**Project Title:** Personality and health: Conscientiousness, achievement motivation and Type A / D personality.

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**Level:** PhD

**Background to the project:** A wide range of research has looked at the impact of personality traits and health, much of it longitudinal and involving large samples (Deary et al, 2010). Recently the strongest contender in predicting long term health has been the Big 5 dimension of conscientiousness (Deary et al. 2010; Kern, & Friedman, 2008; O’Connor et al, 2009). One of the remaining questions concerns the mechanism whereby personality has its effect, one possibility being through health behaviours (Bogg & Roberts, 2004). A recent review presents a 3-factor model and argues that socio-cognitive processes provide a fruitful direction for research (Ferguson, 2013). Conscientiousness has been linked with achievement motivation in terms of work performance and career success, and both are predictive of longevity (Kern et al, 2009; Richardson & Abraham, 2009). Another aspect of personality linked with health is the Type A-B construct with Type A behaviour well established as predictive of coronary heart disease (Pettigrew et al, 2012). There is an argument that aspects of Type A linked to motivation have positive effects on both performance and health. There is also a case to argue that achievement motivation, particularly in terms of McClelland’s construct of pursuit of excellence is a sub dimension of conscientiousness. More recently the construct of Type D personality has emerged in the health literature and is implicated in both physical and mental health problems (Lussier, & Loas, 2015; Mochal et al, 2011; Mols, & Denollet, 2009; 2010; Sher, 2005; van Dooren et al, 2016; Wu, & Moser, 2014). Type D is defined by the combination of two personality traits; negative affectivity and social inhibition (Denollet, 2005) and is generally negatively correlated with conscientiousness (Ferguson, 2013).

Given these established links it appears a potential area for exploration is the relationship between conscientiousness, achievement motivations, Type A / Type D, and health.

**Methods to be used:** The approach to be used involves analysis of existing datasets and following up an existing NI sample using survey methods.

**Objectives of the research:** The aim is to explore the relationship between conscientiousness, achievement motivations, Type A behaviour, Type D personality, and health in a longitudinal analysis based on existing datasets.

**Skills required of applicant:** The applicant should have a first or upper second class honours degree in psychology with the Graduate Basis for Chartership. Experience of using survey methods in the field of occupational health would be desirable. Enthusiasm and self-determination.
References:


Deary, I. J., Weiss, A., & Batty, G. D. (2010). Intelligence and personality as predictors of illness and death: How researchers in differential psychology and chronic disease epidemiology are collaborating to understand and address health inequalities. Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 11, 53-79.


Ferguson, E. (2013) Personality is of central concern to understand health: towards a theoretical model for health psychology, Health Psychology Review, 7:sup1, S32-S70, DOI: 10.1080/17437199.2010.547985


