



Te Tari Whakamātau Hinekarō  
Department of Psychology

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# Psycolloquy 2024

The Department of Psychology's annual research symposium featuring short presentations by research students and special guests

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25 & 26 November 2024  
William James Building  
Room 1.03



# Invited Speakers

## **Dr Nadia Charania**

*Public Health, Auckland University of Technology*

Migration and (In)visibility: The Power of Silence in Health Policy and Data

## **Prof Julie Maheux**

*Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Québec, Canada*

Mentalizing: Regulate Emotions, Act Thoughtfully, Intervene Effectively

## **Dr Abigail Pigden**

*Department of General Practice and Rural Health, Dunedin School of  
Medicine, and Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

Introducing an equity-focussed Primary Care Research Network

## **Assoc Prof Sébastien Héту**

*Université de Montréal and CIRCA Research Center, Québec, Canada*

A Cognitive Neuroscience Approach to Study the Interface Between Our  
Psychology and Our Social Environment

## **Dr Leony Galliano**

*Departamento de Educação Física, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do  
Norte and Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

How Much Do We Listen to Our Volunteers? The LINDA-Brasil Study  
Participant-Centered Intervention

# Psycolloquy 2024 Organiser

Dr Narun Pat

## Special thanks to

Lynne Ando  
Ryan Abraham  
Maddy Hamel-Nind  
Jamin Halberstadt  
Liv Harrison

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November

OPENING

9.45 am ***Opening Karakia***

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10.00 am ***Nadia Charania***

Migration and (In)visibility: The Power of Silence in Health Policy and Data

10.30 am ***Tom Corlet***

Exploring Cognitive Disengagement, Autism Symptomology, and Functioning in Middle Childhood

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10:55am 10 Minute Break

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11.05 am ***Tame Govaerts-Paul***

Māori Perspectives of Whakamomori (Suicide)

11.30 am ***Hashini Madarasinge***

The Relationship Between Individualism/Collectivism and Visual Perspective Taking

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11.55am LUNCH BREAK

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1.05pm ***Julie Maheux***

Mentalizing: Regulate Emotions, Act Thoughtfully, Intervene Effectively

1.30pm ***Sam Fennessy***

Exploring Perceptions and Experiences of Discrimination Against Bi+, Asexual, Non-Binary and Transgender Individuals in Aotearoa New Zealand

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1.55pm 10 Minute Break

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2.05pm **Ronan McNeill**

Holistic Prediction of Cognitive Decline During Ageing:  
An Aōtearoa New Zealand Perspective

2.20pm **Asthajothi Ariwalagan**

The Effects of Ostracism on Selective Memory

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2.35pm 15 Minute Break

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2.50pm **Abigail Pigden**

Introducing an Equity-Focussed Primary Care Research  
Network

3.20pm **Nattapat Simarangsarit**

The Roles of Cognitive Ability and Parental  
Psychopathology in the Development of Adolescents'  
Psychopathology: A Large-Scale Longitudinal Study with  
Parallel Latent Growth Curve Modelling

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3.45pm **Closing Karakia**

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November  
OPENING

9.45 am ***Opening Karakia***

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10.00 am ***Sébastien Héту***

A Cognitive Neuroscience Approach to Study the Interface Between Our Psychology and Our Social Environment

10.30 am ***Jack Scott***

Motor Dysfunction in Schizophrenia, and its Analogue in a Rat Model of Schizophrenia Risk

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10.55 am 10 Minute Break

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11.05 am ***Thomas Cawood***

Neuroimaging Correlates of Psychosis Risk

11.30 am ***Jenna Loffhagen***

Understanding the Psychological Consequences of Contraceptive Use in Aotearoa

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11.55 am LUNCH BREAK

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1.00 pm ***Leony Galliano***

How Much Do We Listen to Our Volunteers? The LINDA-Brasil Study Participant-Centered Intervention

