



MGH Fellowship Program in Autism Spectrum Disorder

Program Description

The MGH Fellowship Training Program in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a combined clinical, educational, and research fellowship with the goal of preparing psychiatrists for a career caring for individuals with ASD across the life course and range of severity. The program can be completed full time in one year or part-time in two years allowing for private practice or other clinical work.

The program's focus is on psychiatric care for people with ASD, but also includes training in educational, vocational, residential, recreational and legal issues specific to this population.

Clinical Experience and Curriculum

The structure of the fellowship consists of: (1) 6-month clinical rotations at the Bressler Clinical and Research Program on the MGH main campus and at the MassGeneral Hospital for Children's Lurie Center for Autism in Lexington MA, respectively; (2) outpatient and state hospital consultation to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) clients; (3) formal didactics in comprehensive care for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and comorbid psychopathology; and (4) a mentored scholarly project.

Trainees will be provided graduating levels of close supervision, feedback, and mentorship by nationally recognized clinicians and researchers in the field of ASD. Clinical experiences include collaboration with neurology, gastroenterology, developmental pediatrics, psychology/neuropsychology, speech/occupational/physical therapy, social work, behavioral therapy and educational consultation to provide comprehensive assessment and care.

Career Preparation

Our program seeks Child and Adolescent Psychiatry trained clinicians, including those about to finish their training in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Adult trained psychiatrists and Triple board graduates will be considered in some instances.

Graduates of this fellowship will be well-prepared to provide psychiatric care for patients with ASD as well as assessments of comprehensive care plans for people with this diagnosis. Graduates will be trained to provide expert clinical care in private practice or the community clinic environment and will be provided mentorship to pursue a career in academic psychiatry with a focus in ASD if desired.

**Interested applicants should contact the program director
Dr. Christopher McDougle (cmcdougle@partners.org) with a copy of their CV
and letter of support from their program director.**

Fellowship Lecture Series

Training experience through the ASD Fellowship includes a rich curriculum offered by leading clinicians and researchers in their areas of expertise. Trainees will have the opportunity to learn assessment of ASD with neuropsychological testing, review psychopathology and cutting-edge treatment with psychopharmacology and psychotherapy, build a solid knowledge of available psychosocial interventions, and explore research findings from neuroimaging, resting state and spectroscopy. Below is a sample list of these lectures:

Diagnosis:

- Epidemiology and Phenomenology of ASD
- Approach to Diagnosing ASD
- The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS)
- Neuropsychological Testing
- Diagnosis of ASD under the age of 3 years old

Comorbidities:

- Seizure Disorder and other Neurologic Issues in ASD
- Gastroenterological Issues commonly seen in ASD
- Neurogenetic Syndromes
- Anxiety Disorders in ASD
- Mood Disorders in ASD
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in ASD

Treatment:

- Pharmacologic Approaches in ASD
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in ASD
- Applied Behavioral Analysis for ASD
- Social Skills Groups/Summer Programs
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy

Psychosocial Interventions:

- Assessing School Fit for the Child/Adolescent with ASD
- Speech Impairment in ASD
- Communication Assist Strategies
- Community Wrap Around Services for individuals with ASD
- Supported Employment for Adults with ASD
- Guardianship and Supported Living Situations

Research

- Hot Topics in Research
- Neuroimaging: Resting State in High Functioning ASD
- Neuroimaging: Spectroscopy studies in High Functioning ASD

Research Experience

At MGH Bressler Research Program for Autism Spectrum Disorders offers opportunity to train in clinical research focused on phenomenology of Autism and associated psychopathologies, develop and conduct treatment studies focusing on psychopharmacological interventions that use neuroimaging as treatment outcome. For further details about ongoing research can be found at MGH Bressler Program website.

Furthermore, this fellowship includes exposure to ASD related research with our ongoing collaborators at McLean Hospital and MIT. State of the art technology and investigational strategies available at both MIT and McLean Hospital, offers a wide range of opportunities to expand clinical, laboratory, and brain imaging research techniques within psychiatric populations. These collaborations include a longstanding and ongoing neuroimaging research at McLean Imaging Center, under the direction of Dr. Scott Lukas, utilizing multi-modal neuroimaging as an outcome measure of therapeutic response and to study neural biomarkers in ASD. Currently we are examining the clinical efficacy and brain imaging correlates of a glutamatergic intervention in ASD. Similarly, we work closely with John and Susan Gabrieli at the McGovern Institute for Brain Research at MIT, where expertise in fMRI techniques and multimodal neuroimaging of neuropsychiatric disorders offers us the opportunity to examine the neural markers of ADHD in adolescents with and without ASD.