

PhD Studentship:

Investigating the relationship of cardiovascular health, serum biomarkers and vitamin D levels in the Asian-Pacific great ape population

Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences, City University of Hong Kong

Project Description:

The Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences (JCC, <https://www.cityu.edu.hk/jcc/>) is building a team of internationally renowned researchers who are actively engaged in advancing animal health and welfare. We aim to make a significant contribution to Hong Kong as a regional hub for One Health and Animal Welfare education, through the provision of high-quality education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

This PhD will explore the cardiovascular health of Asian-Pacific captive great apes in correlation to seasonal serum Vitamin D levels and disease-associated serum biomarkers for early ante mortem detection of potential life-threatening cardiovascular diseases. Hearts will be extensively phenotyped, matched with Vitamin D levels and cardiac biomarkers by using antibody based ELISAs.

The postgraduate student will be based in Hong Kong and join a vibrant research team at JCC but also become part of the established European Ape Project and join a diverse and international team investigating cardiovascular health of captive great apes. Additionally, the project will support current efforts of the European Ape Heart project to establish the 'normal' reference interval of seasonal serum Vitamin D levels and serum biomarkers in healthy and not healthy apes in their natural habitat in Africa.

Attributes

The project would suit someone with a background in animal sciences, zoology, medicine or veterinary medicine, although those from other relevant disciplines with strong prior performance will be considered. The student will join a vibrant, diverse and world class interdisciplinary research team (*Ape Heart project* <https://twycrosszoo.org/conservation/research-at-twycross-zoo/ape-heart-project/>), including cardiologists, zoo vets, bioscience and medical scientists, and pathologists.

The student for this project should be motivated, organised and driven. They will need very good communication skills to develop and maintain excellent relations with external partners.

Requirements

It is expected that the student will meet City University of Hong Kong standard requirements to be considered for a PhD studentship (<https://www.cityu.edu.hk/pg/>). Applicants must have a Bachelor degree, and a relevant Master degree is also preferred. The researcher will be based at City University of Hong Kong. International students are required to provide evidence of their proficiency in English language skills. It would be advantageous if the applicant is able to speak Cantonese and/or Mandarin; however, this is not essential.

Contact and deadline:

Interested applicants are invited to submit a cover letter outlining their interests and some potential research ideas, as well as a short, 2-page CV via email to Prof Kerstin Baiker at kbaiker@cityu.edu.hk on or before 15th of May, 2022. CVs must include degree grade details and GPA scores, because they are a requirement of the graduate school admissions system of City University of Hong Kong. Interview date: 31st of May, 2022. Starting date of the project: January 2023

<https://www.cityu.edu.hk/vcs/staff/prof-kerstin-baiker.htm>

