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**MENTORDEM programme**

**Goals**

In this mentor-programme from INTERDEM and INTERDEM Academy, we provide junior researchers of the INTERDEM Academy with a chance to reflect with a mentor about their careers, about how to strategically achieve their goals, or any advices that they may want to have regarding their work/personal career.

The general purpose is not to discuss content matters, so e.g. not to ask ‘what should I do with the analyses for this particular paper’, but to talk about things that are pertaining more broadly about their careers (e.g., keeping an appropriate work life balance).

We give a couple of examples below, which may or may not apply to everyone, it’s just to give a first (not exhaustive) idea of the purpose of the mentor program:

* I’m close to ending my PhD and I’m not sure if I want to go for a postdoc and stay in academia or do something else?
* I want to make an international career, how to best approach this. Which choices should I make during my PhD to enable this?
* I’m struggling with a work-personal life balance, what can I do to improve this?
* I’m mostly passionate about fundamental/applied research, which kind of grants should I go for?
* I want to get funding, but I’m not sure if my topic will appeal to reviewers. Can I pitch it to you (5’ elevator pitch) and can you give me suggestions for improvement?
* I’m working on several topics but I haven’t found my passion yet/am working on too many things at a time. How do I get a clearer focus?
* I like to become an expert in x, my skills are currently this, what should I work on in my career development to get there?

This is an activity from INTERDEM and INTERDEM Academy, connecting more seniors researchers with juniors to support them in their career. Note, this is different than learning more about the specifics of someone’s own institute.

**Mentor-programme pilot:**

The pilot ran from Mentor April - September 2023. Three emeritus professors and three INTERDEM Academy members participated, forming together 3 dyads of mentor-mentee. The mentees were two (advanced) post docs and a PhD student finalizing their PhD. The mentors were three INTERDEM members with a long, outstanding career within psychosocial dementia research. The positives and lessons learned were gathered, and from that MENTORDEM was built.

* From both perspectives, there is no need to be perfectly matched to each other. In fact, both groups said it would be better to match mentor-mentees from different countries/universities/fields of research to reduce the chance of experiencing competitive feelings. Being matched to someone external was better for career-related questions.
* It was suggested to provide a short checklist to be discussed during the first meeting, to provide structure and make sure both mentor and mentee will have the same expectations about anticipated meetings and content.
* In a field in which circumstances can change over time, it was suggested to have different types of mentors available, like a more advanced post-doc, or a senior/emeritus professor.

Positives from the pilot were that mentees found the access to and expertise of the mentors to be very useful. The pilot programme helped them get a clearer view of the long-term plans and current steps they could take. The mentors also found this pilot programme to be worthwhile, as it was interesting to be a mentor and hear their stories, and the mentor also got something useful out of this by ‘giving back’ to the next generation.

Thus, the minimal directions provided in pilot were adequate, and the international perspective brought added value.

**Procedure MENTORDEM Programme**

As a first step, we are gathering a list of potential mentors. Mentors will be asked to provide some information on their previous and current work experience and their area of expertise. When we have gathered a list of potential mentors, the call for mentees will open (around the end of January). Academy members who are looking for a mentor, can then apply to be matched to a mentor.

C**all for mentors.**

Would you like to become a mentor to share your experience, then feel free to sign up as a mentor via this registration link: <https://redcap.link/MENTORDEM>. Note, next to INTERDEM members, current Academy members are welcome to sign up as a mentor as well, providing you finished your PhD for some years and have some experience in the field of psychosocial dementia research.

*\*Privacy: Note, your profile will be shared with the Executive center of INTERDEM Academy and potential mentees who have signed up for the MENTORDEM program.*

**What’s next?**

In Q1 of 2024, the call for mentees will open. After that, you can expect an email from us to connect mentor and mentee, and the suggestion to plan a first online meeting (initiative with mentee), in Q1 of 2024. Next it is up to the two of you to continue to plan the mentor meetings. We advise to schedule 2-3 appointments for the period of one year (12-months), but it is up to you to decide about exact frequency and further continuation, based on needs. **Importantly**, everything you talk about will be confidential.

Please make sure to discuss during the first meeting:

* Goals and expectations
* Frequency of meetings
* Duration of mentorship

We are happy to hear any feedback in the upcoming months or help with any questions that may rise. After one year, we will contact you to fill out a short online evaluation questionnaire on your experiences.