

Professor **Richard Holt**

Place of employment and host institution: University of Southampton, United Kingdom

Host principal investigator: Lise Tarnow, Steno Diabetes Center Zealand

Title of project: Preventing and managing diabetes in people with severe mental illness

ABSTRACT

The prevalence of type 2 diabetes is approximately doubled among people with severe mental illnesses (SMI), such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, compared with the general population. People with SMI are more likely to develop the acute complications associated with diabetes, more likely to develop chronic microvascular and macrovascular complications and die prematurely as a result of diabetes. Two important unanswered questions are how to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes in people with SMI and how to improve clinical care once diabetes develops. Steno Diabetes Center Sjælland has initiated the "Fusion Clinic" for patients with SMI and diabetes at the Psychiatry West, Slagelse. The purpose of the clinic is to improve the care of people with co-morbid diabetes and SMI.

The aims of the visiting professorship are:

- To develop a research strategy at Steno Diabetes Center Sjælland and Psychiatry West to address the prevention, screening and clinical care of people with diabetes and severe mental illness
- To facilitate collaborative research projects in the field of diabetes and prediabetes and mental health disorders in Region Zealand with the aim of developing at least one ambitious grant proposal.
- To support research capacity building and research dissemination skills in early career researcher working in the field of diabetes and mental health comorbidity. This will be achieved through workshops for junior researchers
- To support an increasing awareness of the clinical care needs of people with diabetes and severe mental illness among healthcare professionals in primary and secondary healthcare. This will be achieved through the delivery of a 2-day conference at the Steno Diabetes Center Sjælland and Psychiatry West. This will aim to bring together diabetes and psychiatry clinicians and researchers as well as primary care. The agenda will offer practical advice to those managing people with co-morbid diabetes and severe mental illness while provoking discussions about unmet research needs in this area.