



Interdem Academy Fellowships 2014

Final report on research exchange – Antonio García

My name is Antonio García, and I have been supported by an INTERDEM Academy research fellowship for an exchange programme between University of Salamanca, in Spain, and UCL in the U.K. I was based in the Division of Psychiatry of UCL, a world-leading interdisciplinary centre for research.

I joined PRIDE, where Dr. Emese Csipke took care of all the details to make me feel a part of the team. PRIDE is a five-year project which seeks to promote independence in people living with dementia. With them, I led a literature review on Computer Based Cognitive Interventions for people with dementia. The review will be useful for the design of PRIDE Work Package 3, and is linked to my PhD programme.

During my stay, I was trained in Cognitive Stimulation Therapy and Individual Stimulation Therapy, treatments developed by Professor Orrell's team in UCL, and I had the opportunity to share and pilot GRADIOR, a Computer Based Cognitive Intervention Program, and the English version of an emotion recognition test, both developed by INTRAS and the University of Salamanca.

A natural outcome of that knowledge exchange is the commitment to improve our initiatives of psychosocial interventions in dementia, combining the strengths of both research teams; as our team in Zamora, led by Professor Franco, has expertise in ICT, we are now seeking to help in the adaptation of paper and pencil programmes for a Tablet interface. On the other hand, the extensive experience of Professor Orrell's team in the validation of psychosocial interventions will be crucial for the design of a large randomized controlled trial of our computer-based cognitive rehabilitation programme.

I also had the opportunity to visit memory clinics in London and attended different courses and conferences that helped me widen my scope of view in the field of

dementia. Alzheimer Europe's conference in Glasgow was particularly enriching, as it made it possible for me to meet many INTERDEM members and participate in the Academy Masterclass. I also had the opportunity to visit Professor Downs' Dementia Centre in the University of Bradford, where we settled the bases for future collaborations.

Now, already back in Spain, I am working in transmitting what I have learned during my research stay to my colleagues in my University Hospital. I am scheduled to give three seminars about person-centred care and cognitive stimulation in dementia to the Departments of Psychiatry, Neurology and Rehabilitation, and I have been invited to teach a workshop about cognitive interventions in dementia in the Second International Conference on Mental Health Nursing, next May in Burgos. I am also collaborating with a European project to foster young researchers careers, where I am applying the expertise acquired during my research stay.

In the near future, I intend to finish my Doctorate in Clinical Psychology in May 2015. I will continue to work on my thesis on cognitive rehabilitation in dementia and the validation of the scale for affect recognition in older adults, as part of the European PhD programme of University of Salamanca. After my experience with the INTERDEM Academy, I have a wider perspective of the European academic networks in the field of dementia research, and I have acquired a deeper understanding of the importance of person-centred care and personhood in this area. I am looking forward to continue working for the wellbeing of people with dementia and their carers. I would like to thank the INTERDEM Academy, the UCL team, and my supervisors at the University of Salamanca for their support in this enriching experience.