

Purpose of the STSM:

In April 2014, I was awarded a Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) to travel to the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) in the University of the West of England (UWE), in Bristol, UK. I completed my STSM under the supervision of Professor Nichola Rumsey and Professor Diana Harcourt. Prof. Rumsey and Prof. Harcourt are Directors of CAR– which consists of a group of approximately 25 researchers specializing in the field of body image and visible difference research.

How this STSM came about was that I contacted the CAR in December 2013 to seek their permission to travel to CAR in 2014. My aim was to build a long-term partnership between University College Dublin School of Psychology and the CAR to potentially collaborate on future activities in appearance research. On foot of a successful application to the STSM, I traveled to the CAR in May. This exciting opportunity supported me to build strong collaboration with the CAR, a global centre of excellence in appearance-related research.

Description of the work carried out during the STSM and the main results obtained:

1. To spend time with several experts in the CAR gathering knowledge about their important work on appearance, visible differences and body dissatisfaction.

On my first day of the STSM, an introductory meeting was held with Prof. Rumsey and Prof. Harcourt to discuss my programme during the STSM at CAR. Both Prof. Rumsey and Prof. Harcourt introduced me to members of the CAR and provided me with an overview of the CAR. I had a series of meetings with researchers and clinicians at the CAR scheduled for the visit.

My first series of meetings were scheduled with researchers on the CAR visible difference projects. I had the opportunity to meet with Prof. Alex Clarke, Head of the Psychology Department in the Royal Free Hospital Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. Prof. Clarke is a clinical psychologist specializing in disfigurement appearance. From this meeting, I was informed about Prof. Clarke's work on CBT for anxiety appearance, and I also read her book and several of her published papers on the psychosocial management of disfigurement or visible difference. I was greatly impressed with Prof. Clarke's work in this area.

I also met with Ms. Nicole Paraskeva who discussed her doctoral work with me on the development of a Cosmetic Procedure Checklist for clients seeking surgery. From meeting with Nicole, I found out about her important work with cosmetic surgeons, linked with the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, where she is developing a screening tool for routine use with cosmetic surgery patients. This important tool will help identify those patients who are most at risk of appearance dissatisfaction and help examine the psychosocial predictors and outcomes of cosmetic surgery.

I took a visit to the Bristol Dental Hospital to meet with members of The Cleft Collective. The Cleft Collective is an inspiring piece of research and is the world's

largest cleft lip and palate research programme. This nationwide study aims to better understand the environmental and genetic causes of cleft, and the factors which help children to adapt positively to having a cleft as they grow up. I was provided with the 5-year-old cohort starter pack and reviewed the battery of measures included in this questionnaire for parents to complete.

From the STSM, I have obtained much knowledge on research related to visible difference research. I have also gained knowledge about important research in this area aimed at improving the lives of people with visible differences.

I have a strong interest in body image research in school-aged adolescents. Therefore, I was very enthusiastic to spend time with researchers on the Dove Self Esteem Project, Happy Being Me program and the Body Project. Of particular interest was the novel research being conducted with mother-daughter dyads and the development of a cross-cultural Body Confidence Index to evaluate body image programmes worldwide. Dr. Phillippa Diedrichs also informed me of a systematic review she has conducted on classroom-based body image programs. I gathered knowledge on the Body Project and its theoretical underpinnings based on cognitive dissonance. It was interesting to hear about ongoing school data collection issues and I was able to share my experience of managing school data collection as part of my postdoctoral research on youth mental health. I spoke with Dr. Rebecca Steer about the reporting of fidelity measures in primary prevention programmes. We discussed about the importance of including indicators on process evaluation to measure participants' enjoyment, likeability, usefulness, etc of body image intervention. This was an interesting discussion as my own work has included fidelity measures in a mental health awareness initiative with teachers.

I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. James Partridge, Chief Executive of Changing Faces, a charity for people and families who are living with conditions that affect their appearance. From looking at the Changing Faces website, I was interested in their e-resources for young people with a visible difference. James informed me about their important work at an applied level in health services in the UK.

2. To gain access to methodologies in appearance research which are not available in my institution.

Novel methodologies for child research- I had many opportunities to hear about new methodologies being used in the CAR to conduct research in appearance issues. For example, I met with Dr. Amy Slater, Senior Research Psychologist who recently joined the CAR. Dr. Slater is conducting important work on body image and sexualization of girls through pictorial drawings and figure ratings of dolls.

Systematic review- I met with Prof. Rumsey to hear about the COST systematic review on measurement of body image. I learned about key steps necessary when conducting a systematic review including the use of the COSMIN checklist to evaluate the methodological quality of studies on measurement properties, development of a coding manual with inclusion and exclusion criteria, and training in coding to ensure consistency with running searches.

