

**PhD student position – The effects of motor action on pain processing: An experimental analysis**  
Ghent University, Belgium  
Department of Experimental Clinical and Health Psychology

We are seeking a highly motivated full-time PhD student for a research project funded by the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) with a duration of 4 years. The project aims to investigate the intriguing question how movements interact with pain processing. The research will be conducted under the supervision of Stefaan Van Damme (main promotor; Ghent University), Ann Meulders (co-promotor; University of Maastricht/Leuven), and Diana Torta (co-promotor; University of Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve).

**Project:**

When we experience pain, our brain typically has to deal with two conflicting demands. On the one hand, the brain should support protective behavioral responses to bodily threats such as avoiding certain movements, by prioritizing the processing of pain-related information. On the other hand, to maintain goal-directed or rewarding actions, the brain should be able to inhibit distracting information such as pain. How the brain integrates these competing demands is poorly understood, especially in the context of motor action. To advance knowledge on the fascinating interplay between pain, motor action, and attention, an experimental research program integrating behavioral and EEG measures will be conducted.

**Profile:**

We are looking for an enthusiastic candidate with:

- a master's degree in (clinical, experimental, health, medical or biological) psychology or other relevant fields including (cognitive) neurosciences, health sciences, and biomedical sciences;
- a strong affinity with or interest in pain research;
- excellent research skills including experimental designs, programming, and statistical data analysis (experience with and/or training in EEG methodology is desirable);
- outstanding proficiency and communication skills in English language, both verbally as well as in writing;
- social and organizational competencies;

**Environment:**

The Ghent Health Psychology Research Group is recognized internationally for its fundamental and applied pain research and offers access to experimental pain equipment and EEG systems. The involvement of co-supervisors from highly regarded pain labs in Maastricht and Leuven creates a stimulating research environment with ample opportunity for collaboration. Starting salary for PhD candidates is around €2000 per month net.

**Requirements:**

The position will start October 1, 2018. Review of applications will start immediately and continue until the position is filled. Required application materials to be sent electronically (preferably PDF) are a motivation letter, CV (including copies of your academic transcripts), and contact details of 2 academic referees. Applications and informal enquiries may be addressed to Stefaan Van Damme via email ([stefaan.vandamme@ugent.be](mailto:stefaan.vandamme@ugent.be)).

Closing date: **August 3, 2018**