

ALEKSANDRINA SKVORTSOVA, PHD

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EDUCATION

PhD degree

University: Faculty of Social Sciences, Leiden University, the Netherlands
Date: 2014-2019
Programme: Health, Medical and Neuropsychology
Dissertation: “Placebo effects and the endocrine system: the role of oxytocin”
Supervisors: A. Evers, D. Veldhuijzen, H. van Middendorp

Master’s degree

University: Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands
Date: 2012-2014
Program: Research Master in Behavioural Science
Minor Research Project: “Deliberative versus intuitive diagnostic decisions”
Major Research Project: “Posner task: improved attentional bias modification training for highly anxious students”
Supervisors: M. Rinck, C. Wittemann

Bachelor’s degree

University: Saint Petersburg State University, Russia
Date: 2006-2011
Program: Specialist in Clinical, Counselling and Correctional Psychology
Thesis: “Anger suppression in patients with depressive and generalized anxiety disorders”

LANGUAGES

COMPUTER PROFICIENCY

Russian (native)	R: Data processing, multilevel analysis (lme4 package), data visualization (ggplot)
Estonian (C2)	SPSS: Data analysis
English (C2)	JASP: Bayesian data analysis
Dutch (C2)	Python: Basics of programming, PsychoPy
Spanish (A1)	FSL: structural and functional MRI data analysis
	E-Prime: Creating stimuli for experiments

CERTIFICATES

Scan license Certification from Leiden Institute of Brain and Cognition for working with an MRI scanner
BROK Basic course on regulations and organization for clinical investigators that allows to lead clinical trials in the Netherlands

RESEARCH EXPERIENCES

04/2023- present **Postdoctoral Researcher** Health, Medical, and Neuropsychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Leiden University, the Netherlands

03/2021- 03/2023 **Postdoctoral Researcher**, Mogil Lab, Department of Psychology, McGill University, Canada

- Leading two research projects on the neurochemical mediation of nocebo effect in pain: preparation of the documents for the Psychology Research Ethics Committee, data collection, data analysis, writing the manuscripts.
- Co-leading a research project on topic of the effects of stress on maternal behavior in mouse model: data collection, data analysis, writing the manuscript.
- Supervising undergraduate students in their research internships.

10/2019- 03/2021 **Postdoctoral Researcher**, Health, Medical, and Neuropsychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Leiden University, the Netherlands

- Leading a randomized controlled trial on classical conditioning of insulin responses in diabetes type-2: co-writing the grant proposal, preparation of the documents for the Medical Ethical Committee (METC), data collection, data analysis, writing the manuscript.
- Leading two research projects: one on the role of expectations on the effectiveness of a physical activity eHealth intervention, another- on the role of stress in nocebo effect: preparation of the documents for the Psychology Research Ethics Committee, data collection, data analysis, writing the manuscripts.
- Co-leading a knowledge exploration “Sex and Gender Differences in Diabetes” for Diabetes Fonds: making a literature review on the topic, interviewing healthcare professionals, policy makers and patients, performing an empirical study on implicit gender biases and preparing a report for Diabetes Fonds.
- Teaching “Health and Medical Psychology” course workgroups.
- Supervising two Bachelor projects.

10/2014- 10/2019 **PhD Candidate**, Department of Health, Medical, and Neuropsychology, Leiden University, the Netherlands

- Leading 3 randomized controlled trials: preparation of the documents for the Medical Ethical Committee (METC), data collection, data analysis, writing the manuscripts.
- Conducting two systematic literature reviews.
- Supervising Bachelor and Master students.
- Supervising three Bachelor projects.

07/2013- 07/2014 **Junior Researcher**, European Federation of Psychology Students' Associations (EFPSA) Junior Researcher Programme
www.jrp.psycholars.org

- Participating in a one-year research project "Examining adolescents' well-being: How do the Orientations to Happiness relate to their free time activities?": collaboration with students from 8 different countries, preparation of the research proposal, data collection at schools in Estonia, data analysis and writing a manuscript.
- Participating in a research summer school in Belgium in 2013 and a research internship in Cambridge, UK in 2014.

04/2014- 06/2014 **Research intern**, Boston University, Center for Anxiety and Related Disorders, the USA

- Literature screening for a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of mindfulness-based therapies for generalized anxiety disorder.
- Preparation of the materials (questionnaires, testing scripts, recruitment materials) for a study on the effectiveness of meditation for anxiety disorders.

