

Ph.d. / Postdoc stipends available in the collaborative research project 'Gene-diet interactions in obesity' (GENDINO)

The GENDINO project

The GENDINO project is based on a grant from the Danish Strategic Research Council (Programme Committee for Health, Food and Welfare). The project may be summarised as follows: The current knowledge about gene loci and obesity and diet and obesity, respectively, indicates that further progress in our understanding requires studies in which both gene loci and the dietary factors are included. The newly found 20+ gene loci associated with obesity contribute very little to explain the known genetic variation. The evidence for a role of dietary factors in development of obesity is not convincing. One important reason for the difficulties could be that the interplay between genes and diet plays an essential role and that the phenotype has not been precisely enough defined and measured. The GENDINO project aims at profoundly improving our knowledge about the role of genes and dietary intake and their interplay in human obesity. This will be achieved by new advanced type of analysis of novel, massive information on genetic variants combined with food patterns and nutrients, weight change (gain and loss), body composition, body fat distribution, and eventual obesity. The studies will include several pre-existing observational cohorts of both women and men, ranging from adolescence through middle age, and dietary intervention studies of weight loss and weight maintenance in obese adults. The project will require cross-disciplinary work based on expertise in general epidemiology, genetic, nutritional and clinical epidemiology, molecular genetics, bioinformatics and advanced statistical analysis. Assuming that diets helping genetically predisposed to avoid obesity do not harm the non-predisposed, the results of the project will contribute to identification and development of healthier food for all. Personalised nutrition based on genetic profiling is another possible outcome although its feasibility is limited.

The collaborating institutions

The GENDINO project is part of the activities in The Danish Obesity Research Centre (DanORC, <http://www.danorc.dk/>), and includes research activities at the following institutions:

- Department of Cardiology, Aalborg Hospital, Aarhus University Hospital and Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Aarhus University, lead by Professor Kim Overvad (KO)
- Department of Diet, Cancer and Health, The Danish Cancer Society, lead by Head of Department, Anne Tjønneland (AT)
- Center for Biological Sequence Analysis, Technical University of Denmark, lead by Professor Søren Brunak (SB)
- The Hagedorn Research Institute, NOVO Nordisk, lead by Professor Oluf Pedersen (OP)
- The Institute of Preventive Medicine, Copenhagen University Hospital, lead by Professor Thorkild IA Sørensen (TS), who is also coordinating the project, and Adj. Professor Berit L Heitmann (BH)

The project is also linked to the new research programme at University of Copenhagen entitled %ood, Fitness and Pharma+ (<http://foodfitnesspharma.ku.dk/>), and GENDINO is an extension of a series of corresponding subprojects in this programme.

The stipends

The following stipends are now open for application and will be granted during 2010:

- One 3-year ph.d. stipend or one 2-year postdoc stipend referring to KO,
- One 2-year postdoc stipend referring to AT,
- One 2,5-year postdoc stipend referring to SB,
- One 2,5-year postdoc stipend referring to OP,
- Three 2-year postdoc stipends referring to TS.

In 2011, there will be more stipends (one ph.d. and one postdoc stipend referring to BH and two postdoc stipends referring to TS).

Primary responsibilities

The research fellows will form an integrated group, which, however, will interact and share responsibilities with other researchers in each group. Those referring to KO, AT, BH and TS are primarily responsible for the nutritional epidemiology parts, the one based at the Hagedorn Research Institute will be responsible for the molecular genetic aspects of the program, and the one based at the Center for Biological Sequence Analyses will be responsible for the systems biology and bioinformatics analyses. A statistician based at the Institute of Preventive Medicine will be associated with the group.

Qualifications

Applicants to the ph.d. stipend are required to have a Master degree in health sciences or equivalent, and applicants to the postdoc stipends are required to have ph.d. degrees in fields relevant for the GENDINOB project. An enthusiastic, dedicated and collaborative attitude to the project is a prerequisite. All interested persons with the relevant qualifications are encouraged to apply for the position, regardless of age, gender, religious affiliation or ethnic background.

The application procedure

The application will take place in two steps. For the **first step** . with a **deadline** of 15th March 2010 at 12.00 hours - the application should include a) a letter that indicates the preferred stipends, explains the interest in the GENDINOB project, and describe the relevant qualifications for the positions (1 page), b) a curriculum vitae, documentation for academic degrees, a bibliography, and, if available, letters of recommendation. Applications must be send electronically to Thorkild IA Sørensen at tias@ipm.regionh.dk. Receipts of the applications will be acknowledged. Those selected after the first step will be given access for the **second step** to the GENDINOB research plan, and will be requested to deliver a research plan of maximum 3 pages about their own contribution as indicated in the GENDINOB research plan. The heads of the participating research groups will together make the evaluation and selection of candidates.

Employment

The successful applicants will be employed time-limited positions at the respective research institutions and under conditions complying with the labour market agreements and the local rules for such positions. The starting date can be negotiated in consideration of current commitments.

Contact Person

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