

The University of Hong Kong  
Department of Psychology

*Departmental Seminar*

***Risk and Resilience of Mood Disorders in Adolescents***

Date: September 12, 2013 (Thursday)  
Time: 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Venue: Room 8.13, 8/F The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU  
Speaker: Dr. Stella Chan  
Chancellor's Fellow in Clinical Psychology  
University of Edinburgh

Adolescence is a developmental stage that sees a sudden increase in the onset of depression and other mood disorders. Further research is needed to investigate the mechanisms underlying risk for mood disorders in this age group. This will ultimately lead to clinical application through the development of effective preventive programmes and / or early intervention. This research seminar will specifically cover four research areas:

First, it will look at a series of behavioural and brain-imaging experiments that investigated how students at risk for depression process emotional information. The key findings suggested that vulnerability to depression is associated with a cognitive bias towards negative information, both on behavioural and neural functioning level.

In light of the above findings, the second part of the seminar will critically examine the effectiveness of 'Cognitive Bias Modification'. This is a computer programme designed to train individuals to interpret ambiguous situations in a positive (or non-negative) way. Our current research seeks to explore whether this could be developed as a preventive tool for vulnerable adolescents.

The third part of the seminar will move slightly away from the Cognitive Theories and look at the role of self-compassion and self-criticism in the mental and social wellbeing of young people.

While the above research mostly focused on young people as individuals, the final part of the seminar will lead us into a discussion of the wider cultural context of emotional processing, risk, resilience, and wellbeing of young people across Britain and Hong Kong.