



Gun Peggy Knudsen, PhD, NIPH Director

Gun Peggy Knudsen is the functioning director of the Norwegian Institute of Public health. She previously served three years as an assistant director and before that as director of the division for health data and digitization. Gun Peggy Knudsen holds a PhD in medical genetics and is a graduate engineer from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. In addition, she has completed the leader course at the Norwegian Ministry of Defence.



Alexandra Havdahl, PhD, PsychGen Centre Director

Alexandra Havdahl is the Director of the PsychGen Centre for Genetic Epidemiology and Mental Health at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. She is a clinical psychologist and did her PhD in neurodevelopmental conditions at the University of Oslo and Cornell University and postdoctoral training in genetic epidemiology at the University of Bristol. She is Principal Investigator of a range of projects aiming to understand the factors influencing neurodevelopment and mental health from prenatal life through the lifespan.



Jean-Baptiste Pingault, Professor, University College London

Jean-Baptiste is a Professor of Developmental Psychopathology and Genetics at the Department of Clinical, Educational and Health Psychology (CEPH), University College London (UCL), as well as a visiting researcher at the Social, Genetic, and Developmental Psychiatry centre, King's College London (KCL). He is currently a MQ Transforming Mental Health Fellow. Prior to his arrival in London with a European Marie Curie Fellowship, he has done research in France, Brazil and Canada.



Ragnhild Brandlistuen, PhD, Scientific Director MoBa

Dr. Ragnhild Brandlistuen is the scientific director of The Mother, Father and Child Cohort Study (MoBa) at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. She is a senior researcher in child development and epidemiology and her research focuses on understanding the impact of early risk and protective factors during the formative childhood and adolescent years for neurodevelopment, cognition, and mental health. She is actively involved in several ongoing research projects using MoBa data and leading the [MoBaYoung, Early educational experiences as a foundation for development and academic success \(MoBaEarlyEd\)](#) project and the [Covid-19 and impact on mental health \(C-Me\)](#) project (Co-PI).



Ragnhild Valen, Leader MoBaGenetics

The last two years Ragnhild Valen has been the director of the department for genetics and bioinformatics at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. Through this position, she is also the leader of MoBa Genetics. Of background she is a biologist with scientific expertise in combining big data and cutting-edge AI technology to understand and predict fish biology. Cross-disciplinary experience with animal nutrition, light and optics, and development; from genes to behaviour - both in science and industry.



Neil Davies, Professor, University College London

I am a Professor of Medical Statistics at the Division of Psychiatry, UCL. I hold a joint appointment with the Department of Statistical Sciences. I gained a BSc in Economics and Econometrics at the University of Bristol (2005) and completed an M.Sc. in Economics (Bristol) in 2006. Under the supervision of Richard Martin, Frank Windmeijer and George Davey Smith, I completed my Ph.D. in Epidemiology (Bristol, 2012). I have held an ESRC Future Research Leaders Fellowship 2014-2018. From 2018-2022 I led a stream of research at the MRC Integrative Epidemiology Unit which used family-based designs to improve causal inference in genetic epidemiology. I joined UCL in 2022 as a Professor of Medical Statistics.



Amanda Hughes, PhD, University of Bristol

Amanda Hughes is a social epidemiologist whose work focuses on body weight and mental health, social inequalities in health, and health-related stigma, using genetic causal inference methods and traditional approaches. She is based at the University of Bristol, completed her PhD at UCL, and has previously worked at ISER, University of Essex.



Eivind Ystrøm, Professor, University of Oslo / PsychGen Centre

Eivind Ystrom is professor of personality psychology and leader of the genetics research group at PROMENTA Research Center. His main research interest is epidemiological studies of intergenerational transmission of risk for mental disorders. This includes extended pedigree and molecular genetic studies on passive genetic transmission and how heritable traits in parents have an effect on children, or "genetic nurture". Cross-disorder effects are rather the rule than the exception in intergenerational transmission of risk. His interests therefore span across common mental disorders, ADHD, normal personality, and substance use. He has conducted a number of pharmacoepidemiological studies on psychotropic drugs and offspring psychological development using a range of counterfactual designs. His research team integrates national health registries and large cohort studies with biobanks to apply designs for separating direct and indirect effects in epidemiological studies of children's mental health and neurodevelopment.



