

University of Leicester – PhD project

Funding Source: Self-funded / Sponsored

Proposed start date: negotiable

Closing date for applications: open until filled

Eligibility: UK/International

Tuition fees for overseas: 2025/26 academic year: £23,650 - £38,300 per year

Department/School: Population Health Sciences/DRC

Supervisors: Louise Hull lmh68@le.ac.uk , Charlotte Edwardson ce95@le.ac.uk, Louisa Herring lh386@le.ac.uk

Project Title: Identifying research priorities to advance the application of implementation science to lifestyle intervention research

Project Description:

Aims:

1.	Understand how implementation science has been applied to study the implementation of lifestyle interventions.
2.	Development of a research agenda to advance the application of implementation science to lifestyle intervention research.
3.	Opportunity to work with world-leading experts in the fields of lifestyle intervention development and evaluation and implementation science.

Background:

It takes an average of 17 years for only 14% of research to get into practice.¹ Implementation science, the scientific study of methods and strategies to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and evidence-based interventions into routine practice,² emerged in the 1990s to speed up and close the evidence-to-practice gap. Lifestyle interventions have been defined as interventions that focus upon improving health through one or more modifiable risk factors, including interventions that promote healthy nutrition, smoking cessation, moderation in alcohol use, physical activity and stress reduction.³ Although implementation science is critical to understanding and optimising the implementation of evidence-based lifestyle interventions, it is unclear the extent to which core implementation science concepts (e.g. implementation outcomes) and methods (e.g. implementation theories, models and frameworks and implementation strategies) have been applied to systematically study the implementation of lifestyle interventions.

Aim:

To identify future research priorities to advance the application of implementation science to lifestyle intervention research. *Objectives:*

1. To understand the extent to which core implementation science concepts and methods have been applied to lifestyle intervention research.
2. Based on a scoping and critical review of the literature, develop a draft research agenda to advance the application of implementation science to lifestyle intervention research.
3. Based on expert consensus, refine the draft research agenda, including priorities and recommendations, to advance the application of implementation science to lifestyle intervention research.

Methods: This PhD will involve three main studies. *Study One:* Will involve conducting a scoping and critical review of the literature to understand and document the extent to which core implementation science concepts and methods have been applied to lifestyle intervention research. *Study Two:* Will involve the initial development of a research agenda, including priorities and recommendations, to advance the application of implementation science to lifestyle intervention research. This work will be informed by the results of study one. *Study Three:* Will involve conducting a Delphi study, involving experts in lifestyle intervention development and evaluation and implementation science experts, to refine and finalise the research agenda for the application of implementation science to lifestyle intervention research.

Expected outcomes and impact:

We will understand the breadth and depth of the application of implementation science to lifestyle intervention research. Based on a scoping and critical review of the literature and a Delphi study, we will develop a research agenda for advancing the application of implementation science to lifestyle intervention research.

References:

1. Balas EA, Boren SA. Managing Clinical Knowledge for Health Care Improvement. *Yearb Med Inform.* 2000;(1):65-70
2. Eccles MP, Mittman BS. Welcome to *Implementation Science*. *Implementation Sci.* 2006;1,1.

Younge JO, Kouwenhoven-Pasmooij TA, Freak-Poli R, Roos-Hesselink JW, Hunink MM. Randomized study designs for lifestyle interventions: a tutorial. *Int J Epidemiol.* 2015;44(6):2006-19.

Entry requirements:

Applicants are required to hold/or expect to obtain a UK Bachelor Degree 2:1 or better in a relevant subject.

The University of Leicester English language requirements apply where applicable.

Application advice:

To apply please refer to <https://le.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/research-subjects/health-sciences>

With your application, please include:

- CV
- Personal statement explaining your interest in the project, your experience, why we should consider you in addition to confirmation of how you will pay your fees.
- Degree Certificates and Transcripts of study already completed and if possible transcript to date of study currently being undertaken
- Evidence of English language proficiency if applicable
- In the reference section please enter the contact details of your two academic referees in the boxes provided or upload letters of reference if already available.

In the funding section please specify that you wish to be considered for Ref **Self funded Meek**

In the proposal section please provide the name of the supervisors and project title (a proposal is not required)

Project / Funding Enquiries: Louise Hull lmh68@le.ac.uk

Application enquiries to cls-pgr@le.ac.uk