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MEDICINE



Planetary Health Post-Doctoral Fellowship Opportunity

Executive Summary

The Stanford University [Center for Innovation in Global Health](#) and [Woods Institute for the Environment](#) and the [London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine](#) (LSHTM) are pleased to announce a unique, inter-disciplinary Planetary Health Post-Doctoral Fellowship. The Fellowship will focus on planetary health, defined as “the health of human civilization and the state of the natural systems on which it depends”, as an area in urgent need of investigation. The impact of multiple pressures on the earth’s system and human health are poorly understood, particularly in lower income regions of the world, and this programme will seek to foster the professional development of a generation of planetary health researchers and ambassadors.

A Background to Human and Planetary Health

Throughout human evolution the health of human communities has been tied to local ecosystems. This inter-dependence is increasingly under pressure resulting from unprecedented anthropogenic change that is profoundly damaging planetary systems. Critical threats include biodiversity loss, pollution, climate change, and mismanagement of freshwater resources and ocean systems. The science of climate change is now well advanced, but we are yet to fully understand the implications of these planetary changes on human health. The ever pressing timeframes and the potential scale of health impacts that range from the direct impact of heat stress, to the ecosystem-mediated impacts of undernutrition from falling agricultural outputs, demand an urgent increase in scientific understanding with a strong focus on actions that can support planetary health.

Introducing Stanford University & The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Since its opening in 1891, Stanford University has been dedicated to finding solutions to big challenges and to preparing students for leadership in a complex world. Stanford’s seven schools on one campus offer students boundless opportunities to pursue their passions and collaborate on solving complex global problems. Two leading bodies at Stanford are collaborating to find solutions to issues related to human and planetary health:

- The [Center for Innovation in Global Health](#) is Stanford University’s hub for global health research, training and leadership. In the pursuit of well-being, worldwide, Stanford Global Health shares knowledge, equips leaders and builds interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral teams to address urgent global health challenges. The Center is led by Director Michele Barry and Director of Research Steve Luby.
- As the university's hub of interdisciplinary environment and sustainability research, the Stanford [Woods Institute for the Environment](#) run by Professor Chris Field is the go-to place for Stanford faculty, researchers and students to collaborate on advancing solutions to complex environment and sustainability challenges.

Founded in 1899, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) is a globally renowned public health institution, whose mission is to improve health and health equity worldwide, through cutting edge research and postgraduate education. With over 3,000 staff conducting research in over 130 countries around the world, including at our Medical Research Units in The Gambia and Uganda, LSHTM is known for diverse and multidisciplinary research.

In 2019, LSHTM opened the [Centre on Climate Change & Planetary Health](#), led by Professor Alan Dangour. This new Centre is unique in its focus on the human health implications of climate change. It connects researchers from across LSHTM to contribute to, and leverage, their combined academic understanding of planetary health in order to mitigate the global threat of climate change on human health. Research areas include, but are not limited to, the delivery of sustainable and healthy food systems, sustainable and healthy cities, and understanding and controlling the shifting patterns of infectious disease.

Format of the Fellowship

Stanford University and LSHTM have designed a unique Planetary Health Fellowship that will give postdoctoral researchers an opportunity to learn from diverse training programmes and pursue ground-breaking research on planetary health.

In the first year, Fellows will spend time in both Stanford University and LSHTM, interacting with core Faculty, working on research papers, and planning research activities. Fellows will identify research projects and will work with world-class Planetary Health Faculty, from a broad range of disciplines including global health, health systems, epidemiology, health policy, environmental science, environmental policy, disease ecology, and more. Based on the research interests of the Fellow and their mentor(s), Fellows will select a research focus and research site. Stanford University and LSHTM Faculty currently have ongoing research in multiple overseas sites including Bangladesh, The Gambia, India, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Fellows may also select a research site in which they have previously been involved so long as a suitable Faculty mentor can be identified.

Areas of potential research include but are not limited to:

- Food security and the environmental impacts of crop and livestock production;
- Healthy cities, clean air and water, sustainable transport;
- The health implications of extreme weather events;
- The impact of climate change and land use on infectious and vector-borne diseases;
- The impact on health of environmental waste such as micro plastics;
- The link between climate change and non-communicable diseases.

Fellows will be mentored and supported by designated Faculty at both institutions throughout the full two-years of their Fellowship.

Requirements of the Fellowship

Fellows will enjoy substantial time to pursue their research interests and they will be expected to present their research both internally and at international meetings as well as publish their research findings in international peer reviewed journals. Fellows will also have the opportunity to contribute to teaching, for example as teaching assistants or guest lecturers, on relevant courses at Stanford and LSHTM. Fellows will be expected to be active participants in the Fellowship scheme by helping LSHTM and Stanford University shape the future of Planetary Health, advocate for the Fellowship programme,

and contribute internally and externally to relevant meetings and activities. Fellows may also be asked to hold office hours to meet with LSHTM and Stanford students when requested.

Compensation

Fellows will receive a competitive postdoctoral salary, full benefits, and modest travel and fieldwork budgets. To supplement the research funding available, Fellows are invited to transfer existing awarded funding, and Fellows will be encouraged to apply for additional research funding during their Fellowship.

Eligibility Criteria

The Planetary Health Fellowship programme is open to researchers from anywhere in the world who are within three years (full time) of successfully completing their doctoral degree. Demonstrated interest and prior research output in planetary health, global health, or the intersection of health and environmental science is a pre-requisite. Instruction and support will be provided in English and high-level proficiency in the English language is a requirement of the Fellowship.

Two-Stage Application Process

The application process will be managed through an online portal and will have two stages.

Stage 1 Interested applicants are invited to submit a CV and a personal statement (maximum 1 page) outlining reasons for applying and primary research interests.

Applications at Stage 1 will be screened by a committee at Stanford and LSHTM and a shortlist of applicants will be invited to submit full applications in Stage 2.

Stage 2 Shortlisted applicants must submit:

- A statement outlining a profile of research to-date, career goals and how this Fellowship will support career progression (maximum 1 page)
- An outline of a proposed research project to be conducted during the Fellowship (maximum 2 pages)
- Two letters of recommendation preferably from current or previous academic supervisors

To apply, please visit: <https://planetaryhealthfellowship.slideroom.com/#/Login>

Timeline

The Stage 1 application deadline is July 15, 2020. Stage 1 applicants will be notified if they are invited to proceed to Stage 2, with applications by October 1, 2020. Stage 2 applications will be short-listed by an interdisciplinary search committee drawn from Stanford and LSHTM and shortlisted candidates will be invited to a “virtual” interview in November. Fellowship offers will be made to successful candidates by December 1, 2020. The Fellowship start-date will be flexible, ideally early 2021.