



Project Acronym: **GAIN**

Project Full Title: **Georgian Artificial Intelligence Networking and Twinning Initiative**

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HORIZON EUROPE - WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-03 (Twinning)

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Executive Summary

This document describes the process of appointment of an independent Ethics Advisor (EA) recommended for the protection of the participants involved in the process of collection of medical data, relevant to the project GAIN.

Keywords: Ethics advisor, ethics protocol, medical data, psychiatry.

Document History			
Version	Date	Contributors	Description
1	25/10/2022	George Giorgobiani - MICM	Appointment of independent ethics advisor
2	29/10/2022	George Giorgobiani - MICM	Appointment of independent ethics advisor
3	30/10/20	George Giorgobiani – MICM; Alexandra Konig, Francois Bremond – INRIA; Andrey Girenko, Philipp Mueller - DFKI	Appointment of independent ethics advisor
4 (Final)	31/10/20	George Giorgobiani – MICM; Alexandra Konig, Francois Bremond – INRIA;	Appointment of independent ethics advisor

		Andrey Girenko, Philipp Mueller - DFKI	
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Introduction

According to the EC document “A comprehensive strategy on how to minimize research misconduct and the potential misuse of research in EU funded research” (see [1]) assert that ethics is a “key oversight mechanism” to ensure that EU funded research is not misused.

Horizon Europe Project GAIN proposes to extend the scope of the MePheSTO project (see [2]). This includes digital phenotyping of various mental and mood disorders pathological evidence such as executive dysfunction or inadequate emotional distress. Video analytics section refers to measuring activities of daily living (ADL), emotions and lifestyle. As the medical data will be collected in Georgia, appointment of an independent Ethics Advisor (EA) was recommended by the Project Officer during the Grant Preparation process in order to ensure that the participants are protected.

Georgian partners of the project from MICM established contacts with the professional medical organization, the Society of Georgian Psychiatrists. They were invited to the project meeting (a second-day event of the Kick-Off meeting, held on 18 – 19 October 2022, in Tbilisi, Georgia, at MICM). Doctor of Medicine from Tbilisi State Medical University, the Head of the Society of Georgian Psychiatrists, and clinical director at the Central Psychiatric Hospital, Professor Eka Chkonia, presented her current research and collaboration results. The title of the presentation is “The electrophysiology and genetics of visual backward masking”.



**The electrophysiology and genetics
of visual backward masking**



Micah Murray
(Kanizsa figures)



Olaf Blanke
(Full body illusion)



THE ROYAL SOCIETY



Research is carried out at “Tbilisi State Medical University” in cooperation with Swiss scientists from “Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne”. It deals with the Endophenotype concept in psychiatry, namely in the study of schizophrenia. According to the research, conclusions

and take home messages are as follows:

- Schizophrenia patients have difficulties enhancing faint sensory information (i.e., target enhancement deficit) reflected by the GFP.
- The endophenotype is the adaptive behavioural performance, not the neural correlates.
- The deficits are found along the entire continuum.
- Deficits are shared to some extent between disorders, reflecting the complex genetics of psychiatric diseases.

Professor Eka Chkonia expressed her interest in the research topics of the project GAIN and suggested supporting it in every way. She introduced to the project participants a young researcher, doctoral student, and staff of the Central Psychiatric Hospital in Tbilisi, who will be permanently involved in the project activities related to collecting and analysing medical data.



Professor Eka Chkonia was suggested to be the EA of the project GAIN. The suggestion was accepted.

Future collaboration details were discussed and agreed. It was stressed that research, planned by the project GAIN, is very important, especially for the Georgian researchers, who will adopt new technologies of Artificial Intelligence and their application in medical sciences. Non the less important is the new, for the Georgian psychiatrists, vision how to collect and treat medical data, the opportunity of creation of the Georgian corpus of clinical interactional (speech and video) data (not available not only in Georgia, but in the entire Caucasus region) using the methodology developed in the project “MePheSTO” for the relevant diseases.

Appointment of an independent Ethics Advisor (EA)

1. Discussion about the candidate

The project Steering Board has discussed the relevance of the Candidate, Professor Eka Chkonia, towards the aims and goals of the project. The Candidates CV¹ and other documents revealed the vast experience of the Candidate in research and organization. Since cooperation with Georgian clinical body is established, the Ethical approval of the study protocol will be obtained in due time (within max. 6 months), which makes possible the start of the corpus creation within the GAIN's TRIP (WP 2) planning.

