

**AKHGAR GHASSABIAN, MD, PHD****GENERAL INFORMATION**

---

Epidemiology Branch, *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health & Human Development  
 6100 Executive Blvd, 7B03D  
 Rockville, MD 20892  
 Tel: 301-435-6922  
 Email: [akhgar.ghassabian@nih.gov](mailto:akhgar.ghassabian@nih.gov)

**EDUCATION**

---

- 2013      PhD in Epidemiology, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands  
 Thesis: Neurobiological pathways to childhood psychopathology, population-based studies of cognition and behavior  
 Advisors: Henning Tiemeier, MD PhD, Frank C. Verhulst, MD PhD
- 2009      Master of Science in Epidemiology, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands  
 Thesis: Maternal thyroid function during pregnancy and problem behavior of the offspring up  
 Advisor: Henning Tiemeier, MD PhD
- 2005      MD, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran  
 Thesis: "Evaluation of CBC, Platelets, ESR and CRP in neonatal sepsis"  
 Advisor: Shahin Behjati, MD

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

---

- 2014–Present    **Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Post-doctoral Fellow**,  
 Epidemiology Branch, Division of Intramural Population Health Research, *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Rockville  
 Supervisor: Edwina Yeung, PhD  
 Theme. Maternal health during pregnancy and neurodevelopment in children
- 2012-2014      **Post-doctoral Fellow**  
 Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands (Nutrimenthe Project, European Community's 7th Framework Programme),  
 Supervisors: Tonya While, MD, PhD, Henning Tiemeier, MD PhD  
 Theme. Maternal nutrition during pregnancy and neuroimaging correlates in children
- 2009-2012      **Researcher**  
 Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2009-2012  
 Supervisor: Henning Tiemeier, MD PhD  
 Theme 1. Maternal thyroid abnormalities and child behavioral and cognitive development  
 Theme 2. Cognitive development, executive functioning and vulnerability to psychopathology in young children
- 2006-2008      **Researcher**, Scientific Writing Unit, Tehran University of Medical Science, Iran  
 Theme. Assessment of characteristics and clinical features of hepatic cavernous hemangioma in Iranian patients

**CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

---

- 2006-2007      **Health Officer**, Disease Control and Prevention Department, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran  
 Duties:  
    -Consulting physician for national plan for screening Beta-Thalassemia

- Regional tuberculosis coordinator, national tuberculosis surveillance system
- Mapping of poliomyelitis
- Involved in neonates' hypothyroidism screening program

- 2005-2006     **General Physician**, Imam Sadegh General Hospital, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Iran,  
Duties:  
-Emergency room chief physician
- 2005           **Voluntary Health Promotion Activist**, Section for Disease Control, West Health Centre, Iran  
University of Medical Sciences, Iran
- 2004-2005     **Clinical Intern**, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Iran

## AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS

---

Travel grant for participation in 59th annual meeting of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in USA, TrustFonds Erasmus University, 2012, €500

Travel grant for participation in AACAP/CACAP Joint annual meeting in Canada, TrustFonds Erasmus University, 2011, €500

Entrance Scholarship, Utrecht University, 2008, €13000

Entrance Scholarship, Université Pairs Sud, 2007

Dean's award for High Achievement, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Iran, 2001-2004

Accepted with honour in Iran National University Entrance Examination (ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the Biological Science discipline and ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the Art discipline out of 500,000 examinee), 1997 (Authorized translated diploma on request)

## FUNDING

---

Rubicon individual grant, *The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)*, "The Autistic Brain: what is the role of hippocampus?", 2014, €128,000 (Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Netherlands), Role: main applicant

Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative, "Environmental-Wide Association Study of Autism Spectrum Disorders", 2014, \$125,000, Role: co-investigator

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

---

**Ghassabian A**, Steenweg-de Graaff J, Peeters RP, Ross HA, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, Verhulst FC, White T, Tiemeier H 2014 Maternal urinary iodine concentration in pregnancy and children's cognition: Results from a population-based birth cohort in an iodine-sufficient area. *British Medical Journal Open*; 4(6):e005520.

**Ghassabian A**, Székely E, Herba CM, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, Oldehinkel AJ, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H 2014 Positive emotionality, executive functioning, and internalizing problems in preschool children. The Generation R Study. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*; 23(9):729-41.

**Ghassabian A**, El Marroun H, Peeters R, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H, White TJH 2014 Maternal hypothyroxinemia in pregnancy, children's nonverbal IQ and brain morphology at school age. *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*; 99(7):2383-90.