1.30 pm ***Nick Wong***

Building Emotional Profiles: Exploration of Processes Associated with Emotional Functioning

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1.55pm 10 Minute Break

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2.05pm ***Sophie Logan***

Understanding Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis Among  
People with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
(ADHD)

2.30pm ***Jemma Donnelly***

Group Turning Point Narratives and Wellbeing

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2.45pm ***Closing Karakia***



We would like to thank the Department of Psychology  
for supporting the Department's presentation days

# **Migration and (In)visibility: The Power of Silence in Health Policy and Data**

***Nadia Charania***

*Public Health, Auckland University of Technology*

International migration has been increasing due to a complex set of economic, political, and social drivers. With migration at an all-time high, it is paramount to support the health and wellbeing of migrant and refugee background communities. Migrants often face specific health challenges due to various factors, including systemic racism, marginalization, and language barriers. Existing literature points to health inequalities between migrant and non-migrant populations. Additionally, health disparities are notable within and between migrant groups, given the heterogeneity among these populations. Within a broader examination of migration as a social determinant of health, there is a compelling argument that current policies, systems, and practices contribute to invisibilising the needs of migrant and refugee background communities. Together, we will explore ways to collect data, structure systems, and support meaningful participation to improve the health and wellbeing of migrant and refugee background communities.

# Exploring Cognitive Disengagement, Autism Symptomology, and Functioning in Middle Childhood

***Tom Corlet<sup>1</sup>, Dione Healey<sup>1</sup>, Paul Tran<sup>2</sup>***

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago<sup>1</sup>*

*Department of Women's and Children's Health, University of Otago<sup>2</sup>*

Cognitive disengagement (CD), previously termed "sluggish cognitive tempo," was introduced in the 1980s to describe cognitive symptoms—such as daydreaming, confusion, and hypoactivity—present in children with ADHD. Recent research has identified CD as a unique, transdiagnostic cluster of symptoms, with studies indicating that up to 49% of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) may also experience CD. Preliminary evidence suggests that CD contributes to impairments beyond those associated with autism or ADHD, affecting sleep, social engagement, emotion regulation, and academic performance. However, the relationship between autism and CD, particularly in higher-functioning children, remains underexplored, and previous studies have often relied on limited cognitive engagement measures and single-informant designs.

This project aims to take a cross-sectional, multi-informant approach to: (1) Determine whether CD is associated with mild or moderate levels of ASD symptomatology in Dunedin school-aged children, and identify related symptom domains; (2) Investigate the relationships between CD, ASD symptomology, and functioning across sleep, social, emotional, and academic domains; and (3) Explore potential mediating effects. This talk will discuss the initial research phase and outline future directions for understanding the complexities of CD in the context of autism.

# Māori Perspectives of Whakamomori (Suicide)

***Tame Govaerts-Paul, Richard Linscott & Amanda Clifford***  
*Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

New Zealand has one of the highest population rates of suicide in the world, with nearly 550 deaths by suicide occurring between 2021 and 2022. The rate of suicide committed among the Māori population is over 1.5 times higher compared to other ethnic populations in New Zealand. Models of suicidal behaviour help to conceptualise how an individual develops the thoughts and behaviours that lead to suicide action. The *integrated motivational-volitional model of suicidal behaviour* (IMV model) is a detailed model of how suicidal ideation develops to suicidal intent and action. The IMV model of suicidal behaviour is supported by research on marginalised populations; however, there is no empirical evidence that the IMV model is applicable for Māori.

This project aims to (1) collect mātauranga and perspectives from Māori participants aged 18 and over, on the key arguments of the IMV model; (2) highlight the common and different perspectives that Māori may have on the aspects of the IMV model; and (3) collect mātauranga and perspectives on whakamomori (suicide) and whakamomori research. This talk will explain the exploratory study and how the mātauranga collected will be used to guide the future direction of the overall research project.