Conclusions

The project Steering Board has appointed Professor Eka Chkonia as an independent Ethics Advisor (EA) of the project GAIN.

References

1. European Commission, “A comprehensive strategy on how to minimize research misconduct and the potential misuse of research in EU funded research”. The report is addressed towards The EU Commission; EU Ethics Screeners, Reviewers and Auditors, and Research project applicants.
2. MePheSTO project website <https://team.inria.fr/semagramme/mephesto/>

¹ See the part of the CV in APPENDIX

APPENDIX

CURRICULUM VITAE

22.10.2022

PERSONAL PARTICULARS:

Full name Eka Chkonia
Gender: Female
Home address 11 Kekelidze St, Tbilisi, Georgia. 0179
E-Mail Address: e.chkonia@tsmu.edu
ekachkonia@gmail.com

Education

University:

1983 - 1989 - Doctor of Medicine from Tbilisi State Medical University
 1999 – Certificate in Adult Psychiatry
 2002 – Ph.D. in Psychiatry
 2015-2016 - International diploma in mental health law (WHO program in Human Rights Law and Policy)

Current position:

1. Head of the Society of Georgian Psychiatrists
2. Professor at Tbilisi State Medical University
3. Program Director in Psychiatry (TSMU USMD program)
4. Clinical director at the Central Psychiatric Hospital (Tbilisi Mental Health Center)
5. Editorial board member, medical journal “The Georgian Psychiatric News”
6. International advisory board member of the Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences Reports (PCN Reports - the official journal of the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology, a peer-reviewed, open-access journal)

Memberships:

1. The World Psychiatric Association Honorary Member
2. Secretary of the Steering Committee of the EPA (European Psychiatric Association) Council of NPAs
3. Member of the EPA Ethics committee
4. Head of the WPA Expert Committee on the Ukrainian mental health crisis
5. 2013 - 2017 - European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP) Ambassador for Georgia

Awards

1. Junior Faculty Development Program Fellowship at Rutgers University (NJ, US) -January 4 - May 20, 2010
2. International collaboration - 2007-2009 – “Investigation of early visual processing in schizophrenia” funded by the Royal Society UK, a research project in collaboration with King’s College London Institute of Psychiatry, UK,

Employment History:

- Since 2011 -Clinical director at Tbilisi Mental Health Centre

- Since 2011– USMD (American MD Program) Program Director in psychiatry at Tbilisi State Medical University
- Since 2010 – Associate Professor in Psychiatry, Tbilisi State Medical University
- 2006-2009 – Assistant Professor in Psychiatry, Tbilisi State Medical University
- 2005 - 2010 – Training coordinator, Expert Centre of Global Initiative on Psychiatry “Mental Health and HIV/AIDS”
- 1997-2006 - Lecturer, Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology, Tbilisi State Medical University
- 1994-1997 Psychiatrist, Central Psychiatric Hospital, (Tbilisi, Georgia)
- 1990-1994 Trainee in psychiatry, Central Psychiatric Hospital, (Tbilisi, Georgia)

Teaching:

Medical students (Tbilisi State Medical University)

1. Coordinator of the courses in Human Development and Neuroscience (TSMU USMD program)
2. Director of the Clerkship in Psychiatry (TSMU USMD program)
3. General and Clinical Psychiatry

Master programs (Ilia State University, SEU)

1. Social Psychiatry
3. Psychopharmacology

Training for health care professionals:

1. 2021-2022 - Suicide Prevention Program for Children and Adolescents
2. 2017-2019 – Suicide Prevention Program for Adolescents
3. 2015-2017 – Treatment of Resistant Depression (CME)
4. 2015 October-December – Psychiatry in General practice
5. 2015 February – March – Tuberculosis and Mental Health (TB/MH)
6. 2014-2015 – Suicide Prevention in Prison
7. 2012-2014 – Psychopharmacology (CME)
8. 2011-2012 – Introduction to Social Psychiatry
9. 2010 – 2011 – „Medical and Social Consequences of Violence“ supported by American Councils for International Education (CME)
10. 2009 – 2010 – Management of Dementia (CME)
11. 2007-2008 - Adherence to the treatment: a multidisciplinary approach (CME)
12. 2005-2006 - HIV and Mental Health – Training for health professionals