**Ghassabian A**, Rescorla L, Henrichs J, Jaddoe VW, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H 2014 Early language development in preschoolers and risk of verbal and nonverbal cognitive delay at school age. The Generation R Study. *Acta Paediatrica*; 103 (1):70-80.

Mileva-Seitz VR, **Ghassabian A**, Bakermans-Kranenburg M, van den Brink JD, Linting M, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H, van IJendoorn MH 2014 Are boys more sensitive to sensitivity? Parenting and executive function in preschoolers. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*; in press.

Steenweg-de Graaff J, **Ghassabian A**, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H, Roza SJ 2014 Prenatal folic acid supplementation and autism in the offspring: nutritional mechanism or confounding? *European Journal of Public Health*: [Epub ahead of print].

Guxens M, Garcia-Esteban R, Giorgis-Allemand L, Fornis J, Badaloni C, Ballester F, Beelen R, Cesaroni G, Chatzi L, de Agostini M, de Nazelle A, Eeftens M, Fernández M, Fernández-Somoano A, Forastiere F, Gehring U, **Ghassabian A**, Heude B, Jaddoe V, Klümper C, Kogevinas M, Krämer U, Larroque B, Lertxundi A, Lertxundi N, Murcia-Hinarejos M, Navel V, Nieuwenhuijsen M, Porta D, Ramos R, Roumeliotaki T, Slama R, Sørensen M, Stephanou E, Sugiri D, Tardon A, Tiemeier H, Tiesler C, Verhulst F, Vrijkotte T, Wilhelm M, Brunekreef B, Pershagen G, Sunyer J (ESCAPE Consortium) 2014 Air pollution exposure during pregnancy and childhood cognitive and psychomotor development in six European birth cohort studies. *Epidemiology*; 25(5):636-47.

Verlinden M, Veenstra R, **Ghassabian A**, Jansen PW, Hofman A, Jaddoe VW, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H 2013 Cognitive functioning of bullies and victims in early elementary school. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*; 42(6):953-66.

**Ghassabian A**<sup>#</sup>, Román GC<sup>#</sup>, Bongers-Schokking JJ, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, de Rijke YB, Verhulst C, Tiemeier H, 2013 Association of gestational maternal hypothyroxinemia and increased autism risk. *Annals of Neurology*; 74(5): 733-42.

<sup>#</sup>These authors contributed equally.

Medici M, **Ghassabian A**, Visser W, de Muinck Keizer-Schrama SM, Jaddoe VW, Visser E, Hooijkaas H, Hofman A, Steegers EA, Bongers-Schokking JJ, Ross A, Tiemeier H, Visser TJ, de Rijke YB, Robins P 2013 Women with high early pregnancy urinary iodine levels have an increased risk of hyperthyroid newborns: the population-based Generation R Study. *Clinical Endocrinology*; 80(4):598-606.

Kok R, Lucassen N, Bakermans-Kranenburg MJ, van IJendoorn MH, **Ghassabian A**, Govaert P, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H 2013 Parenting, corpus callosum and executive function in preschool children. *Child Neuropsychology*; 20(5):583-606.

Langeslag SJE, Schmidt M, **Ghassabian A**, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, van der Lugt A, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H, White TJH 2013 Functional connectivity between parietal and frontal brain regions and intelligence in young children. *Human Brain Mapping*; 34(12): 3299-307.

**Ghassabian A**, Herba CM, Roza SJ, Govaert P, Jacqueline J Schenk, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, White T, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H 2012 The prospective relation of infant brain structures with executive function and attention deficit/hyperactivity problems in preschoolers. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*; 54(1): 96-104.

van Mil NH, Tiemeier H, Bongers-Schokking JJ, **Ghassabian A**, Eilers PHC, Hofman A, Hooijkaas H, Jaddoe VW, Sabine M. de Muinck Keizer-Schrama, Steegers EAP, Visser TJ, Visser W, Verhulst FC, de Rijke YB, Steegers-Theunissen RPM 2012 Low urinary iodine excretion during early pregnancy is associated with executive functioning problems of the child. *The Journal of Nutrition*; 142 (12): 2167-74.