Laurie Hannigan, PhD, Lovisenberg Hospital /NIPH, PsychGen Centre

I am a senior researcher co-leading the Psychiatric Genetic Epidemiology (PaGE) group at Nic Waals Institute, and a researcher in the Centre for Genetic Epidemiology and Mental Health at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. I am interested in using genetic and genomic data to investigate the development and epidemiology of common health problems. In addition to empirical work, I have a strong focus on reproducibility and transparency. Within our research group, I am leading several infrastructural projects to improve the robustness and reproducibility of the handling of both phenotypic and genetic data for team members and collaborators.



Isabelle Ljøsne, PhD, NIPH, PsychGen Centre

Dr. Isabelle Budin Ljøsne is a bioethicist and senior advisor at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. She holds a PhD in research ethics from the University of Oslo. Isabelle's research explores ethical and societal challenges in health research. Her work includes research on consent processes, data sharing, research participant involvement, stakeholder engagement and the feedback of genetic research results to participants. She currently participates in several EU projects and is the national ELSI representative of the biobank infrastructure Biobank Norway.



Guido Biele, PhD, NIPH

I am a research professor in the Department of Child Health and Development at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and a professor (II) in the Department of Psychology at the University of Oslo. In my current research, I mostly use Bayesian statistical modelling to learn from observational data. This includes topics such as risk factors for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), estimation of treatment effects in ADHD, and more recently also some SARS-CoV-2 research. My background is in experimental psychology and cognitive neuroscience, where I use quantitative modelling and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to learn about cognitive and brain processes for decision making in social contexts.



Tracy Odigie, University College London

Tracy is a PhD Candidate at the University College London, based within the CMAP Research Lab led by Prof Jean-Baptiste Pingault. Her PhD focuses on using genetically informed designs to better understand the relationship between bullying victimisation and mental health outcomes in childhood and adolescence.



Leo Frach, University College London

Leo is a PhD Student at University College London, working in the group of Prof Jean-Baptiste Pingault. For his PhD, he investigates intergenerational risk factors for externalising behaviours using genetically informed designs.



Anja Hollowell, Birkbeck, University of London

Anja Hollowell is a PhD student at Birkbeck, University of London, supervised by Professor Angelica Ronald. Her research is focused on the genetics of infant temperament traits from birth to 36 months and looking at how these early traits might relate to later neurodevelopment and mental health.



Pia Jensen, NIPH, PsychGen Centre

I am a PhD candidate in the project "Covid-19 and impact on mental health: a longitudinal, multi-national study (C-Me)". By using data from national health registries and MoBa, my project aims to examine how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the mental health and life satisfaction of Norwegian adults.



Johanne Pettersen, NIPH, PsychGen Centre

I am a PhD candidate in the Covid-19 and impact on mental health: a longitudinal, multi-national study (C-Me). In my project I use large datasets to examine how genetic and environmental factors have contributed to the development of mental health problems and disorders in childhood and adolescence during the pandemic.



Nora Refsum Bakken, University of Oslo

Nora Refsum Bakken, MD-PhD student at the University of Oslo. Doing research on longitudinal trajectories of emotional and behavioral traits in relation to mood and anxiety disorders with researchers from NORMENT and NIPH.



Viktoria Birkenæs, University of Oslo

I am a PhD student at the Norwegian Center for Mental Disorders Research (Norment) with a background in clinical psychology. My science journey began as a research assistant during my undergraduate years, sparking a deep interest in understanding the causes of psychosis.



Anastasia Izotova, Lovisenberg Hospital, PsychGen Centre

Anastasia Izotova (M. Sc. Psychology) has six years of research experience in Medical Psychology in Germany and Norway. She has been volunteering as an online counsellor for children and adolescents with a focus on mental health. In her PhD, she is focusing on childhood and adolescent self-harm.



Robyn Wootton, PhD, University of Bristol / Lovisenberg Hospital, PsychGen Centre

I am a psychiatric genetic epidemiologist, interested in understanding and preventing mental illness. My research is highly interdisciplinary, combining methodologies from behavior genetics, epidemiology and longitudinal modelling. I have worked with data from international cohorts including ALSPAC (UK), TEDS (UK), E-Risk (UK), MoBa (Norway), Dunedin (New Zealand) and Pelotas (Brazil). I am skilled in several epidemiology methodologies including twin modelling, GWAS, polygenic

score analysis, genetic correlations, Mendelian randomisation, genetic nurture analysis and repeated measures multi-level modelling.



Fartein Ask Torvik, PhD, NIPH

Fartein Ask Torvik is a senior at the Centre for fertility and health at the Institute of Public Health and associate professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Oslo. He researches associations between mental health, education and gender. Through his research, he wants to understand why there are social differences in mental health and why there is such a strong reproduction of these inequalities over generations.



