

College of Fellows 2025 – Young Researcher Award

Dr Emily C. Garman

Senior researcher, Alan J. Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health, Department of Psychiatry & Mental Health, Faculty of Health Sciences

Dr Emily Garman is a senior researcher in the field of public mental health. She is based at the Alan J. Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health in the Department of Psychiatry & Mental Health. Having completed a BSc in Psychology in 2008 at The University of Reading and an MSc in Developmental Psychopathology in 2010 at Durham University England, she obtained her PhD from the University of Cape Town in 2019.

Her PhD thesis employed latent modelling techniques to identify the trajectories of perinatal depressive symptoms among low-income women in South Africa. This was the first use of such a method in Sub-Saharan Africa at the time. The findings highlighted the need to move away from conceptualising depression as unidimensional and instead understanding it as being heterogenous in terms of risk, severity, chronicity and onset. Her work contributed to understanding how primary care providers may identify, refer and manage women with varying mental healthcare needs in resource-limited contexts.

Since the start of her career at UCT in 2011, Emily's research focused mainly on the integration of mental healthcare into community and primary care settings. Specifically, this was for vulnerable populations in low-resourced settings, including adolescents and perinatal women.

Over the years she has been involved in several international research consortia, such as the Africa Focus on Intervention Research for Mental Health and the Programme for Improving Mental Health Care. She is currently the Scientific Coordinator for the Improving Adolescent Mental Health by Reducing the Impact of Poverty (ALIVE) project, an international Research Consortium based in Colombia, Nepal and South Africa. The aim of this project is to develop a prevention intervention that provides skills for self-regulation as well as for academic and employment success to prevent depression and anxiety among young people living in poor urban settings.

Emily has published over 50 peer-reviewed articles and co-authored three chapters in the *2021/2022 South African Child Gauge*, *2016 South African Health Review* and *Essential in Global Mental Health*. Her contributions have had direct implications on identifying and addressing some of the key social determinants of mental health in the country and other low- and middle-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, South America and South-East Asia, thus improving mental health services for vulnerable populations at a global level.