Research grants:

1. 2020-2024- NCCR consortium ((National Centres of Competence in Research – Swiss National Research Foundation). "SYNAPSY – Synaptic Bases of Mental Diseases", funded by EPFL (Laboratory of Psychophysics, Brain Mind Institute, Ecole Polytechnique Lausanne, Switzerland)
2. 2019-2021 - Clinical trial MIN Study MIN-101C07 - A Multicentre, Randomized, Double-blind, Parallel-Group, Placebo-Controlled, Monotherapy, 12 Week Study to Evaluate the Efficacy and Safety of 2 Fixed Doses of MIN-101 in Adult Patients with Negative Symptoms of Schizophrenia
3. 2018-2019 - Clinical Trial MIN-117 C03 - A Randomized, Double-Blind, Parallel-Group, Placebo-Controlled Study to Evaluate the Efficacy and Safety

of 2 Fixed Doses (5.0 mg or 2.5 mg) in Adult Patients with Major Depressive Disorder

4. 2018-2020 – EEG patterns of Mental Disorders (Schizophrenia, Bipolar disorder, depression). NCCR consortium ((National Centres of Competence in Research – Swiss National Research Foundation). "SYNAPSY – Synaptic Bases of Mental Diseases"
5. 2014-2018 – Cognitive and Perceptual features of Unipolar Depression. NCCR consortium ((National Centres of Competence in Research – **Swiss National Research Foundation**). "SYNAPSY – Synaptic Bases of Mental Diseases"
6. 2014-2016 – The Neuropsychological Markers of Mental Disorders. Research grant of **Agricultural University of Georgia**
7. October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2014 - NCCR consortium ((National Centres of Competence in Research – **Swiss National Research Foundation**). "SYNAPSY – Synaptic Bases of Mental Diseases"
8. 2012-2014 - Prevention of clinical, social, and cognitive deterioration of patients with first-episode psychoses. Research grant of **Agricultural University of Georgia**
9. September-May 2011 – Effectiveness of psychosocial programs in Georgia. Research grant of **Rutgers University** (New Jersey, USA)
10. October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2012 – “The search for behavioral endophenotypes of schizophrenia?” - supported by the “NCCR SYNAPSY” (National Centres of Competence in Research – **Swiss National Research Foundation**)
11. 2008 - 2010 - “Why is visual information processing prolonged in elderly and schizophrenic patients?” with Collaboration of Laboratory of Vision Physiology, I.Beritashvili Institute of Physiology, Tbilisi, Georgia, General Hospital Bremen-Ost, Centre for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Laboratory of Psychophysics, Brain Mind Institute, Ecole Polytechnique Lausanne, Switzerland. Supported by **Volkswagen Foundation**
12. 2007-2009 – “Investigation of early visual processing in schizophrenia” funded by the **Royal Society UK**, a joint research project in collaboration with King’s College London Institute of Psychiatry, UK,
13. 2007-2009 – “Genetics polymorphisms and early information processing in schizophrenia” funded by **EPFL** (Laboratory of Psychophysics, Brain Mind Institute, Ecole Polytechnique Lausanne, Switzerland)
14. 2005 – 2008 – “Basic aspects of feature integration” in Collaboration with Laboratory of Vision Physiology, I.Beritashvili Institute of Physiology, Tbilisi, Georgia, General Hospital Bremen-Ost, Centre for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Laboratory of Psychophysics, Brain Mind Institute, Ecole Polytechnique Lausanne, Switzerland. Supported by **Volkswagen Foundation**

Projects:

1. 2022-2024 - Inter-clinical partnership BER-LISI: Klinikpartnerschaft mit Tbilisi, Georgien - Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Psychiatric University Hospital Charité at St. Hedwig Hospital part 2 (The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH - GIZ)
2. 2020-2022 - EU COVID 19 solidarity program for the Eastern Partnership.
3. 2020-2021 – COVID 19 and Mental Health -OSGF (Med/23/20-21082)