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

03/2021- present **Supervision of undergraduate students**, Department of Psychology, McGill University, Canada

Supervised five undergraduate Psychology students in their research internships: teaching students the research methods, supervising the data collection, supervising the data analysis, giving feedback, and evaluating research theses.

11/2020- 01/2021 **Workgroup teacher**, course “Health and Medical Psychology”, Leiden University, the Netherlands

Lead the workgroups for the course “Health and Medical Psychology” for a group of 19 Bachelor Students: leading group discussions, demonstrating psychotherapy techniques, evaluating students’ assignments, and presentations.

2016- 2021 **Bachelor Projects supervisor**, Health, Medical and Neuropsychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Leiden University, the Netherlands

Supervised 5 Bachelor projects (8-9 students per project, each project lasted 4 months) of the Psychology Department: organization of weekly group and individual meetings with students, teaching research methods, research ethics, research technics, supervising data collection, data analysis and writing theses, Bachelor theses evaluation.

2016- 2021 **Master students’ supervisor**, Health, Medical and Neuropsychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Leiden University, the Netherlands

Supervised 23 master students from Health Psychology Master and Research Master in Health Psychology in their research internship and master theses.

01/2014- 05/2014 **Teaching assistant**, course "Primary relationships in adolescence and adulthood", Radboud University, the Netherlands

Lead workgroups for the second year Bachelor students: teaching the workgroups, grading assignments.

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC ROLES

05/2022- present **Project manager**, Replications & Reversals project, FORRT (Framework for Open and Reproducible Research Training), <https://forrt.org/reversals>

Curating Replications & Reversals project, a project that aims to build a crowd-driven database that describes the replications of widely known effects across social sciences: keeping track of the database, checking new entries, attracting community to actively participate in the project, preparation of grant proposals to collect funding for the project.

10/2018- 7/2019 **Member of the organization committee** of the 2nd official Society for Interdisciplinary Placebo Studies (SIPS) conference on placebo studies

Co-organizing the conference: creating promotion materials, designing the conference program, inviting speakers, keeping track of the emails, solving practical issues around the conference.

09/2018- 01/2021 **Member of the organization committee** of MRI Methods Meetings, Leiden Institute for Brain and Cognition

Organizing monthly meetings for neuroimaging researchers from Leiden University and LUMC, looking for speakers, preparing monthly newsletter.

07/2018- present **Invited reviewer** for journals Psychosomatic Medicine, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatic, JAMA Psychiatry, PlosOne, Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience

09/2014- 09/2015 **Editor**, The Journal of European Psychology Students, www.jeps.efpsa.org

Initial screening and review of submitted articles, searching for reviewers, organizing peer-review process and copy-editing of the manuscripts.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

03/2022- 10/2022 **Psychologist volunteer**, Psy For Peace, volunteer-run hotline that was organized in response to the war in Ukraine. The line offers first psychological aid to the victims of the war.

Accepting phone calls from clients, offering first psychological aid, triage and referring clients to specialists.

06/2011- 09/2012 **Clinical psychologist**, Narva Hospital, Estonia.

Clinical diagnostics (intake interviews, preparation of reports for a psychiatrist).

07/2009- 01/2012 **Psychologist assistant**, Psychological Aid Center “Ariadna”, Narva, Estonia.

Assisting psychologists with intake interviews and group therapy sessions.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

2022 **Travel grant** of Quebec Pain Research Network (1000 Canadian dollars) for attending Neuroscience 2022 conference in San Diego, USA.

2022 **Travel grant** of International Association for the Study of Pain (800 US dollars) for attending the 2022 World Congress on Pain in Toronto, Canada.

2020 **Rubicon Grant** of Dutch Research Council (NWO) (120 000 euros). Individual fellowship for performing 2 years research at Psychology Department of McGill University, Canada. Project “How stress affects our pain memory: the effects of cortisol on conditioned hyperalgesia”.

- 2019** **Best article of the year award** of the unit of Health, Medical and Neuropsychology of Leiden University for the article “Placebo effects in the neuroendocrine system: learned oxytocin responses”.
- 2019** **Grant** of The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMW) & The Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation. Project Knowledge Exploration ‘Gender-, sex differences and diabetes’. PI: A.M.W. Evers. *Role*: involved in preparation of the application and writing the proposal, a post-doctoral researcher performing the project proposed in this grant.
- 2018** **Grant** of The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development & The Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation. Project “Conditioning of insulin responses. A high risk- high gain intervention for diabetes type-2”. PIs: A.M.W. Evers and H. Pijl. *Role*: involved in preparation of the application and writing the proposal, worked as a post-doctoral researcher coordinating and leading the trial.
- 2018** **Best Poster Award**, European Society for Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, the 4th international conference.
- 2017** **APS Young Scholar Scholarship Award**, American Psychosomatic Society (400 US dollars) for attending the American Psychosomatic Society 76th Annual Scientific Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, the USA.
- 2014** **Scholarship** of Honors Academy of Radboud University (3000 euros) for performing an international research project at the Center for Anxiety and Related disorders, Boston University, the USA.
- 2011** Graduated **Cum laude**, Saint Petersburg State University.
- 2007-2011** **Scholarship** for excellent grades from Saint Petersburg State University (50 euros/month).

