Applications are invited for a doctoral student position under the supervision of Prof. N. Chabane, Prof. Micah M. Murray, and Dr. Anne Maillard on the project “early biomarkers in children at risk for ASD”, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and Hoffmann Foundation.

This multidisciplinary project aims at identifying early biomarkers for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) using different methods including MRI, EEG, eye-tracking and behavioural assessments. Target population are children under the age of 6 that are siblings of an older child diagnosed with ASD (20% risk of presenting ASD themselves) or children carrying a genetic risk factor for ASD (e.g. copy number variants at the 16p11.2 locus). The goal is to better understand the emergence of dysfunction at behavioural and neurophysiological levels and to identify early biomarkers for ASD diagnosis. A particular emphasis will be placed on putative links between sensory and multisensory dysfunction (using EEG and eye-tracking) and cognitive and social difficulties. We will perform cognitive/behavioural observations to assess developmental level and social behaviour. Finally structural and functional MRIs (resting state) will be used to look into brain anatomy and functions.

The successful applicant will 1) hold or be in the course of obtaining a Master’s degree in psychology, neuroscience or a related discipline 2) be fluent in French 3) feel comfortable and have experience with young children in the context of normal and abnormal development 4) have some experience with MRI or EEG and eye-tracking techniques. The ideal candidate should have some background in cognitive neurosciences and should be highly motivated by a multidisciplinary work. Experience with data analysis and statistics as well as proficiency in English and scientific writing is desirable.

The student will be part of the new interdisciplinary project with synergies across neurosciences and clinics to identify early biomarkers for ASD. The student will be supervised by Prof. Micah Murray at the LINE (Laboratory of Investigative Neurophysiology, CHUV - UNIL) and Prof. N. Chabane and Drsc A. Maillard at the Cantonal Autism Centre (CHUV). The student would be enrolled in the Lemanic Neuroscience Doctoral Program. This is a full time post and the preferred start date is September 2017 or as soon as can be arranged. Contracts are for a fixed term of 12 months with the possibility of renewal up to a total duration of 36 months or attainment of PhD degree. Salary is in accordance with norms established the SNSF.

Applications must include a motivation letter, a complete CV, as well as references from at least 2 individuals. Application materials should be sent electronically to Drsc. Anne. M. Maillard (anne.maillard@chuv.ch). Informal be addressed to Dr. Anne Maillard. Be sure to include “PhD Application” as subject header.