have received this award, which has allowed me to work in child and youth research, in the area of self-injurious behavior. I am looking forward to presenting my findings at the CYHRNet AGM this upcoming November.