

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP ADVERTISEMENT

Dept Psychiatry, Stellenbosch University

ESTABLISHING A COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM FOR EXPOSOME RESEARCH IN AFRICAN MENTAL HEALTH

The Department of Psychiatry at Stellenbosch University invites applications for a full-time Postdoctoral Research Fellow to join an international collaborative project investigating environmental, neighbourhood and genomic determinants of PTSD and stress-related disorders. This is a highly interdisciplinary initiative involving **Stellenbosch University**, the **South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)**, and **Duke University (USA)**, with opportunities to contribute to innovative exposome research, lived-experience engagement, and capacity development across Africa.

The fellowship will focus on investigating how **environmental and neighbourhood-level exposures**, including air pollution, green space, climate-related variables, and socioeconomic factors, **interact with molecular markers to influence PTSD and related mental health outcomes**. The postdoctoral fellow will contribute to geocoding and environmental data processing, variable selection and covariate planning, and the integration of biological and environmental datasets for statistical analysis. They will also support the development and execution of qualitative lived-experience components, contribute to capacity-building activities such as student training workshops, and collaborate closely with project partners at Stellenbosch University, SAMRC and Duke University.

Responsibilities

- Develop and implement analysis plans
- Contribute to publications, presentations, and grant writing
- Mentor junior researchers and support team meetings
- Assist with ethics amendments and data management compliance

Minimum Requirements

- PhD (**within past 5 years**) in Epidemiology, Public Health, Neuroscience, Biostatistics, Molecular Biology, Environmental Science, or related field
- Evidence of **at least one first-authored publication**
- Strong **quantitative and /or qualitative** research and **statistical analytic** skills
- Proficiency in **R, Python**, or similar

Preferred Experience

- Geospatial analysis (ArcGIS/QGIS)
- Statistical analyses
- Mental health or trauma/PTSD research
- Genomics research
- Scoping/systematic review experience
- Community-engaged research

The fellowship offers opportunities to influence an emerging research agenda in the exposome–mental health field, contribute to international conference presentations, and participate in developing future large-scale grant proposals. The fellow will work closely with senior investigators and will be encouraged to develop independent research outputs and career-advancing skills.

A **tax-free stipend in line with Stellenbosch University Postdoctoral Fellowship guidelines** will be provided. The position is funded for one year, with potential renewal based on performance and available funding.

Interested candidates should submit a **cover letter** describing their research experience and fit for the position, a **detailed CV** including publication list, and **current contact information for two referees**.

Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled.

For enquiries, applicants may contact **Prof Sian Hemmings** at Stellenbosch University: smjh@sun.ac.za