Visser AM, Jaddoe VW, **Ghassabian A**, Schenk JJ, Verhulst FC, Hofman A, Tiemeier H, Moll H, Arts W 2012 Febrile seizures and behavioral and cognitive outcomes in pre-school children; The Generation R Study. *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology*; 54(11): 1006-1011.

van Mil NH, Steegers-Theunissen RPM, Bongers-Schokking JJ, El Marroun H, **Ghassabian A**, Hofman A, Jaddoe VW, Visser TJ, Verhulst FC, de Rijke YB, Steegers EAP, Tiemeier H 2012 Maternal hypothyroxinemia during pregnancy and growth of the fetal and infant head. *Reproductive Sciences*; 19(12): 1315-22.

Angoorani H, Narenjiha H, Tayyebi B, **Ghassabian A**, Ahmadi G, Assari S 2012 Amphetamine use and its associated factors in body builders: a study from Tehran, Iran. *Archives of Medical Science*; 8(2):362-7.

**Ghassabian A**, Bongers-Schokking JJ, de Rijke YB, van Mil N, Jaddoe VW, de Muinck Keizer-Schrama SM, Hooijkaas H, Hofman A, Visser W, Roman GC, Visser TJ, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H 2011 Maternal thyroid autoimmunity during pregnancy and the risk of attention deficit/hyperactivity problems in children. *The Generation R Study. Thyroid*; 22(2): 178-86.

**Ghassabian A**, Bongers-Schokking JJ, Henrichs J, Jaddoe VW, Visser TJ, Visser W, de Muinck Keizer-Schrama SM, Hooijkaas H, Steegers EA, Hofman A, Verhulst FC, van den Ende J, de Rijke YB, Tiemeier H 2011 Maternal thyroid function during pregnancy and parent-report problem behavior of the offspring up to age three years. The Generation R Study. *Pediatric Research*; 69(5): 454-459.

Etemadi A, Golozar A, **Ghassabian A**, Zarei M, Hashemi AP, Dawsey S, Malekzadeh R 2011 Cavernous hemangioma of the liver: factors affecting disease progression in general hepatology practice. *European Journal of Gastroenterology & Hepatology*; 23(4): 354-8.

Henrichs J, Bongers-Schokking JJ, Schenk JJ, **Ghassabian A**, Schmidt HG, Visser TJ, Hooijkaas H, de Muinck Keizer-Schrama SM, Hofman A, Jaddoe VW, Visser W, Steegers EA, Verhulst FC, de Rijke YB, Tiemeier H 2010 Maternal thyroid function during early pregnancy and cognitive functioning in early childhood: the generation R study. *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*; 95(9): 4227-3.

Khooshabi K, Forouzan SA, **Ghassabian A**, Assari S 2010 Is there a gender difference in associates of adolescents' lifetime illicit drug use in Tehran, Iran? *Archives of Medical Science*; 6 (3): 399-406.

Habibi M, Mortazavi H, Shadianloo S, Balighi K, Ghodsi SZ, Daneshpazhooh M, Valikhani M, **Ghassabian A**, Pooli AH, Chams-Davatchi C 2008 Nail changes in pemphigus vulgaris. *International Journal of Dermatology*; 47(11): 1141-4.

#### Invited commentary

**Ghassabian A**, Henrichs J, Tiemeier H 2014 Impact of mild thyroid hormone deficiency in pregnancy on cognitive function in children: Lessons from the Generation R Study. *Best Practice & Research, Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*; 28(2):221-232.

Henrichs J, **Ghassabian A**, Peeters RP, Tiemeier H 2013 Maternal hypothyroxinemia and effects on cognitive functioning in childhood: how and why? *Clinical Endocrinology*; 79(2):152-62.

**Ghassabian A**, Tiemeier H 2012 Is Measurement of maternal serum TSH sufficient screening in early pregnancy? A Case for More Randomized Trials. *Clinical Endocrinology*; 77(6): 802-5.

#### IN SUBMISSION/IN PREPARATION

---

Guxens M, **Ghassabian A**, Garcia-Esteban R, Giorgis-Allemand L, Fornis J, Badaloni C, Ballester F, Beelen R, Cesaroni G, Chatzi L, de Agostini M, de Nazelle A, Eeftens M, Fernández M, Fernández-Somoano A, Forastiere F, Gehring U, Heude B, Jaddoe V, Klümper C, Kogevinas M, Krämer U, Larroque B, Lertxundi A, Lertxundi N, Murcia-Hinarejos M, Navel V, Nieuwenhuijsen M, Porta D, Ramos R, Roumeliotaki T, Slama R, Sørensen M, Stephanou E, Sugiri D, Tardon A, Tiemeier H, Tiesler C, Verhulst F, Vrijkotte T, Wilhelm M, Brunekreef B, Pershagen G, Sunyer J (ESCAPE Consortium) Air pollution exposure during pregnancy and childhood autistic symptoms in four European cohort studies (Under review at *Environmental Health Perspectives*).

