



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

**SCHOOL OF
NURSING AND
MIDWIFERY**

Funded PhD Opportunity in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Queen's University Belfast 2022-23

The School of Nursing and Midwifery, Queen's University Belfast (QUB) is pleased to announce an opportunity to apply for a fully funded 3-year PhD Studentship. This is a unique opportunity to undertake a missed methods PhD focusing on pregnancy and longer-term outcomes of women with cardiovascular disease. This PhD study is aligned to the strategic direction of maternity services in Northern Ireland (NI) and will seek to provide novel evidence in an area of emerging interest.

Title: Cardiovascular Outcomes During and After Pregnancy in Women with Heart Disease

The full-time studentship is funded by the Northern Ireland Department for the Economy (DfE). Funded studentships may cover maintenance and fees for a maximum of three years, depending on residency status. For further details about eligibility criteria (including academic, citizenship and residency criteria) please click on the DfE Research Eligibility Guidance Notes: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/department-economy-studentships>.

Essential Criteria

- Applicants must have at least a 2.1 BSc (Hons) degree (or equivalent) in Midwifery, Nursing or a relevant subject area.

Desirable Criteria

- Applicant is currently registered on the live Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Register (or eligible to attain NMC registration)
- Completed MSc qualification in a relevant subject area
- Currently registered on a MSc programme in a relevant subject area

The closing date for applications is **1st March 2022**

Interviews are anticipated to take place online on 25th March 2022.

Anticipated Starting date of PhD: **Oct 2022**

How to Apply: Apply using our online Postgraduate Applications Portal go.qub.ac.uk/pgapply and follow the step-by-step instructions on [how to apply](#). When prompted, applicants should supply a cover letter (max 2 pages long) outlining their suitability for the project, rather than a proposal document.

The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity. Prospective students with a disability or long term condition are encouraged to disclose as early as possible in the application and selection process by contacting admissions@qub.ac.uk. Upon disclosure the University will ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments and additional supports can be put in place for applicants. Reasonable

adjustments and additional supports will be determined on an individual basis, in line with the course entry requirements to ensure selection standards are maintained.



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PhD Project Title: Identification and Management of cardiovascular risk factors during and after pregnancy

Supervision Team:

Professor Donna Fitzsimons, Professor of Nursing/Head of School, School of Nursing and Midwifery, QUB,

Dr Fionnuala Mone, Academic Clinical Lecturer Maternal Fetal Medicine Centre for Public Health, QUB and Honorary Consultant Maternal Fetal Medicine RJMS, BHSC

Dr Jenny McNeill, Reader (Midwifery), School of Nursing and Midwifery, QUB.

About the Project: There is significant potential for women with cardiac risk factors or disease during pregnancy to experience future adverse cardiovascular events. Cardiac disease may be related to pregnancy as a direct or indirect cause and contributes to maternal morbidity and mortality. Emerging evidence has highlighted the potential risk of pregnancy-related adverse events occurring later in life, however data are limited. In addition, the increasing number of women with congenital heart disease experiencing pregnancy has highlighted the importance of cardiovascular risk identification and management during and after pregnancy. Thus, there is a need to better understand the relationship between cardiovascular risk factors identified during pregnancy and future health outcomes, as well as to explore women's experience of and preferences for cardiovascular risk management during and after pregnancy.

Aim: This project will aim to investigate the relationship between cardiovascular risk factors identified during pregnancy and future cardiovascular outcomes and explore women's experience of and preferences for cardiovascular risk management during and after pregnancy.

Method: The study will take a mixed methods approach to address this aim and firstly, identify a cohort of women with cardiac disease and follow up pregnancy outcome and long-term maternal cardiovascular outcomes over a 20+ year period using data capture from routine electronic systems used within maternity services such as the Northern Ireland Maternity Information System (NIMATS). It is anticipated the study will utilise a matched cohort design to compare outcomes for women with and without heart disease. Subsequently the study will identify a contemporary sample of pregnant women with cardiovascular risk factors or disease and use interviews to explore their experience of cardiovascular risk identification and management, articulating their preferences for future cardiovascular disease prevention strategies.

Results & Impact: The findings of this study will draw much needed attention to maternal cardiovascular risk in Northern Ireland. This will help to inform the development of a more cohesive prevention strategy underpinned by analysis of population level data integrated with the perspectives of women impacted by cardiovascular risk or disease.

References

Hauspurg A, Ying W, Hubel CA et al 2018 Adverse pregnancy outcomes and future maternal cardiovascular disease. *Clin Cardiology* 41;2, 239-246

Siu SC, Lee DS, Rashid M et al 2021 Long-term cardiovascular outcomes after pregnancy in women with heart disease. *JAMA* 10;11, doi.org/10.1161/JAHA.120.020548

Wang MC, Freaney PM, Perak AM et al 2021 Association of pre-pregnancy cardiovascular risk factor burden with adverse maternal and offspring outcomes. Eur Jour Prevent Cardiology doi:10.1093/eurjpc/zwab121

For further information please contact Dr Jenny McNeill, School of Nursing & Midwifery, QUB by email: j.mcneill@qub.ac.uk