# **The Relationship Between Individualism/Collectivism and Visual Perspective Taking**

***Hashini Madarasinge, Jamin Halberstadt, Marea Colombo***

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

Perspective-taking, a crucial dimension of Theory of Mind (ToM), is the ability to understand others' mental states. This skill underpins the ability for collaboration, empathy and interpersonal communication. Previous research suggested that cultures vary in their perspective-taking ability, and some studies find that Eastern (versus Western) cultures excel in perspective-taking tasks, potentially due to their generally more collectivist orientation. More recent studies, however, have produced mixed findings. This study aimed to explore the multidimensional nature of individualism and collectivism (IND/COL) and its impact on visual perspective-taking (VPT). American and Singaporean Prolific users (representing individualistic and collectivistic cultures, respectively), completed two key tasks: the 'Director task' to assess VPT and an eight-dimensional Self-Construal Scale (SCS) to measure participants' IND/COL tendencies. The results revealed significant cultural differences in performance; significant differences between Americans and Singaporeans emerged in three SCS dimensions, with Singaporeans exhibiting stronger collectivistic tendencies. Additionally, Singaporeans displayed higher accuracy rates and shorter reaction times in the VPT task. However, the observed differences in VPT performance were not statistically explained by variations in participants' IND/COL tendencies. The next phase of this study will involve collecting data from the United States, Italy, and India to allow a cross-cultural comparison between cultures with varying levels of IND/COL.

# **Mentalizing: Regulate Emotions, Act Thoughtfully, Intervene Effectively**

***Julie Maheux***

*Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Québec, Canada*

This presentation will present how fostering mentalization can enhance psychological resilience, interpersonal effectiveness, and intervention outcomes in both students and professionals. Mentalization is the ability to reflect on and understand our own and others' thoughts and emotions. It is vital for emotional regulation, psychological well-being, and fostering prosocial behaviors. For university students, particularly those preparing for careers in health, psychosocial, and public safety fields, developing mentalization is crucial. These students face significant stress and complex interpersonal relations, and mentalization could better equip them for these challenges. Indeed, mentalization can mitigate the impact of stress and lead to more sensitive and effective practices. Our research program explores the role of mentalization in university students and its importance in professional training for health and psychosocial fields, as well as for first responders (such as police officers). We will discuss projects around the development of tools to measure mentalization in professional contexts and the study of associations between mentalization, social support, well-being, and best practices. Our manualized mentalization training program and an innovative Digital Learning Environment (DLE) for cultivating these skills will also be introduced, with a focus on its application in both students' personal development and their future professional roles.

# **Exploring Perceptions and Experiences of Discrimination Against Bi+, Asexual, Non-Binary and Transgender Individuals in Aotearoa New Zealand**

***Sam Fennessy<sup>1</sup>, Charlene Rapsey<sup>2</sup>, Damian Scarf<sup>1</sup>, Amanda Clifford<sup>1</sup>, Gareth Treharne<sup>1</sup>***

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago<sup>1</sup>*

*Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Otago<sup>2</sup>*

Mothers' reminiscing style during early childhood is critical for children's later autobiographical memory narratives, oral language, and socioemotional development (Salmon & Reese, 2016; Waters et al., 2020). Conceivably, these early reminiscing conversations also play a role in adolescents' later narrative identity (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Despite evidence uncovering the longitudinal impact of parental reminiscing styles, little is known about the mechanisms of parent-child reminiscing and its influence on toddlers' cognitive development. One plausible mechanism is that discussions about past events provide stimulation for the neurocognitive development of toddlers. Steadfast growth in toddler's attention and inhibition response (Kerr German et al., 2023) may set the stage for toddlers' active cognitive participation during reminiscing conversations (Morgan et al., 2020). As there is a big gap of research uncovering cognitive skills during early childhood, my PhD aims to explore linkages between early neurocognitive processes and parental reminiscing in early childhood. A promising avenue to explore this mechanism is through Event-Related Potentials (ERPs) and their relationship with reminiscing of past events. A more context-specific and elaborative reminiscing style may modulate neural signatures associated with expectation violation (P300) and attention skills. These neurocognitive gains and processes suggest a need for future research to delve into the neurobehavioral benefits, executive functioning, and emotion regulation development across childhood.

