

# “Collaboration on eating disorders in young adulthood”

## Short Term Scientific Mission Report

**Applicant:** PhD student Johanna Kling, University of Gothenburg

**Host:** Rachel Rodgers, Associate Professor, Université Paul-Sabatier/ Northeastern University

**Date:** June 23-27, 2014

**Place:** Toulouse, France

### **Background and purpose of the STSM.**

Longitudinal data on the development of body image and associated attitudes and eating behaviors are critical for informing prevention interventions, yet such data are scarce. The present STSM aimed to explore longitudinal predictors of body image associated attitudes using the phase 1-6 of an ongoing longitudinal project, initiated in 2000 by Professor Ann Frisén (University of Gothenburg). The focus of wave 6 was to explore disordered eating behaviors within the sample. As neither my colleagues nor I had previous experience in assessing eating disorders, we established a collaboration with Rachel Rodgers who has solid experience in research on eating disorders among young adults. In particular, she provided consultation on the choice of measures.

The focus of the STSM was to explore the main hypotheses related to wave 6 of our project, in particular focused on disordered eating, as well as to establish a framework for exploring secondary hypotheses. More specifically, we planned to conduct the analyses that would form the basis of a primary exploration of sociocultural correlates of disordered eating and collaborate on a draft of a joint publication. Additionally, an analysis plan for examining secondary hypotheses regarding longitudinal predictors of body image at different developmental stages would be established.

While remote statistical consultation is feasible, an STSM was considered to greatly facilitate our work and ensure our collaboration was fruitful. My colleagues and I were convinced that Rodgers' experience and assistance would be invaluable in exploiting our data on body image

and disordered eating in adolescence and young adulthood, and helping us to disseminate our findings so as to contribute to the field.

### **Description of the work carried out during the STSM and the main results obtained.**

The STSM took place in Toulouse, France, during the last week in June, 2014. Rogers and I spent the major part of the STSM in front of a computer, conducting analyses and discussing hypotheses. It would not have been possible to perform such a fruitful amount of work without meeting face-to-face, which the STSM enabled us to do. Consistent with the STSM plan, we began our work by exploring disordered eating within the sample. Based on several interesting discussions on the data, and also as planned ahead, we decided to explore some additional hypotheses. Our work during the STSM resulted in three drafts for papers:

**Paper 1 - Drive For Leanness And Eating Concerns.** The eating disorder questionnaire that was used in the 6<sup>th</sup> phase of the ongoing longitudinal project was the EDE-Q (Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire, Fairburn and Beglin, 1994) which is a self-report version of the EDE (Eating Disorders Examination, Fairburn and Cooper, 1993). After some preliminary analyses we went forward with the idea of exploring eating behaviors in relation to drive for leanness, drive for muscularity, and weight and shape concerns. Specifically, we looked at the mediation of the effect of drive for leanness on disordered eating via weight and shape concerns, and then via muscle dissatisfaction. The analyses were conducted with both men and women.

**Paper 2 - Internalization, Drive For Muscularity, Drive For Leanness Among Young Men: The Role of Appearance Orientation.** In recent years there has been an increasing amount of research on body image among men. However, most of the research is cross-sectional and correlational in nature. Therefore, we decided to conduct a longitudinal study among young men. The focus of this study was the role of appearance orientation in media internalization, drive for muscularity and drive for leanness.

**Paper 3 - Self-objectification and media-internalization: cross-sectional and longitudinal relations with appearance and weight satisfaction among young men and women.** In this draft we explored the relations between self-objectification, media internalization, and appearance and weight satisfaction (cross-sectional and longitudinal). The aims of this study

were to explore change in weight and appearance satisfaction in young adults between the ages of 18 and 21, and to explore the cross-sectional and longitudinal relationships between media-internalization, self-objectification, and appearance and weight esteem.

During the STSM week, I also participated in several research group meetings at the host institution. During these meetings I had the opportunity to learn more about, and discuss, the research conducted at the host institution, as well as presenting my own research. These meetings were very interesting and rewarding. Particularly, I found the discussions regarding the results from the HBSC study useful. HBSC is a cross-national study on young people's well-being, health behaviors and their social context. This research collaboration with the WHO is conducted every four years in 43 countries and regions across Europe and North America. Researchers in Toulouse, such as Mariane Sentenac, provided me with interesting information on how to use the HBSC data. Further, on one of the days of the STSM, I attended a lecture by Christophe Genolini. The focus of the lecture was on the analysis of longitudinal data using KmL, which is a non-parametric algorithm for clustering longitudinal data. Since I am conducting my PhD within an ongoing longitudinal project, this lecture was particularly helpful for me.

### **Future collaboration.**

Rachel Rodgers and I will continue to work on our drafts with the aim of generating papers for publication. Further, she has also been invited to visit my department at the University of Gothenburg in December, in conjunction with the COST conference in Kristianstad. We are also planning to submit an abstract to the 2015 International Conference on Eating Disorders (ICED) in Boston. As Rodgers will be at Northeastern University in Boston at that time, this conference would enable me to visit her there. Furthermore, after discussing potential collaborations with both Mariane Sentenac and Christophe Genolini we will also remain in contact.

### **Final comments.**

My STSM in Toulouse was a very useful and enjoyable experience. Most likely it was also the beginning of an ongoing and rewarding collaboration between Dr. Rodgers and me, as

well as between our departments. Rodgers' experience and assistance was invaluable in exploiting our data on eating disorders in young adulthood, and I am really looking forward to continue working together. I am both very thankful to the COST Action IS1210 for enabling me to go on this STSM, and to Rachel Rodgers for kindly accepting my request and investing so much time and effort in our collaboration.

Johanna Kling

Gothenburg, Sweden

14 July 2014

**Confirmation by the host institute of the successful execution of the mission.**

During the last week of June, Johanna Kling joined me in Toulouse for a STSM focusing on the analysis of a longitudinal data set initiated in 2000 by her PhD supervisor, Professor Ann Frisén (University of Gothenburg). Our week together was both productive and enjoyable. We were able to outline three research questions and draft the corresponding manuscripts which we shall continue working on at a distance. Furthermore, our STSM was immediately followed by the AM6 conference in Bristol which provided me with the opportunity of meeting with the other members of Johanna's research team as well as professor Ann Frisén. I look forward to continuing our collaboration!

Rachel Rodgers, Ph.D.

July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014