Course Outline:

This Early Intervention Workshop focuses on best practices in assessing and treating children with developmental disabilities. It is aimed at helping participants understand the roles played by each clinician and professional involved in this complex area: such roles include the diagnosis of the disability and the interventions required to manage the affected child.

This Workshop will also discuss the issues and options relating to the period of transition – when the child moves from a more clinical intervention towards being part of the educational system (kindergarten, primary school). We will provide an overview of the intervention programs available around the world and in Malaysia as well as other available options/learning support. There will be real-life case study discussions to facilitate the translation of knowledge into practice.

Topics to be Discussed:

1. Team Dynamics in the Assessment and Intervention of Autism and Cross-Syndromes
2. Translating Theory into Clinical Practice:
   - Genetics of Autism and its complex relationship with other Syndromes
   - Clinical Genetic Testing for Early Diagnosis of Autism and other Syndromes
   - Current Screening and Comprehensive Autism Assessment Measures
   - Differential Diagnoses: Clinical Vs. Neurobehavioural Features
3. Ensuring Effective Interventions and Support Systems for Autism and Cross-Syndromes:
   - Evidence Based Vs. Non Evidence Based Interventions
   - Dealing with Co-Morbid Psychopathology: Predictors and Interventions on Behaviour, Social and Emotional Issues
   - Atypical Interventions: Addressing the Professionals’ Perspective Constraints
   - Supporting Family Needs
   - Early Intervention Programs and Education Options in Malaysia
4. Current Research Focus in Autism and Cross-Syndromes
5. Case Studies
6. “Living with Autism” - Sharing Life Experiences

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Dr. Nicole Rinehart

Dr. Nicole Rinehart is an Associate Professor and Deputy Director of Clinical Psychology. She has published over 50 journal articles and 6 book chapters on Autism, Asperger’s Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). She has received over 4 million dollars of funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council, ARC, Neurosciences Victoria, and international funding bodies.

Assoc. Prof. Rinehart is currently supervising a large group of PhD and Clinical Doctoral Students. Her vision is to bridge the ‘bench to bedside’ gap in Autism so that latest scientific data can be translated to usable information for clinicians, teachers, and families.

Assoc. Prof. Rinehart received the Monash University Award for Outstanding Contributions to Research, and earlier in her career, the Australian Psychological Society (APS) Rising Star Award for the College of Clinical Psychologists, and APS Early Career Research Award at a ceremony in New Zealand. She is a regular reviewer for the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders and other key neurodevelopmental journals (e.g., Neuroscience Letters, Neuropsychology, Brain and Behavioural Development, Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology: Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology).

This year Nicole will be a Guest Editor for Autism: An International Journal for Autism Brain and Behaviour. Biological Psychiatry, Psychiatry Research, Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology; Journal of Developmental Disorders and other key neurodevelopmental journals (e.g., Neuroscience Letters, Neuropsychology, Brain and Behavioural Development, Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology: Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology).

Dr. Kylie M Gray

Dr. Kylie M Gray is the Director of Professional Training Programmes, Deputy Director of Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology and Senior Lecturer / Senior Research Fellow at the School of Psychology and Psychiatry, Monash University Australia.

Dr. Gray is an accredited trainer by the University of Michigan, Autism and Communication Disorders Clinic. For the past 10 years she has directed and taught professional development programmes in autism assessment measures (Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised and Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule). She developed the first training program in Australia and continues to lead training in this area across the Asia-Pacific region, including workshops in Australia, Singapore, Japan, Korea, New Zealand. This includes a regular training workshop at the Singapore Institute of Mental Health (IMH), training health professionals from Singapore, Malaysia and other Asian countries. She also provides consultation for the Western Psychological Services, a US-based publisher, on autism assessment measures and training in the Asia-Pacific region as well as Autism Speaks, a US-based international autism funding and advocacy agency, on training researchers and professionals in Asian countries.

Together with her colleagues, Dr. Gray has developed, initiated and is currently the member of the Australian Research Network on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (RNIDD). She is also a part of the committee members of the Australian Psychological Society Special Interest Group on Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities.

Being in the academic line, Dr. Gray is also actively involved in research, either as a researcher or the supervisor of undergraduate and post-graduate students, both in research and clinical supervision. She has been awarded with numerous research grants in which most of them were for research work on autism and developmental disabilities. Her research work has been published extensively in reputable journals.

Dr. Rajini Sarvananthan

Dr. Rajini Sarvananthan is a Consultant Developmental Paediatrician at Sunway Medical Centre (SunMed), Baby and Beyond Child Specialist Clinic and Sau Seng Lum Stroke and Rehabilitation Centre.

Dr. Rajini graduated from the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, United Kingdom in 1993. She subsequently trained in Paediatrics in 1994. Having obtained her Membership of the Royal College of Physicians in the area of Paediatrics in 1996, she further sub-specialized in the area of Neuro Disability/Developmental Paediatrics in the United Kingdom. During this time, she also pursued her Masters in Medical Science in Child Health.

Dr. Rajini returned to Malaysia in the year 2003 where she joined Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) as a Lecturer in Paediatrics. Together with a team of Developmental Paediatrics, Clinical Psychologists and other Allied Health Professionals, she was involved in starting the Child Development Centre at UKM Medical Centre, the first such Centre in Malaysia during the time. She subsequently joined SunMed to work together with the team of allied health professionals already established here to provide a holistic service for children with developmental disabilities and in the SunMed S.H.I.N.E. Program, an Early Intervention Program for children from 0 to 3 years old with developmental disabilities.

Dr. Rajini has a particular interest in preschool children with development disabilities. She has been involved in research in the outcome of extremely/very low birth weight babies and neonates with persistent pulmonary hypertension, use of developmental screening tools (comparing parental report vs screening administered by a paediatrician) in the local setting and children with other sensory impairment.

Dr. Rajini is also a Committee Member of the Chapter of Child Neurology and Developmental Paediatrics, under the umbrella of the Malaysian Society of Neurosciences. She represents the subspecialty of Developmental Paediatrics as a co-opted Member of the Specialty Sub-Committee of Paediatrics, National Specialists Register in Malaysia.