

**COST Action ISI120: Appearance Matters**

**Short Term Scientific Mission Final Report**

**(maximum 2,000 words)**

**Name of STSM visitor/applicant:** Dr. Paolo Antonelli, Department of Health Sciences, University of Florence, Florence, Italy

**Name of STSM host:** Prof. Diana Harcourt, Centre for Appearance Research, University of the West of England, Bristol, United Kingdom

**Duration: From** 2015-02-15 **to** 2015-02-21

**Host Institution & Country:** Centre for Appearance Research, University of the West of England, Bristol, United Kingdom

**Title of STSM visit:** Aspects of visible difference/disfigurement

**The purpose of the STSM:** learning and improving my knowledge, skills and methods about body image issues and concerns, especially regarding the psychological and social aspects, processes and needs characterizing visible difference and disfigurement, both for my research purposes and for interventions and treatments within my clinical practice

**Description of the work carried out during the STSM and the main results obtained:** an intensive and useful 5 day program of activity with many researchers from the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) who are currently developing and evaluating a variety of research and intervention projects that mainly comprehend the following psychosocial aspects of appearance, visible difference, disfigurement, and related constructs, features and effects:

* Quality of Life and psychosocial wellbeing in people with appearance related concerns;
* measurement issues and development of new patient reported outcome measures for people affected by burn injuries;
* psychosocial needs of burn injured patients, and in particular to support young people with burn injuries;
* features, wellbeing and needs of children and adolescents born with a cleft lip and/or palate and their families and friends (projects developed by the Cleft Collective research team at Bristol University);
* provision of care for patients with disfiguring conditions;
* features, support and advice for people with visible difference in their intimacy;
* support and advice for any young person who has worries or is unhappy because they have an unusual appearance through the use of an online programme based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and social interaction skills training (www.ypfaceit.co.uk);
* psychosocial impact of changes to appearance as a result of cancer treatment, for example due to chemotherapy on breast cancer, and in particular to support women with breast cancer affected by hair loss or deciding whether or not to have breast reconstruction following mastectomy;
* psychosocial predictors and outcomes of cosmetic surgery;
* public attitudes about diversity in appearance by promoting positive body image in the media (also social media) and in schools;
* self-esteem of girls and young women to overcome beauty-related anxieties that stop them from being happy and confident enough to reach their full, amazing potential within the Dove Self Esteem Project.

My STSM in Bristol also included the opportunity to know and use the many helpful resources that are present at CAR, to be able to study and deepen the constructs, tools and study designs involved in the research projects and interventions carried out by CAR. This learning has important implications on my research projects and interventions carried out at the Department of Health Sciences of the University of Florence in Italy.

My interesting STSM at the Centre for Appearance Research of the University of the West of England was a really significant and useful experience for me to be able to learn and improve my knowledge and skills about body image issues and concerns, especially regarding the psychological, social and clinical aspects, processes and needs characterizing people with visible difference and disfigurement, both for my interdisciplinary research purposes and for my interventions and treatments within the clinical practice.

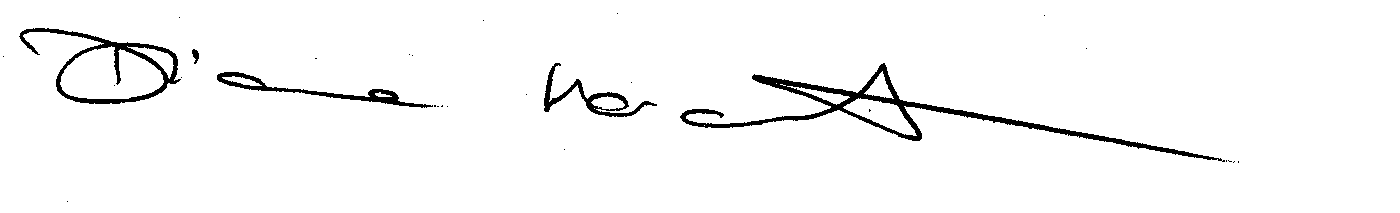
**Future collaboration with the host institution:** by this important and helpful experience at CAR for me, during which I gave to CAR researchers my knowledge, skills and research and intervention experiences about body image issues and concerns, together we are trying to create the basis for further collaborations in studies regarding various aspects of appearance, visible difference and disfigurement, starting with a research project on psychosocial predictors and outcomes of cosmetic surgery with a comparison between English and Italian data, also to understand possible cultural differences.

**Additional comments:** The Centre for Appearance Research of the University of the West of England makes a real difference to the lives of the many hundreds of thousands of people with appearance-related concerns both in the UK and across the world, therefore for my research projects in Italy was a privileged way and an honor for me to learn, develop new studies and improve my current studies by this STSM at CAR, as to use methods and techniques learnt from this experience at CAR in my interventions and clinical treatments, also with the purpose of sharing these knowledge and skills with my colleagues in Italy.

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

I declare that Paolo Antonelli stayed at The Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) during their STSM period and participated to all the above described activities. *(Host is encouraged to add any additional comments on the STSM, from their perspective):*

*Paolo had a busy week, meeting with members of CAR at UWE, Bristol and spending one full day with the Cleft Collective team at the University of Bristol. In addition to meetings with researchers working on a wide range of projects, each project team provided him with some key papers relevant to their area and access to resources such as our online interventions and training materials, all of which will have broadened his understanding of the area, particularly around visible difference. Members of CAR also learnt much from Paolo about his own work and areas of expertise during his visit. There is much potential for future collaboration between members of CAR and Paolo in the future.*

Signed (Host):Date: 09/03/15……….

Name (HOST): …Diana Harcourt ……………..