



EPA GAINING EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME REPORT

On the observership at the “*King’s College London, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN)*”

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REPORT:

My observership at King’s College London (IoPPN) was research and academic focused, and it ended up being one of those experiences that can genuinely shift your career direction. Before coming, I wanted to use the time properly, understand how a strong academic environment actually runs, and work on real outputs rather than simply “observing”. What I did not fully expect was how much structure and supervision can change what you are able to do as an early-career clinician who is still very actively working in the clinic.

The backbone of the placement was structured supervision with Dr Mariana Pinto da Costa. We had regular meetings that were not casual catch ups, but properly planned working sessions. When you are early-career and clinically busy, research can easily become vague or aspirational unless someone helps you turn it into concrete steps, deadlines, and decisions. This placement made that point very clear to me, and I left with a much sharper understanding of how I need to work if I want to build an academic track alongside clinical practice.

A major part of my work at King’s involved two projects that produced tangible outputs. The first was our systematic review on AI and psychiatric education. I did not just read about systematic reviews; I learned the process by doing it. I attended training sessions and workshops on systematic review methodology and then applied that learning directly to our project. We framed the research question, refined the scope, worked through the search strategy and inclusion criteria, and moved the work forward towards synthesis and writing. The review progressed substantially during the placement and is now being finalised and written up. Alongside this, I worked on the EFPT gender representation analysis. This project reached completion during the observership, and the manuscript is currently in the submission process. Working on these two outputs in parallel, one moving into the final writing stage and the other reaching submission, was valuable for me both professionally and personally. It showed me what becomes possible when supervision is structured and academic time is used deliberately.

I also had a first opportunity to try co-supervision in practice. With oversight, I supported two medical students working on research tasks. It was a small but meaningful shift. I was still a trainee learning, but at the same time I was practising how to guide someone else’s work, give feedback, and keep tasks realistic and structured. That experience made me reflect on the kind



of supervisor I want to become, and how supervision is not only about expertise but also about consistency, clarity, and structure.

One of the intellectually richest aspects of being at King's was the density of academic life. I joined a wide range of events across different areas of psychiatry, sometimes as a listener, sometimes contributing more actively when it felt appropriate. Being able to attend multiple parallel academic activities, and then return to project work, created a very different rhythm from my usual clinical routine. I also joined activities with the wider research group, which gave me a real sense of how large, multinational teams collaborate in practice. I could see how meetings work, how feedback is exchanged, how writing is coordinated, and how people protect time for research.

The international dimension of the placement also stood out. During my stay I shared part of the experience with Harry, an early-career psychiatrist from Australia who was in London through a similar programme connected to the WPA. Going through the observership alongside someone coming from a different training system was unexpectedly valuable. We compared how things are done, talked a lot about career planning, and shared the intensity of trying to absorb as much as possible in a limited time. It also felt genuinely positive that two associations, EPA and WPA, could intersect in the same environment in a natural way.

London itself added something important. It is not just a nice city. It has a particular academic and cultural energy that makes you feel there is always more happening, more to learn, more to connect with. That atmosphere contributed to the sense that I was not simply visiting, but temporarily living inside an academic ecosystem.

I did not encounter major problems at the host institution itself. The main challenges were logistical and administrative around the placement. Preparing everything alongside my duties at my home institution, handling travel arrangements, and managing the necessary bureaucratic steps required time and mental energy, and the financial side of staying in London was also a consideration. On a more personal level, starting an intensive academic placement while still carrying an active clinical workload can feel mentally demanding at first, mainly because you want the time to count and you do not want to waste any opportunity. However, the clear structure of supervision and the defined project goals helped me stay focused, settle quickly, and use the time efficiently.

Overall, this observership was genuinely guiding for me. It clarified my research direction, strengthened my skills in systematic review methodology and academic writing, and showed me how much becomes possible when supervision is structured and when institutional opportunities are used deliberately. I feel I benefited deeply from the resources and academic environment, I am very grateful to the EPA, to Dr. Mariana Pinto da Costa and to the host institution for enabling this experience.