PUBLICATIONS

1. **Skvortsova, A.***, Meeuwis, S.*; van Laarhoven, A., Holle, H., Evers, A.W. (2022) Can contagious itch be affected by positive and negative suggestions? *Experimental Dermatology*. In press
2. Rosen, S.F., Lima, L.V., Chen, C., Nejade, R., Zhao, M., Nemoto, W., Toprak, E., **Skvortsova, A.**, Tansley, S.N., Zumbusch, A., Sotocinal, S.G., Mogil J. (2022) Olfactory exposure to late-pregnant and lactating mice causes stress-induced analgesia in male mice. *Science Advances*, 8(20), p.eabi9366.
3. **Skvortsova A.**, Cohen Rodrigues T., de Buissonjé D., Kowatsch T., Santhanam P., Veldhuijzen D.S., van Middendorp H., Evers A.W. (2022). Increasing the Effectiveness of a Physical Activity Smartphone Intervention With Positive Suggestions: Randomized Controlled Trial. *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 2022;24(3):e32130
4. **Skvortsova, A.**, Veldhuijzen, D.S., Kloosterman, I.E.M., Pacheco-López, G., Evers, A.W.M. (2021). Food anticipatory hormonal responses: a systematic review of animal and human studies, *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*.
5. **Skvortsova, A.**, Veldhuijzen, D.S., de Rover, M., Pacheco-Lopez, G., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M., van IJendoorn, M., Chavannes, N.H., van Middendorp, H., Evers, A.W.M. (2020) Effects of oxytocin administration and conditioned oxytocin on the perception of emotional faces, crying baby sounds and heat pain: an fMRI study. *Plos one*, 15(3), p.e0229692.

6. **Skvortsova, A.**, Veldhuijzen, D.S., van Middendorp, H., Colloca, L., Evers, A.W.M. (2019) Effects of oxytocin on placebo and nocebo effects in a pain conditioning paradigm: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Pain*.
7. **Skvortsova, A.**, Veldhuijzen, D.S., Pacheco-Lopez, G., Meijer, O.C., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M., van IJzendoorn, M., Smeets, M.A.M., Wilderjans, T.F., Dahan, A., van den Bergh, O., Chavannes, N.H., van der Wee, N.J.A., Grewen, K.M., van Middendorp, H., Evers, A.W.M. (2019). Placebo effects in the neuroendocrine system: learned oxytocin responses. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 80(4), 353.
8. **Skvortsova, A.**, Veldhuijzen, D. S., Kloosterman, I. E., Meijer, O. C., van Middendorp, H., Pacheco-Lopez, G., & Evers, A. W. (2018). Conditioned hormonal responses: a systematic review in animals and humans. *Frontiers in Neuroendocrinology*.
9. **Skvortsova, A.**, Veldhuijzen, D. S., Van Middendorp, H., Van den Bergh, O., & Evers, A. W. (2018). Enhancing placebo effects in somatic symptoms through oxytocin. *Psychosomatic medicine*, 80(4), 353.
10. Wagner, L., Conrad, D., Gajić, N., Kácha, O., Martinović, K., **Skvortsova, A.**, ... & Voitenko, D. (2014). Examining Adolescents' Well-being: How Do the Orientations to Happiness Relate to Their Leisure Time Activities? *Journal of European Psychology Students*, 5(2).
11. **Skvortsova, A.**, Schulte-Mecklenbeck, M., Jellema, S., Sanfey, A., & Witteman, C. (2016). Deliberative versus intuitive diagnostic decision. *Psychology*, 7(12), 1438-1450.
12. Evers, A.W., Veldhuijzen, D.S., **Skvortsova, A.**, Meeuwis S. (2021) Knowledge exploration "Sex and gender differences in diabetes"
<https://www.diabetesfonds.nl/media/researchpage/rapport-diabetes-kennisverkenning.pdf>

