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Dr. Kelly Suschinsky

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By Kelly Suschinsky and Eric Brousseau
Photo by Eric Brousseau

Psychology post-doctoral fellow Kelly Suschinsky has received a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Fellowship Award. These highly competitive fellowships are awarded to support post-doctoral fellows and their research. Kelly was notified of the award in May. Funding will begin immediately and run for up to three years.

Kelly’s main program of research focuses on studying gender differences and similarities in sexual response patterns. Kelly feels that although extensive research has been conducted on men’s sexual preferences and responses, patterns of women’s sexual response and sexual functioning remain poorly understood.

“Sexuality is an integral aspect of human nature”, Kelly explains. “Despite its overwhelming importance, little research has focused on sexuality, and in particular, on women's sexuality, although I’m happy to say that this is changing. With my research on the sexual motivations of women, particularly those with sexual difficulties, I hope to inform the development of new treatments in order to best assist those individuals seeking to improve their sexual lives. Because sexual arousal and desire difficulties can affect up to one-third of women, this CIHR award will allow me to conduct research that will significantly improve the lives of many women around the world. It is incredibly rewarding to be able to conduct research that can contribute to the well-being of women and their partners.”

Working with her primary collaborator and post-doctoral supervisor Dr. Meredith Chivers in the Sexuality and Gender Laboratory, Kelly will launch her new study this summer. The study will involve laboratory assessments of sexual response, as well as online survey entries. Women will be recruited from Queen’s
University and the broader Kingston community.

Kelly also holds a SSHRC Insight Development Grant with Dr. Chivers, which is aimed at understanding the social aspects of sexual response in women and men. They hope to complete data collection by the end of summer 2014, with the goal of presenting these results at conferences and publishing in 2015.

“My future plans involve pursuing an academic career where I am able to continue to investigate sexuality, as well as teach”, Kelly says. “I have the privilege of studying and teaching about a topic that is relevant in some way to everyone. Because sexuality can be such an important component of people’s lives, it is crucial to better understand various aspects of it, including basic information such as the sexual response.”

For more information about becoming a participant, please contact the Sexuality and Gender Lab at sagelab@queensu.ca.