# **Holistic Prediction of Cognitive Decline During Ageing: An Aōtearoa New Zealand Perspective**

***Ronan McNeill, Bruce Russell, Narun Pat, Olivia Harrison***

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

Post-clinical treatments have largely proven ineffective in mitigating or reversing cognitive decline in late life, underscoring the need for early identification of at-risk individuals to enable preventative interventions. Unlike adjacent fields, cognitive decline research has under-utilised holistic multivariate models to understand individual factors within a broader contextual system. In this study, using UKBiobank data and a method aligned with mātauranga Māori knowledge, we first identified the strongest independent predictors of cognitive decline through conventional univariate modelling. We then developed and evaluated the most holistic multidimensional predictive model to date, utilising an optimised elastic net framework informed by mātauranga Māori. This multivariate model outperformed the strongest univariate approaches, revealing a more diverse set of predictive factors spanning demographic (e.g., age, sex), physical activity (e.g., light intensity activity duration), diet (e.g., coffee intake), lifestyle (e.g., phone usage), mental health (e.g., general happiness), anthropometric (e.g., body mass index), neuroimaging (e.g., cerebrospinal fluid volume), blood biomarkers (e.g., platelet count), sleep (e.g., disordered sleeping), social factors (e.g., household size), medication usage (e.g., simvastatin), medical history (e.g., diabetes mellitus), and family medical history (e.g., parental dementia incidence) domains from the UKBiobank. These results highlight the value of integrating indigenous knowledge with conventional science, offering insights into midlife factors most predictive of longitudinal cognitive decline trajectories. The findings also hold significant clinical potential for identifying high-risk individuals in pre-clinical populations and for informing preventative treatment strategies and future research questions.



# **The Effects of Ostracism on Selective Memory**

***Asthajothi Ariwalagan & Hitaua Arahanga-Doyle***

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

Ostracism is the act of excluding individuals from groups and social interactions. When people are ostracised, it unsurprisingly creates a range of negative emotions, but in addition to these negative emotions, past research has found that ostracism has an effect on memory. Notably, these studies have found that participants who experienced exclusion showed better memory for negative events described in others' diary entries. Building on this, the present research aims to explore how ostracism affects the recall of one's own autobiographical memories. We hypothesise that ostracism will lead individuals to recall more negative than positive events. For 7 days, participants will be asked to complete a daily diary task, where they need to note down a positive, neutral and negative event. On the 8th day, they will play Cyberball, a virtual ball-tossing game designed to induce inclusion or exclusion. They will then be given 10 minutes to recall as many events as possible based on their diary entries. This study aims to provide insight into cognitive processing under social distress by exploring how ostracism affects personal memory recall and potential biases in recall after exclusion.

# Introducing an Equity-Focussed Primary Care Research Network

***Pigden, A., Leitch, S., Atmore, C., Stokes, T.***

*Department of General Practice and Rural Health, Dunedin School of Medicine, and Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

Primary care research is critical to understanding health and wellbeing challenges such as access to services, evaluation of health policy, and barriers to equitable health outcomes experienced by indigenous and rural populations. Overseas, primary care data is collected nationally by primary care research networks (PCRN). Despite a rich landscape of primary care data, New Zealand lacks a connected PCRN.

**Aim,** To establish a regional equity centred primary care research network, in partnership with tangata whenua, primary care providers and academics.

**Methods,** Drawing on previous research, we established co-investigator groups of local and external academics while using local connections to partner with our region's Primary Health Network (which co-ordinates provision of primary care services across our region). We then undertook a co-design process with senior Māori academics, and Māori health sector leaders on how to structure the network to represent a true partnership, and to ensure the network was equity focussed.