* Shared first authorship

PRE-PRINTS

1. **Skvortsova, A.**, Veldhuijzen, D. S., van Dillen, L. F., Zech, H. G., Derksen, S. M., Sars, R., ... Evers, A. W. (2022, May 16). Pharmacological conditioning of insulin effects in patients with diabetes type-2 and healthy controls: randomized controlled trial.
<https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/3ru6q>
2. **Skvortsova, A.**, Meeuwis, S. H., van Laarhoven, A., Holle, H., & Evers, A. W. (2022, June 28). Can contagious itch be affected by positive and negative suggestions?
<https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/u8rb3>
3. **Skvortsova, A.**, Veldhuijzen, D. S., de Rover, M., Pacheco-Lopez, G., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M., van IJzendoorn, M. H., ... Evers, A. W. (2019, September 30). Effects of oxytocin administration and conditioned oxytocin on brain activity: an fMRI study.
<https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/4rtcv>

INVITED TALKS

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|----------------|--|
| 12/2022 | “Chronic Pain and Chronic Stress: Two Sides of the Same Coin?” an invited lecture for a group of arthritis patients organized by Quebec Pain Research Network, Montreal, Canada. |
| 04/2022 | “Role van Verwachtingen bij Diabetes type-2”, an invited online talk at a meeting of the Dutch workgroup Psychosocial Aspects of Diabetes (PSAD-NL). |
| 05/2021 | “Placebo & nocebo effects in the endocrine and immune systems” at the symposium “Conditioning in psychopathology: new developments” of the Dutch-Flemish Postgraduate School for Experimental Psychopathology. |

- 05/2020** “Placebo and nocebo effects: the role of expectations in health outcomes” online lecture for the 3rd year Bachelor Psychology students at the Metropolitan University (UAM) – Mexico.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2022** **Poster presentation** “The role of cholecystokinin in conditioned hyperalgesia” at Neuroscience conference in San Diego, USA
- 2022** **Poster presentation** “The role of cholecystokinin in conditioned hyperalgesia” at International Association for the Study of Pain in Toronto, Canada
- 2022** **Poster presentation** “Neurochemical mechanisms of conditioned hyperalgesia in mice” at the *Canadian Pain Society Annual Meeting* in Montreal, Canada
- 2021** **Virtual poster presentation** “Improving the effectiveness of Mobile Coach with positive verbal suggestions” at the *Official Society for Interdisciplinary Placebo Studies (SIPS) conference on placebo studies*
- 2019** **Oral presentation** “Can oxytocin influence placebo and nocebo effects in pain?” at the *European Pain Federation Congress* in Valencia, Spain.
- 2019** **Oral presentation** “The role of placebo effect of oxytocin and exogenous oxytocin on the brain activity: an fMRI study” at the *American Psychosomatic Society 77th Annual Scientific Meeting* in Vancouver, Canada.
- 2019** **Oral presentation** “Conditioning of the neuroendocrine system: learned oxytocin responses” at the *8th Annual Conference of Association for Researchers in Psychology and Health Conference*, Egmond aan Zee, the Netherlands.
- 2018** **Poster presentation** “Does oxytocin influence placebo and nocebo effects?” at the *European Society for Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience 4th international conference*, Leiden, the Netherlands.
- 2018** **Oral presentation** “Enhancing placebo effects through oxytocin” at the *7th Annual Conference of Association for Researchers in Psychology and Health Conference*, Maastricht, the Netherlands.
- 2018** Oral presentation “Conditioning of the neuroendocrine system: learned oxytocin responses” at the *American Psychosomatic Society 76th Annual Scientific Meeting* in Louisville, Kentucky, the USA.
- 2018** **Oral presentation** “Enhancing placebo in pain through oxytocin” at the *American Psychosomatic Society 76th Annual Scientific Meeting* in Louisville, Kentucky, the USA.
- 2017** **Oral presentation** “Enhancing placebo in pain through oxytocin” at the *1st official Society for Interdisciplinary Placebo Studies (SIPS) conference on placebo studies*, Leiden, The Netherlands.
- 2017** **Poster presentation** “Classical conditioning of the endocrine system: a systematic review” at the *1st official Society for Interdisciplinary Placebo Studies (SIPS) conference on placebo studies*, Leiden, The Netherlands.
- 2017** **Poster presentation** “Enhancing placebo effects in itch and pain through oxytocin” at the *7th annual conference of Association for Researchers in Psychology and Health Conference*, Leiden, the Netherlands.