



UKRI Mental Health Platform Newsletter

Issue 1

February 2025

ECR Awards

We are welcoming applications for our Early Career Researcher Fellowship Awards.

We're pleased to announce the first round of funding to support future leaders in severe mental illness research. These fellowships are for individual researchers based in the UK who have not yet made the transition to independence.

- Projects can last for 1 – 3 years and can be funded up to £300k.
- Applications open 1st March – 30th April 2025
- External applicants welcome; projects must link at least two Hubs



This is a unique opportunity to join a network of international researchers right at the start of a new initiative, and to bring new ideas to under-researched areas of SMI.

If you're interested in creating a project, and would like to know more about how to reach out to Hubs, please contact the Coordinating Team : mhp@ed.ac.uk

[Find full details of eligibility, project requirements and how to apply on the website.](#)

Meet the Researcher

Jodie Gill is a registered mental health nurse and worked in clinical practice for almost 10 years. She's now the research co-ordinator for the Brain and Genomics Hub and works in close collaboration with the professional PPIE group.

In her blog, Jodie tells us about her collaborative work in the Hub.

"I think that the major implications of this project will be beginning to present real and in-depth evidence that symptoms are not enough to make an absolute clinical diagnosis. I am hopeful that this will pave the way for more directed research into developing exact scientific tests for conditions."

[Read the full blog on our website](#)

MHP Industry Alliance

We want to work with trusted industry partners to turn research findings into real-world positive impacts for people with SMI. So we are creating the MHP Industry Alliance to facilitate trusted and impactful collaboration to accelerate research into SMI. The Alliance will bring together academics, industry professionals and people with lived experience.

We are currently seeking leading industry experts who are operating (or seeking to operate) within the mental health field, with interests in biomarkers, diagnostics, technologies and treatments.

[Find out more on our website](#)



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Immuno-metabolic depression

Researchers from ImmunoMIND recently published a review of the research about a form of depression called immuno-metabolic depression.

Research has shown about 20–30% of people with depression have higher levels of certain immune markers in their blood, like C-reactive protein and cytokines. This indicates their body is experiencing long-lasting, low-level inflammation.

[Read the full paper here](#)

Studies suggest immune and metabolism problems can contribute to depression, and depression can also lead to these health issues. So, there is an ongoing cycle in which the conditions impact on each other over time. Brenda Penninx, lead author on the paper, told us:

“Depression is a heterogeneous condition, where different patients can have different symptoms as well as underlying biological mechanisms. Recognizing that immune-metabolic mechanisms could be a relevant treatment target for part of the depressed population opens the doors to personalised psychiatry.”

The researchers noted overlaps in the mechanisms for these conditions. So far, the data suggests that treatments focusing on inflammation, metabolism, or lifestyle changes might be helpful for people with immuno-metabolic depression. This supports the idea of treating people based on their unique needs, rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach in mental health care. [Read the summary on our website](#)



MHP News In Brief

- ⇒ A new study published in Cell, involving several Hub leaders, uses genetics to help better understand major depression: [Read our summary here.](#)
- ⇒ DATAMIND hosted their in person Away Day, with the team coming together to learn, share, and inspire. [Follow DATAMIND](#)
- ⇒ Metabolic Psychiatry published their protocol for the longitudinal METPSY research study (Metabolic biomarkers of clinical outcomes in SMI) [Read the paper here.](#)

If you have something you think we should feature in the MHP newsletter, get in touch: mhp@ed.ac.uk

And finally...

A section not necessarily about the MHP – just for your interest.

11th February marks International Day of Women and Girls in Science. So for this “And finally”, we’re highlighting Helen Boyle (1869–1957).

Helen Boyle established a [psychiatric facility, hospital and dispensary staffed by women for women](#), which offered free or low-cost treatment to those who couldn’t afford GP’s charges. She went on to become the first female psychiatrist at the Royal Sussex County Hospital and co-founder of MIND.

In 1939, she became the first woman President of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association (now known as the Royal College of Psychiatrists).

[Read more about her in The Lancet](#)

