



**Parsing Pathways to Health Disparities:
A mixed-method, multi-domain approach**

by

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Time : 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Venue : Mrs Chen Yang Foo Oi Telemedicine Centre (MTC),
2/F, William MW Mong Block, 21 Sassoon Road, Hong Kong**

Abstract:

How does adversity get under the skin of the developing child to instantiate risk for a heterogeneous set of health problems across the life course? This program of research aims to characterize biobehavioral pathways to health disparities across key stages of development. A mixed-methods approach grounded in developmental-ecological theory has been adopted to examine how social factors at the neighborhood, family, and individual level interact to confer risk for psychopathology and chronic health conditions across the life course. In particular, to better understand how early exposure to chronic stress provokes vulnerability to conditions that manifest in different life stages, dysregulation across the domains of social-cognition, emotion processing, health behaviors, cardiovascular reactivity, and immune function are investigated together with the biological state of the developing brain. Findings suggest that adversity during sensitive developmental stages sensitizes threat vigilance and response systems as well as immune cells that trigger inflammation, enables high-risk health behaviors, and interacts with genetic predispositions to forecast neuroanatomical structure in frontolimbic regions. Implications for early interventions that may mitigate early adversity and vulnerable trajectories will be discussed.

Bio-sketch:

Dr Meanne Chan is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto. She completed graduate training in health psychology at Northwestern University, which also included policy research training and neurobiology training with respectively The Center on Social Disparities and Health at the Institute for Policy Research and the Department of Medical Social Sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine. She then completed a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in biological psychiatry at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, a research hospital fully affiliated with the University of Toronto.



Her work bridges psychology, neuroscience, and immunology approaches to better understand the vast implications linked with childhood adversity. Key concurrent international projects include a Toronto community engagement study targeted at fostering resilience among marginalized youths with agency and social affiliation, a racial disparities project at Indiana University examining re-appraisal strategies for cardiovascular recovery after exposure to prejudice, and a NIH funded multi-site brain-mapping study exploring early-life stress, a neuro-immune network hypothesis, and risk for psychopathology in adolescents. Her work has also been funded by Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Ministry of Child and Youth Services, and Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Prior to doctoral training at Northwestern University, Meanne completed undergraduate and Master's studies at the University of British Columbia, majoring in Health Psychology and a minor in Quantitative Methods. Meanne's teaching experience include undergraduate lectures in Psychopathology, Developmental Psychology, and Health Psychology, as well as seminars on Research Methods and graduate seminar on Multiple Regression. American Psychosomatic Society named Meanne as one of 25 Young Investigator Colloquium Scholars in 2016, an award granted for promising early career research.