Dopamine replacement therapy, a treatment of Parkinson’s disease, can induce severe impulse control disorders (ICDs) or compulsive behaviours, such as pathological gambling, hypersexuality, and compulsive shopping and eating, in around 1 in 5 patients. Individuals have lost their homes and businesses or been convicted of criminal behaviour attributed to their medication. While such treatments may have significant implications for the affected individual, the issue has not been comprehensively investigated. This project aims to understand the impact of drug-induced ICDs on patients, their perception of their ability to control their behaviour, and the role that the medication plays in their behaviour. The successful PhD candidate will employ a battery of behavioural and cognitive tests to investigate the neural and psychological bases of these ICDs in patients with Parkinson’s disease undergoing dopamine therapy and to predict those at greatest risk. The project will also consider the clinical, ethical and legal implications of the neurocognitive changes identified. The project will be supervised by Dr Adrian Carter (Primary advisor) and Professor Murat Yucel (Associate advisor) from the School of Psychological Sciences.

For further information, please contact:
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Note: student must have an APA or equivalent scholarship in 2015 in order to be eligible for the top up.