**Results,** Our network structure and processes are now clearly established, we have a Governance Group, and an Operational Team handling the day to day network business, and multiple research projects happening across the network. Including a recently completed research prioritisation exercise identifying the areas of priority for our community.

**Implications,** Establishing a Primary care Research Network from scratch is challenging, and creating one with a specific focus on equity and partnership with indigenous peoples requires a different approach to a traditional academic project. Connections with local service providers and community members are integral for developing a network.

# **The Roles of Cognitive Ability and Parental Psychopathology in the Development of Adolescents' Psychopathology: A Large-Scale Longitudinal Study with Parallel Latent Growth Curve Modelling**

***Nattapat Simarangsarit<sup>1,2</sup>, Sunthud Pornpasertmanich<sup>1</sup>, Narun Pat<sup>2</sup>***

*Faculty of Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand<sup>1</sup>  
Department of Psychology, University of Otago, New Zealand<sup>2</sup>*

Cognitive ability is a significant transdiagnostic predictor of various mental disorders, with established links to psychopathology. However, questions remain regarding how cognitive ability is associated with psychopathology during an adolescent developmental period, characterized by growth and parental psychopathology. This study examined the longitudinal relationship between the developments of cognitive ability in children and psychopathology in both children and their parents. Utilising data from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) study (N = 12,693), spanning five annual timepoints from baseline through a four-year follow-up, the sample comprised children aged 8 to 15 years. Children's cognitive ability (operationalised by a latent g factor) was measured through multiple cognitive tasks, while psychopathology (operationalised by a latent p factor) for children and parents was assessed via parent and self-reports, respectively. Based on parallel latent growth curve modelling, both children's baseline psychopathology and their developmental trajectories were significantly associated with a) children's baseline cognitive ability and b) changes in parental psychopathology. Additionally, at baseline, parents with higher psychopathology tended to have children exhibiting more psychopathological symptoms. These findings underscore the interconnected nature of cognitive and psychopathological development in children and emphasise the critical impact of parental psychopathology improvement over time on overall child psychopathology.

# **A Cognitive Neuroscience Approach to Study the Interface Between Our Psychology and Our Social Environment**

***Sébastien Héту***

*Université de Montréal and CIRCA Research Center, Québec, Canada*

My research program seeks to deepen our understanding of how human psychology enables us to navigate our modern social environments—allowing for both success and occasional missteps. To explore this, I leverage computational tools and neurophysiological techniques to examine how individuals construct, modify, and utilize complex social constructs such as social norms and hierarchies. During my presentation, I will share key findings on how we perceive violations of social norms, the cognitive processes involved in learning new norms and how to enforce them. Additionally, I will discuss the impacts of modern social environments, including social networks, on psychological functioning and well-being, with a focus on the underlying psychological and neurobiological systems.

I hope these insights will enrich our discussions and open new avenues for collaboration with professors at the University of Otago during my time here.

# **Motor Dysfunction in Schizophrenia, and its Analogue in a Rat Model of Schizophrenia Risk**

***Jack Scott & David Bilkey***

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

Early schizophrenia researchers recognized a diverse set of motor alterations in the disorder. However, attention fell away from intrinsic motor symptoms with the advent of antipsychotic drugs, and focus turned towards managing motor side effects of treatment. Some researchers even doubted the existence of motor symptoms intrinsic to the disorder. In recent decades, interest in this symptom domain has been renewed, with research highlighting the presence of motor dysfunction in antipsychotic-naïve patients, and in clinically high-risk groups. This has led researchers to consider motor symptoms a core feature. Such symptoms can range from psychomotor slowing, to subtle alterations to coordination and balance. This talk will start with an overview of motor symptoms in schizophrenia, their historical context and current knowledge. I will then discuss findings from our research examining motor dysfunction in the maternal immune activation model of schizophrenia risk. Utilizing deep learning, and high-speed video recording, we captured movements of our rats in a horizontal ladder task designed to challenge the rats' motor performance. We found evidence of impaired coordination in our male rats; whilst in female rats, motor performance was largely preserved. Our findings show that the MIA model may be useful for investigating motor dysfunction.

