Mindfulness and Biobehavioral Health Research Group

http://louisville.edu/psychology/sephton/biobehavioral

**Professor:** Sephton. Dr. Sephton’s Research Group is accepting applications for an undergraduate researcher. The student will assist with collection and management of data collected from lung cancer patients for a study of associations between distress, sleep-wake cycles, hormonal rhythms and immune/inflammatory factors.

**Type of position:** Course credit

**Time commitment:** We require a two-semester commitment at 10 hours per week in the context of fulfilling requirements for PSYCH 401 (Research Psychology). The student will be expected to meet weekly with the research team and be available for other meetings, but a portion of the work hours will be flexible.

**Semesters position is available:** Ongoing

**Location of work:** Lutz Hall (in several labs, including our wet lab).

**Requirements:** We seek a highly motivated, detail oriented student who is interested in biobehavioral (e.g., mind-body) cancer and mindfulness research. Successful applicants will have strong academic and practical skills and excellent communication abilities.

**Brief description of project:** The emotional and physical losses imposed by many types of cancer can be devastating, but lung cancer patients also suffer from stigma. As disease advances, physical symptoms such as feelings of breathlessness become more distressing. Lung cancer patients report more anxiety and depression than those with many other cancer types. Distress can lead to disrupted sleep and circadian rhythms, which can impair physiological cancer defenses. Our research group recently demonstrated circadian disruption predicts early mortality in lung cancer. The current study is exploring factors contributing to disrupted rhythms in these patients including distress, sleep-wake cycles, hormonal rhythms and immune/inflammatory factors. All of our participants are invited to participate in a mindfulness meditation-based intervention aimed at reducing distress and increasing lung cancer coping skills. The format includes a support group and the use of iPod audio recordings that provide mindfulness training specific for cancer patients.

**Specific tasks (i.e., what student will do):** We seek assistance with preparing study materials, collecting data from participants, and entering/managing the data.

**How to apply:** To apply, please email a letter of introduction detailing your relevant background and interests, current GPA, and psychology, biology, or related coursework to: sephton@louisville.edu.

**Contact:** Sandra Sephton sephton@louisville.edu.