

Psychiatry, Suicide Research (PRN26622B)

WORK WITH US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN REDUCING SUICIDE AT UTAH

The University of Utah has become a world leader in the study of risk factors leading to suicide death. Our highly collaborative, interdisciplinary team of researchers is embedded in the new Huntsman Mental Health Institute (HMHI). The HMHI is committed to excellence in research, clinical care, and education.

Description

The Utah Suicide Genetic Research Study (PI: Hilary Coon, PhD) is seeking a postdoctoral fellow to join our productive team in our search for risk factors leading to suicide death. Experts in our research group span the fields of psychiatric genetics, epigenetics, statistics, epidemiology, clinical research, and ethics. Together, our group has over \$12million in research funding. We publish regularly in high-profile journals, and serve in leadership roles in national and international collaborative consortia.

The project: while prediction of suicide attempt has been improving, prediction of suicide death remains near zero. In addition, though prior attempt is currently the best predictor, <10% of suicide attempters go on to die by suicide, and >50% of suicide deaths occur without a prior attempt. *Better understanding of risks leading to suicide death is critical, and will direct scarce resources to aid those most in need.* Our current projects employ risk modeling using all measured demographic and longitudinal health data, employing natural language processing (NLP) of physician notes for more accurate determination of suicide attempts. Results will be further informed by assessing contributions of polygenic risk scores and of rarer functional variants from whole genome sequence data.

The data resource: >8,000 biosamples from population-ascertained suicide deaths linked to extensive longitudinal health records, demographics, deep genealogical data back to the 1700's, and genomic array and sequencing data. This is the largest genetically-informative data set of suicide death in the world. Genotyping has been completed on ~5,500 suicide deaths, and whole genome sequencing has been completed on a selected subset of 670 suicides at increased genetic risk. Future additional studies will be possible in viably frozen cells from 3,500 skin samples from a subset of the suicides. The resource grows by an average of 700-750 suicides per year; numbers with DNA will approach 10,000 within two years.

The work environment: The University of Utah is committed to creating an environment of inclusion and respect, and to actively recruit and fully foster the development of a physician and scientist workforce that reflects the diversity of our community.

Please apply online at <https://utah.peopleadmin.com/postings/118177> and send a curriculum vitae and contact information for references. Send inquiries to hilary.coon@utah.edu