

The section Cognitive Psychology of the institute Psychology of the Faculty Social and Behavioural Sciences is looking for a

PhD candidate in Cognitive/Clinical Psychology (1.0 FTE)

Vacancy number 5741

Project description

Research Project "Emotional contagion in autism and social anxiety disorder"

Humans' capacity to express, recognize and share emotions enables them to navigate their social worlds and forms a core component of what it means to be socially competent and healthy. Emotion processing deficits have been reported in different disorders and are reflected in disturbed emotion regulation, attentional biases, gaze avoidance, disrupted mimicry and emotion recognition deficits. The current project focuses specifically on the putative linkage between the mimicry of expressions and their recognition. Apart from the typically used posed, full-blown facial expressions, a much larger range of expressions are being investigated including pupil dilation (pupil mimicry), tears (contagious crying) and blushing (contagious blushing). These expressions are genuine and hard to enact or fake. The question of how patients with SAD and ASD mimic and perceive emotional cues, visible in the face or from body language, has not been investigated yet. Due to the high prevalence of such cues in daily life interactions, it is of crucial importance to investigate whether their known deficits in perceiving prototypical, explicit facial expressions of emotion translate to the more subtle emotional cues that are beyond the control of the expressor.

This project is supported by an NWO VIDI grant to Mariska Kret. The project will run in parallel with ongoing projects in the CoPAN lab, directed by Dr. Mariska Kret (www.mariskakret.com). The research group participates in the Leiden Institute for Brain and Cognition (LIBC), an interfaculty center for interdisciplinary research on brain and cognition (www.libc-leiden.nl). Patients will at least partly be tested in Germany so the candidate is expected to temporarily move to Germany for a couple of months per year.

Key Responsibilities

- Literature study, hypothesis-driven development and execution of experimental studies in patients;
- Report results at conferences and in at least four international peer-reviewed journals;
- Supervise BSc and MSc thesis projects;
- Participate in the Leiden Institute for Brain and Cognition (LIBC).

Selection criteria

- Master degree in experimental or clinical psychology or related field;
- Knowledge of multilevel statistics;
- Programming experience (e.g., Matlab, R, e-prime);
- Knowledge of psychophysiological methods (e.g., heartrate, facial temperature, eye-tracking and pupillometry)
- Excellent research and writing skills;
- Excellent command of English (basic knowledge of German is preferred).

Our Faculty/institute

The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences comprises four institutes: Education and Child Studies, Political Science, Psychology and Cultural Anthropology & Development Sociology. The Faculty also includes the Centre for Science and Technology Studies. The Faculty is home to 5,000 students and 600 members of staff. Our teaching and research programmes cover diverse topics varying from adoption to political behaviour. For more information, see <http://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/social-behavioural-sciences>.

Terms and conditions

We offer a four year term position . Salary range from €2,266 to €2,897 gross per month (pay scale P , in

accordance with the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities). A part-time position is possible, too. The preferred starting date 1 December 2018. Earlier is not possible, later is discussable.

Leiden University offers an attractive benefits package with additional holiday (8%) and end-of-year bonuses(8.3 %), training and career development and sabbatical leave. Our individual choices model gives you some freedom to assemble your own set of terms and conditions. For international spouses we have set up a dual career programme. Candidates from outside the Netherlands may be eligible for a substantial tax break. More at <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/working-at/job-application-procedure-and-employment-conditions>.

Diversity

Leiden University is strongly committed to diversity within its community and especially welcomes applications from members of underrepresented groups.

Information

Enquiries can be made to Dr Mariska Kret, email m.e.kret@fsw.leidenuniv.nl.

Applications

Please submit online your application **no later than 1 October 2018** via the blue button of [our application system](#). Applicants should submit online a letter of interest accompanied by a CV.

Enquiries from agencies are not appreciated.