# Neuroimaging Correlates of Psychosis Risk

**Thomas Cawood<sup>1</sup>, Olivia Harrison<sup>1,3,4</sup>, Richard Linscott<sup>1,2</sup>, & Bruce Russell<sup>2</sup>**

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand<sup>1</sup>*

*School of Pharmacy, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand<sup>2</sup>  
Translational Neuromodeling Unit, Institute for Biomedical Engineering, University of Zurich and ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland<sup>3</sup>*

*Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom<sup>4</sup>*

Psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia, have complex aetiologies, with early indicators like schizotypal traits often manifesting before a formal diagnosis. Identifying these risk factors early on can help mitigate future harm. This longitudinal study employed magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to investigate the relationship between brain structure, neurochemistry, and psychosis risk factors. We hypothesised that higher schizotypy scores would be associated with specific alterations in brain structure and neurochemistry. Forty undergraduate students participated, undergoing MRI scans and completing both the Psychosis-Like Symptoms Semi-Structured Interview (PLIKSi) and the Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire (SPQ). T1-weighted MRI and proton magnetic resonance spectroscopy were used to measure brain tissue volumes and glutamate concentrations in the striatum and ventromedial prefrontal cortex. A subset of 21 participants completed follow-up assessments and MRI scans one year later to monitor longitudinal changes in brain structure, neurochemistry, and psychosis risk. Cross-sectional analyses revealed significant correlations between positive schizotypy scores and grey matter volume in the parahippocampal gyrus and cerebellum. Longitudinal analyses showed changes in striatal glutamate levels were linked to changes in schizotypy scores. These findings suggest potential biomarkers and treatment targets for psychosis risk. Our study provides an important foundation for future research into the neurobiological mechanisms underlying psychotic disorders.

# **Understanding the Psychological Consequences of Contraceptive Use in Aotearoa**

***Jenna Loffhagen & Richard Linscott***

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

Approximately 966 million people use contraceptive medications globally, yet many still have unmet contraceptive needs due to concerns about side effects. Experiencing psychological side effects, or fearing them, can influence a person's decision making and engagement with these medications, which can have serious implications for their reproductive health. Despite this, healthcare providers may not adequately address these concerns, leaving individuals feeling unsupported by the healthcare system. Furthermore, existing research on the relationship between contraceptive use and psychological outcomes is limited, contradictory, and overly focused on a biomedical framework that fails to address the importance of sociopolitical contexts when considering people's contraceptive experiences.

This project aims to explore what mental health outcomes are associated with contraceptive use, to understand the experiences of contraceptive users who report psychological side effects, and to consider how well the New Zealand healthcare system supports these individuals. This talk will introduce three ongoing studies: a prospective study of the association between contraceptive use and various mental health outcomes, one-on-one interviews with contraceptive users who have reported experiencing psychological side effects, and interviews with contraceptive providers. The future direction of this research will also be discussed.



# How Much Do We Listen to Our Volunteers? The LINDA-Brazil Study Participant-Centered Intervention

***Leony Galliano***

*Departamento de Educação Física, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte and Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

In this presentation, we explored the LINDA-Brazil study, conducted in Brazil, which investigated the effectiveness of a lifestyle intervention program in delaying or preventing type 2 diabetes in women who experienced gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM). This multicenter randomized clinical trial focused on women at higher risk shortly after pregnancy (10 weeks to 2 years). Emphasizing a participant-centered approach, the study tailored interventions to individual needs through personalized coaching. The intervention group received intensive support to promote healthy behaviors, focusing on breastfeeding, weight control, a nutritious diet, and regular physical activity. We invite you to join the discussion and share your thoughts on the importance of listening to and addressing the unique needs of our volunteers, postpartum women.



