

# EADC Resident and Research Fellow Section (RRFS)

## Exchange through internship programs

Name and location EADC hosting center

**National and Kapodistrian University of Athens - Aiginitio Hospital**

Link to center's website

[https://eginitio-en.uoa.gr/about\\_us/history/](https://eginitio-en.uoa.gr/about_us/history/)

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Description of the center

The **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** (NKUA), officially founded in 1837, is the oldest University not only in Greece but also in the Balkan peninsula and in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is among the largest Universities in Europe and its Medical School of the NKUA is the only Medical School in Athens, a city of ~3.5 million inhabitants.

The **1st department of Neurology of the Medical School of NKUA is hosted at Aiginitio Hospital** (a University hospital dedicated to Neurology and Psychiatry) with a long tradition in the offering of clinical services, education at the undergraduate and post-graduate level, and research in the field of neurological diseases. The hospital is located very close to the center of Athens. The Cognitive Disorders Clinic (CDC) of the department of Neurology is hosted in spacious and interview/examination rooms and is staffed by neurologists, neuropsychologists, nurses and dieticians. The CDC at Aiginitio hospital is one of the few of its kind in the whole city of Athens; as a result, the patient volume is considerable, ~100 / month.

### **Clinical activities**

- Outpatient CDC: People with normal cognitive function and patients with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) or dementia who visit the CDC are thoroughly examined by neurologists and neuropsychologists, with administration of extensive batteries of neuropsychological tests and other questionnaires and evaluation instruments. The fellow will gain practical experience in many aspects of assessing and managing patients with cognitive disorders through direct patient interaction. Such aspects include neuropsychological test scoring and interpretations, neurological evaluations, diagnostic approach, discussion-revelation of diagnoses with patients and caregivers, risk

assessment of everyday living situations, cognitive pharmacological managements, approach of neuropsychiatric symptoms etc.

- In-patient: Participants with atypical presentation or courses and unclear cognitive neurological diagnoses are admitted in the inpatient department for further evaluation. The fellow will have the opportunity to observe and be involved in the care of hospitalized patients under investigation for more unusual dementias.

### **Research activities**

- Clinical trials: The fellow will have the opportunity to observe and gain experience in all aspects and procedures of high profile international clinical trials in the field of dementia. As an example of currently running trials, EVOKE & EVOKE+ are two phase III trials aiming to evaluate the safety and efficiency of oral Semaglutide in people with early Alzheimer's disease. Our center has randomized 41 participants, who are followed periodically for the following years.
- Observational Clinical Epidemiological studies. The fellow will have the opportunity to gain experience in such clinical epidemiological research. We outline 2 examples of such studies actively ongoing in our center.
  - ALBION study: ALBION is an ongoing, longitudinal study in CD clinic of Aiginitio Hospital. The study aims to address several research questions concerning the preclinical and prodromal stages of AD and explore potential markers for early detection, prediction, and primary prevention of dementia. Briefly, the sample consists of non-demented younger middle-aged ( $\geq 40$  years old) to older adults. They can be either cognitively normal or have at most mild cognitive deficits. Each participant undergoes an extensive, structured assessment, including demographic, medical, social, environmental, clinical, nutritional, neuropsychological determinants and lifestyle activities. In addition, all participants are evaluated every two years after their baseline assessment.
  - HELIAD study: HELIAD (Hellenic Longitudinal Investigation of Aging and Diet) is a population-based, multidisciplinary, collaborative study. The sample consists of community-dwelling older people aged  $\geq 65$  years old, who are selected through random sampling from municipality registries. After the baseline evaluation, all participants are re-evaluated approximately every 3 years, performing some of the baseline assessments. To date, two evaluations per person have been completed (the baseline and the 1st follow-up), whereas the 3rd (2nd follow-up) is currently in progress. Detailed information regarding medical and family history, lifestyle and demographics is collected by certified neurologists, neuropsychologists and registered dietitians. Also, all participants receive a thorough neurological and neuropsychological evaluation through structured questionnaires, psychometric tests, and clinical evaluations.

The fellow will have the opportunity to gain experience on the specific evaluation and assessments performed, human participant interaction, building and maintaining organizational dimensions of clinical research and in general multiple aspects of such

studies. In addition, the fellow will have the opportunity to actively participate in lab meetings and research updates that take place as part of ongoing research studies.

Our group has particular experience and expertise in clinical research investigating nutrition and other lifestyle aspects in relation to fluid and imaging biomarkers, wearables and cognitive trajectories. Multiple lab meetings are happening, each focused on specific topics. For example, there are separate lab meetings in relation to nutritional data approaches, neuroimaging data analyses, Polygenic Risk Scores projects, Electroencephalogram analyses, Actigraphy data analyses, biomarker, microbiome and other omics related topics are performed. The fellow will have the opportunity to attend these meetings, be informed in-depth on the topics discussed and, if interested, even start working on a specific project associated with the research questions of the studies.

### Internship program

A fellow joining our center will have the opportunity to explore different aspects of dementia and Alzheimer's disease (AD), ranging from clinical, hands-on care of patients to various fields and aspects of related clinical research.

Time period of hosting: our center accepts fellows all-year long, with the exception of the following time periods:

- Mid-July-August,
- Christmas holidays
- Greek Orthodox Easter holidays.

Optimal duration of an internship: 4 weeks, definitely not less than 2 weeks