Astanand Jugessur, PhD, NIPH

Astanand Jugessur is a senior scientist affiliated with the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH) in Oslo. He also holds an adjunct associate professor position at the University of Bergen, Norway. With multidisciplinary training in human genetics and genetic epidemiology, he has contributed numerous insights to these closely related fields of research. Together with his team in Norway and internationally, he has received several research grants that have helped spearhead a rich portfolio of research into the genetics of complex traits, telomere biology, epigenetics, and mitochondrial bioenergetics. Link to website:

<https://www.uib.no/en/persons/Astanand.Jugessur>



Helga Ask, PhD, Co-director PsychGen Centre

I am the co-director of the PsychGen center and a senior researcher at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. I am interested in getting new knowledge on how genetic and environmental factors play together to influence the development of common mental health problems in children and adolescents. Currently, I am leading several Nordic projects investigating risk and resilience in the population during the Covid-19 pandemic. I also hold a position at the PROMENTA research center, teaching personality. As a member of the scientific advisory board in MoBa, I am interested in the future of MoBa, questionnaire development and participant engagement.



Angelica Ronald, Professor, University of Surrey

Angelica Ronald is Professor of Psychology and Genetics at the School of Psychology in the Faculty for Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Surrey in the UK. She gained postdoctoral training in molecular genetics funded by an Autism Speaks fellowship and a PhD in Quantitative Genetics from King's College London. Prior to that she received her BA from the University of Oxford in Experimental Psychology. Professor Ronald has 22 years' experience of research with a focus on genetic and environmental causes of neurodevelopment and mental health in children and adolescence. Her research includes the first study to show high genetic overlap between autism and ADHD in childhood, and the first genome-wide association study of autistic traits. Her recent research has included large-scale meta-genome-wide association analyses of cohorts such as TEDS, ALSPAC and CATSS. She is co-I of Babytwins Study Sweden, a 5-year study of infant twins assessed on an extensive neurocognitive battery. Her research prizes include the Association for Psychological Sciences Janet Taylor Spence

award and the British Psychological Society Spearman medal. Prof Ronald has >130 publications, is a Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science and is joint editor of the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, a highly-ranked journal in psychology and psychiatry (ISI). She co-founded the London Genetics Network in 2020, a hub funded by the Genetics Society involving over 30 institutions and 300 members. She established the Genetics of Early Milestones and Skills (GEMS) project, an ongoing multi-disciplinary collaboration with PsychGen and a range of international cohorts which aims to investigate the common genetic architecture of the infant phenome.



George Davey Smith, Professor, University of Bristol

George Davey Smith was a member of the noise-terrorism outfit Scum Auxiliary in the early 1980s. Since artistic and commercial success eluded them, he has had to earn his living working as an epidemiologist in the provinces.



Esther Walton, PhD, University of Bath

I investigate the link between DNA methylation, brain imaging traits and mental health (e.g. ADHD, depression, anorexia or schizophrenia). As a co-chair of the Methylation, Imaging and Neurodevelopment (MIND) consortium and as an active member of several ENIGMA working groups, I have a long track record of investigating brain imaging correlates of mental health conditions and how

these link to genetic and epigenetic markers. In my research I apply several approaches including methylome-wide association analyses, mixed and multi-level modelling, as well as causal inference methods such as Mendelian randomization. As part of my H2020- and ERC-funded work, I also study the life-course of these associations by applying longitudinal analyses on prospectively collected data from large UK and international cohorts.



Jorien Treur, PhD, Amsterdam UMC

Dr Jorien Treur obtained her PhD in 2016 at Vrije Universiteit University in Amsterdam, where she analysed data of twin-families to disentangle genetic from environmental influences on mental health. After her PhD she worked as a post-doc at the University of Bristol, specializing in genetic causal inference methods. She joined Amsterdam UMC as an Assistant Professor in 2018, where she now has her own research group, funded by a starting grant from the European Research Council starting and a major grant from the Dutch Heart Foundation. Dr Treur and her team aim to explain comorbidities between different types of (mental) health problems by combining and triangulating evidence from diverse epidemiological and genetic methods. One of the comorbidities they focus on in particular is that between mental health problems and cardiovascular disease.



Amy Shakeshaft, PhD, Cardiff University

Dr Amy Shakeshaft is a post-doctoral Research Associate at the Wolfson Centre for Young People's Mental Health, Cardiff University. Amy's research uses genetic and epidemiological methods to understand the life course of young people's mental health and neurodevelopmental disorders.