

Mina Lee Thomas – Toward Exercise Intervention for Children with FASD

Description

Mina participated in a research project with an interdisciplinary team of researchers to design, implement and assess an intervention program for children with FASD.

University/Institution

Kinesiology and Physical Education, University College of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford, BC

Supervisor

Dr. Kathy Keiver, Professor, Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education

Internship Activities and Accomplishments

I have been put in charge of the process of further recruiting participants for the January 2009 portion of the research, as well as for the upcoming final year of the project. This has taken various forms during my internship including direct consultation with caregivers and guardians (obtain informed consent and arrangement of pre- and post-test dates), as well as calling upon numerous agencies and professionals working with our target population throughout the Fraser Valley. I was also involved in the scoring and analysis of psychological test data (e.g. CBCL, SIB-R, PSI, etc.) that were collected during the past year. As well, I continued to be involved in the distribution and timely collection of the salivary cortisol kits.

Research-Related Skills Enhanced by Internship

I have been presented the opportunity to gain valuable insight into the research process and to experience how the component parts come together. My data analysis skills were honed through the process of learning to score a variety of psychological tests, collating data and by employing descriptive statistics to summarize our results. I learned that the research process requires not only a high level of organization and systematization, but also flexibility, co-operation and effective communication. I (among others) have completed the data collection and initial round of analysis for the first set of participants (2007-08) in our three-year project, and have begun the scoring and analysis for those currently participating. Notably, I have acquired an appreciation for the meticulous nature of the process that spans from collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation. I have also greatly interfaced with caregivers and professionals involved in the children's lives, and through this I have acquired more self-confidence. Finally, having been asked to head the recruitment process for the upcoming year and into 2010, I have come to understand a great deal about the difficulty in finding participants that not only meet our research criteria (diagnosis of FAS, ARND, or pFAS, and between the ages of 6 and 12), but also finding parents and guardians who are willing and able to participate. I am especially thankful to the Michael Smith Foundation and CYHRNet for granting me this valuable experience.

Presentation of Research Findings

I attended CYHRNet's own AGM in November 2008 where I presented a descriptive outline of the research we are conducting, and specifically my own activities within it. However, as the findings of our research had not been completed at that time (the conference was scheduled while my internship was still in process), I did not receive any particular response about our findings. In general, people felt I presented well, and were interested in the nature of the motor skills intervention that is the main focus of our research with the FASD population. Many individuals I spoke with were complimentary of our team-approach (employing kinesiologists, occupational therapists, and psychologists), and the strength-based nature of the intervention itself.