Scale development through use of Rasch- Ms. Catrin Griffiths informed me of her work on the development of patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) for burn patients. She informed me about Rasch analysis to be used in the development of her new PROM to identify items that form a unidimensional scale. I was interested to hear about this statistical technique and how it is concerned with the quality of outcome measures.

Experimental methodologies- Dr. Emma Halliwell informed me about her experimental work on body image including assessing the effects of media exposure and the protective effects of body appreciation. Given that I work in a university setting, and supervise undergraduate students, this would be a methodology my students could employ in their small-scaled research on body image.

3. To gain knowledge about the role of technologies in body image dissatisfaction, and in particular, the use of online interventions to reduce body image.

I was very enthusiastic to hear about Dr. Heidi Williamson's work on YP Face IT- an online psychosocial intervention for young people with a visible difference. Prior to my visit, Heidi provided me with access to this online intervention so I was able to look through the modules in the intervention. I was really interested to hear about Heidi's work as my research interest is focused on psychosocial interventions to reduce anxiety in young people. Heidi provided me with an overview of how YP Face It links with the Appearance Research Collaborative (ARC) stepped care model.

Dr. Slater informed me about a longitudinal study she has conducted with adolescent girls looking at the impact of social media and Internet use on adolescents' body image. Furthermore, from having attended the training school in Poznan on measurement issues, I was able to discuss with Dr. Slater some of the key learning points from the session on 'the online environment in appearance research' delivered by Prof. Jack Pyzalski Faculty of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. Prof. Pyzalski provided an overview of the change in media and technology in recent years, and discussed new methodologies for measuring the online environment and appearance issues through content analyses of Facebook pages, and experimental methodologies on social media. Dr. Slater recommended reading some key papers published by Prof. Marika Tiggeman.

4. To develop strong links with the CAR members with the potential of developing a collaborative research project and to discuss funding opportunities.

This was my first visit to the CAR and this opportunity helped me to develop strong links with members of the CAR. This visit also facilitated me with identifying what members in the CAR have similar research interests to my own. Specifically, the research on body image in adolescents is an area of research which aligns with my doctoral research. With regard to funding, I met with Dr. Martin Persson, a member of the CAR who has extensive experience of obtaining EU funding. Martin informed me about EU funding bids such as Marie Curie

Actions. However, after my STSM in the CAR, I believe it would be important to obtain funding nationally before applying for EU funding.

Future collaboration with the host institution:

Over the course of the STSM, I discussed with researchers the potential for research collaborations within the area of adolescent body image. From discussions with members of the body image team, we discussed about the feasibility of introducing the Body Project into Ireland, and ways of tailoring this intervention for Irish students. I discussed about obtaining training from members of the CAR in the delivery of this intervention. On foot of this, a research proposal and a funding bid will be developed to support this collaborative effort.

Outputs:

- *Conference Presentation-* I will present a poster '*Adolescents' beliefs about the consequences of healthy eating: What role do these beliefs play in body dissatisfaction?*' at the Centre for Appearance Matters 6 Conference this July. I will have the opportunity to meet up again with many of the members of the CAR and to continue to strengthen the networks I have developed during my STSM.
- *Teaching-* I am developing a module on 'Youth Mental Health' in University College Dublin School of Psychology. From my STSM, I have acquired a variety of resources which will inform the delivery of a seminar on appearance-related issues in this module.
- *Preparation of manuscript for publication-* The STSM helped me to refine the structure of a manuscript I am preparing on body dissatisfaction.
- *Completion of radio interview for postgraduate student project-* On completion of my visit to the CAR, I was contacted by a postgraduate student in Journalism in Dublin City University who is completing a postgraduate radio thesis on body image. Key documents identified to me at the CAR including the Oxford Handbook on the Psychology of Appearance, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Body Image and the NICE guidelines on body dysmorphic disorder were of great benefit to me in this radio interview.

Final comment:

This STSM was a valuable learning and networking experience, and this opportunity forms the beginning of an exciting collaboration between UCD and the CAR. This exciting and through-provoking STSM organized by Prof. Rumsey and Prof. Harcourt was tailored to my research interests, and it included a variety of meetings, discussions and activities to assist me with achieving the aims of my work plan. I found my time at the CAR to be a great learning experience where I gained important insight into appearance issues from a research, applied and clinical perspective. I thoroughly enjoyed spending time

with members of the CAR and I hope they enjoyed hearing about my research on youth mental health. The collegial atmosphere among members of the CAR made the visit even more enjoyable. I look forward to returning to Bristol in July to meet up with members of the CAR at the Appearance Matters 6 Conference. I look forward to our future research collaborations.

Confirmation by the host institution of the successful execution of the STSM: