

FORM E – PROJECT SYNOPSIS, School of Life Sciences

Project title: An investigation of the effects of Skullcap, *Scutellaria lateriflora*, on mood in healthy volunteers

Cross School Project? Yes
If so, name of other School/s: Psychology

The proposal falls into the following priority area(s), Please underline: East Medicine, Ageing Research, informing policy and practice, New technologies for Biosciences

Background to research and synopsis

A recent pilot study using a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled crossover design investigated the mood enhancing effects and safety of *S. lateriflora* was examined in healthy volunteers (PhD study C.Brock, 2012, J. Whitehouse, A Towell, I Tewfik, University of Westminster). Results indicated the herb is likely to possess significant anxiolytic and mood enhancing effects. Additionally, there was no reduction in measures of energy or cognition following chronic administration of *S. lateriflora* nor was there any evidence of toxicity.

We wish to extend these results by using a more balanced design and more sensitive measures of mood/anxiety. Novel methods of CNS activation will also be employed using psychophysiological measures. As such the student will receive training in quantitative EEG as well as psychometric testing and trial design.

Given the problems with wide spread use of anxiolytics in terms of dependency and toxicity the findings of this research will have a potential impact on prescribing patterns by offering an alternative and safe herbal remedy.

Supervisory Team and Research Environment

Supervisor Name	Role (DoS, 2 nd Supervisor, 3 rd Supervisor)	No. of successful PhD/ supervisions	Current student load for 2012/13 (FTE)	School (for cross School projects)
Dr Julie Whitehouse		2	DOS 1 2 nd supervisor 1	Life Sciences
Prof Tony Towell		6	3	Psychology
Dr Julia Green		1		Life Sciences

Please list recent publications by supervisors relevant to the project:

Brock C, Whitehouse J, Towell A, Tewfik I (2013) American skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*): a randomised, double-blind placebo-controlled crossover study of its effects on mood in healthy volunteers, submitted to Phytotherapy research

Brock C, Whitehouse J, Tewfik I & Towell T (2010) *American skullcap (Scutellaria lateriflora): an ancient remedy for today's anxiety?* British Journal of Wellbeing 1 (4), 25-30.

Informal enquiries (email address of Director of Studies) and any web links that prospective applicants would be referred to:

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