

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE Full-Time

Applications are invited for the position of Research Associate in the project 'Biomedical and Health Experimentation in South Asia: Critical Perspectives on collaboration, governance and competition', which is part of a research grant awarded by the Economic and Social Research Council/DfID to the University of Edinburgh (UoE) for the project.

The main aims of this research are to understand the relationships that link experimental scientific enquiry in the field of medicine and public health, the pharmaceutical industry, and developmental programmes, and to assess the developmental impact of these activities in South Asia. These activities not only have direct economic benefits and costs, but can also expose patients and other populations who might become part of these experiments to increased vulnerabilities and exploitation. By focusing on the brokering of clinical trials research and public health research activities in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, the research will map the range and extent of such scientific enquiry. Through detailed case studies of particular experimental projects in these three countries the project will chart the extent of the relationships and networks (both national and transnational) involved in these activities, and analyse these through ethical, socio-anthropological, political and economic frames.

This is led by a research group at the UoE and University of Durham in the UK with Social Science Baha as the institutional partner in Nepal. Members of the research team belong to the Centre for South Asian Studies at the University of Edinburgh, and the Department of Anthropology, University of Durham. The research team in Edinburgh include Prof Roger Jeffery and Dr Ian Harper, who were co-investigators on the 'Tracing Pharmaceuticals' project. The research team also includes Dr Jeevan Sharma (Tufts University), who has been working in a research programme entitled 'Aid, Conflict and Social Transformation in Nepal' since 2007. The research team in Durham include Prof Robert Simpson and Dr Salla Sariola.

The position

The successful applicant will be based at the Social Science Baha, Battisputali, Kathmandu. The post will commence as soon as possible after 1 September 2010, and will last no later than 31 August 2012.

S/he will conduct ethnographic research, supplemented with focussed interviews, into the running of clinical and public health trials in Nepal (mainly in Kathmandu). S/he will carry out fieldwork and basic qualitative data collection, transcriptions of interviews, data management through to contributing to analysis and writing up.

S/he will have a master's degree in a social science discipline and be experienced in research and writing, with sound knowledge of research methods. S/he will have some awareness of research activities in Nepal, including clinical trials, randomised control trials and other public health research in Nepal. Preferably s/he will have had experience working in either the public health and/or the social research sectors in Nepal, and have an understanding of public policy. S/he must be fluent in both spoken and written English and Nepali.

S/he will initiate research and work with other members of the research group as well as with collaborators outside of Nepal. The post will suit those looking to develop a research career in Nepal in the arena of health and/or public policy.

Duties and responsibilities

A significant amount of time for this research will be spent in the collection and management of research data. It may need some travel (up to 10 per cent) outside of Kathmandu.

The successful candidate will further

- Work closely in coordination with Dr Ian Harper and Dr Jeevan Sharma in developing and conducting all aspects of the research;
- Help to specify the research for Nepal, in interaction with the team from Edinburgh, Durham and other South Asian partners in India and Sri Lanka;
- Conduct ethnographic fieldwork on the brokering of clinical trials research and public health research activities (by Contract Research Organisations [CROs], Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs], and research collaborations of various kinds) in Nepal and map the range and extent of such scientific enquiry'
- Partake of qualitative research and data collection relating to clinical trials, randomised control trials and other public health experiments in Nepal. This will involve undertaking ethnographic and interview-based research and data collection with a range of participants involved in these processes, including, but not limited to: government officials; researchers involved in public health trials, clinical trials and other health related experiments; representatives of international organisations; representatives of public health research organisations; representatives of hospitals/nursing homes/labs involved in clinical or public health trials; representatives of civil society, etc;
- Record, transcribe (and where necessary translate) analyse and write up the results of the studies, in consultation with other members of the research team;
- Prepare and present findings of research activity to colleagues for review purposes;
- Conduct comprehensive literature searches, including research literature, technical reports, and internal documents, as well as journal and media writings (in both Nepali and English) in Nepal;
- Assist in the translation of taped transcripts and key documents – from Nepali to English, and vice versa – including academic/policy papers produced;
- Collect and assist in analysing legal and policy documents relating to public health and clinical trials and review the laws as pertaining to Nepal;
- Contribute to the drafting and submitting of papers to appropriate peer reviewed journals;
- Participate, as necessary, in workshops both in India and Edinburgh;

- Work with and assist in the coordination of visits of any other members of the research team on visits to Nepal; and
- Adapt, if necessary, to other dimensions of the research not specified above as the project progresses.

As duties and responsibilities change, the job description will be reviewed and may be amended in consultation with the post-holder. The Research Associate will be expected to develop excellent working relations with other members of SSB, and other collaborators outside of the organisation, both in Nepal, and in India and the UK.

Person specification

Knowledge Essential

- A master's degree in any social science discipline
- Experience in a relevant research field such as social science or health-related research in relation to public policy, research governance and ethics
- Advanced computer skills

Desirable

- A good knowledge of ethics and governance of public health research in Nepal and South Asia, or the ability to gain such a knowledge
- A good working knowledge of operations and functions of clinical trials, randomised control trials and/or other public health experiments in the context of Nepal
- Awareness of current issues in health services research
- Awareness of current debates about research governance and ethics in relation to globalisation
- Practical experience of working in fields such as randomised control trials, clinical trials or other public health experiments

Skills Essential

- Experience of writing in the media and/or for an academic audience in both English and Nepali
- An understanding of qualitative research methods with excellent skills in qualitative interviewing, management of qualitative data and qualitative data analysis

Aptitudes Essential

- Excellent written and oral communication in both English and Nepali
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to form good working relationships with a wide range of people

Desirable

- Ability to work on own initiative
- Ability to work flexibly
- Ability to prioritise and deliver outputs to an agreed timetable

To apply, please submit:

- i. A one-page application describing your suitability for the position;
- ii. A CV not exceeding two pages, with your contact telephone number;
- iii. Names and addresses of two referees; and
- iv. A 500-word essay on 'Ethics in medical research'

Send your application by email to: <mailto:info@soscbaha.org>info@soscbaha.org

Application deadline: 8 September 2010 (5 pm)

Interview date: 16/17 September 2010

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for the interview.

The Social Science Baha was set up in January 2002 to foster and facilitate the development of the study of the social sciences in Nepal.

<http://www.soscbaha.org/>