# **Building Emotional Profiles: Exploration of Processes Associated with Emotional Functioning**

***Nick Wong<sup>1,2</sup>, Mei Peng<sup>1</sup>, Narun Pat<sup>2</sup>, Jamin Halberstadt<sup>2</sup>***

*Department of Food Science, University of Otago<sup>1</sup>*

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago<sup>2</sup>*

Emotional functioning is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of interrelated emotional processes, such as the expression, regulation and understanding of emotional experiences. To date, only research related to emotional intelligence (EI), to my knowledge, has explored the various processes associated with emotional functioning. However, most of the research uses exclusively self-report measures or test-based assessments which are done on rating scales and multiple-choice questions. The present study seeks to better represent one's emotional functioning by incorporating an assessment of physiological and behavioural response to emotional stimuli, an emotion recognition task, along with self-report and test-based measures. The current study aims to examine and consolidate the processes underlying emotional functioning, namely emotion regulation, emotion understanding, emotional reactivity, and emotional expressiveness, to build emotional profiles. The profiles may provide insights into how the distinct, yet interrelated processes can individually or collaboratively contribute to one's emotional competence, thus allowing both a holistic view and a detailed dissection of emotional functioning. Furthermore, adopting a person-centred approach, the study hopes to reveal unique emotional profiles that exist within a population. The study will then examine the associations between those profiles with emotional affect and psychopathology.

# **Understanding Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis Among People with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

***Sophie Logan, Ryan Ward, Gareth Treharne, Amanda Clifford, Dione Healey***

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder frequently treated with stimulant medications. Side-effects of these medications make alternative treatment approaches important to consider. Several studies have emphasized the complex nature surrounding motivations for cannabis use among ADHD individuals. Growing evidence suggests cannabis may have therapeutic uses for those with ADHD, and it can be accessed via Aotearoa's Medicinal Cannabis Scheme. This PhD aims to understand the experiences of ADHD individuals who use cannabis by exploring its impact on ADHD symptoms. Additionally, the PhD will examine how cannabis use may differ between ADHD subtypes, age of diagnosis, gender, and ethnicity. First, an analysis of existing survey data will examine cannabis use among university students with or without ADHD across gender and ethnicity. Secondly, conducting qualitative interviews will explore the experiences of ADHD individuals who use cannabis. Findings from these studies will inform another quantitative survey designed to capture patterns of cannabis use, including frequency, consumption methods, and motivations. Results could inform future prescribing practices and planning of randomized controlled trials of cannabis for ADHD. Additionally, it could help shift the perception around ADHD cannabis use to a therapeutic tool where individuals self-medicate to ameliorate specific ADHD symptoms or alleviate medication side-effects.

# Group Turning Point Narratives and Wellbeing

***Jemma Donnelly & Hitaua Arahanga-Doyle***

*Department of Psychology, University of Otago*

People gain a range of benefits from having a positive and coherent narrative about their life. An important aspect of narrative identity research is how people look back and attribute meaning to specific past experiences, which psychologists call 'Turning-point narratives'. Typically, the focus of this research is on turning-points specific to an individual. However, more holistic theories about identity (e.g. social-identity theory) argue that a person's identity also includes important social groups (e.g. friends, family, sports teams) and that these groups have a significant impact on cognition and behaviour. In the current research we aim to investigate the turning-point paradigm with a particular emphasis on group turning points rather than individual turning-points. We expect that participants with more coherent group-focused turning points will show increased well-being outcomes, and that this relationship will be stronger for participants higher in collectivist/relational self-concept. As far as we know, this is the first project of its kind that has attempted to study turning-point narratives from a group-based, rather than an individual, perspective. Given the novel nature of this research there are several conceptual and practical challenges that will be discussed in the talk.

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