Blanken LME, Mous SE, **Ghassabian A**, Muetzel RL, El Marroun H, van der Lugt A, Jaddoe VWV, Hofman A, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H, White T Cortical thickness and gyrification in 6-to-10 year old children with autistic traits – A population-based neuroimaging study (Under review at *American Journal of Psychiatry*).

Koks N, **Ghassabian A**, Greaves-Lord K, Hofman A, Steegers EAP, Jaddoe VWV, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H Elevated maternal C-reactive protein concentration/levels in early pregnancy and child autistic traits in the general population (Under review at *Autism Research*).

Serdarevic F, van Batenburg-Eddes T, Mous SE, White T, Hofman A, Verhulst FC, Jaddoe VWV, **Ghassabian A**, Tiemeier H Relation of Infant Motor Development with Nonverbal Intelligence, Language Comprehension and Neuropsychological Functioning in Childhood. A Population-based Study (Under review at *Developmental Science*).

Wylie A, Sundaram R, Kus C, **Ghassabian A**, Yeung E Maternal pre-pregnancy obesity and achievement of infant motor developmental milestones in the Upstate KIDS Study (Under review at *International Journal of Obesity*).

**Ghassabian A**, Basten MMGJ, Hudziak JJ, Greaves-Lord K, Rescorla L, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, Robinson EB, Verhulst FC, Tiemeier H The stability of autistic symptoms in the general population (In preparation).

**Ghassabian A**, Wylie A, Sundaram R, Kus C, Yeung E Maternal medical conditions during pregnancy and children's gross motor development up to age two years in the Upstate KIDS Study (In preparation).

Thiago Modesto, Tiemeier H, Peeters RP, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, Verhulst FC, **Ghassabian A** Maternal mild thyroid hormone insufficiency in early pregnancy and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Symptoms in children (In preparation).

## BOOKS

---

**Akhgar Ghassabian** 2013 *Neurobiological pathways to childhood psychopathology: Population-based studies of cognition and behavior*, Publisher: Optima Grafische Communicatie, Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Edited book: Bitá Mesgarpoor MD, **Akhgar Ghassabian MD** 2008 *Patent in Medical Sciences* (in Iran and the World), Publisher: Tehran University, Tehran, Iran.

## PRESENTATIONS

---

Oral presentation at Vermont Center for Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Psychiatry, *University of Vermont*: "Anxiety-depression symptomatology and cortical morphometry in children", Burlington, VT, USA, 2014

Poster presentation in **the Annual Meeting of Organization for Human Brain Mapping**: "Downstream effects of mild maternal thyroid insufficiency in pregnancy: child's brain morphology", Homburg, Germany, 2014

Key-note speaker in **the 83<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting of American Thyroid Association**: "Maternal autoimmune thyroid disease, pregnancy and the offspring", San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2013

Poster presentation in the **NWO Gravitation programme (The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research)**: "Problem behavior in children born to mothers with thyroid autoimmunity during pregnancy, The Generation R Study", Utrecht, the Netherlands, 2013

Oral presentation in **Nutrimenthe International Conference**: "Prenatal folic acid supplementation and autism in the offspring: nutritional mechanism or classical confounding?", Granada, Spain 2013

Oral presentation in **Developmental Origin of Health and Disease 2012 Satellite Meeting**: "Maternal hypothyroxinaemia in early pregnancy increases risk of parent-reported autistic symptoms in the offspring. The Generation R Study", Rotterdam, the Netherlands 2012

Oral presentation in **The Generation R Research Meeting**: "The stability of parent reported autistic symptoms, a latent transition analysis approach", Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2012

Poster Presentation in the **59<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**: "The stability of parent reported autistic symptoms in the general population", San Francisco, USA, 2012

Poster Presentation in **AACAP/CACAP Joint annual meeting**: "Problem behavior in children born to mothers with thyroid autoimmunity during pregnancy, The Generation R Study", Toronto, Canada, 2011

Oral presentation in the **Department of Psychiatry, Utrecht Medical Centre**: "Maternal thyroid function during pregnancy and the cognitive and behavioral problems in the offspring", Utrecht, the Netherlands, 2010

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

---

2014            Impact of Mild Thyroid Hormone Deficiency in Pregnancy on Cognition and Behavior of Children, Erasmus University Medical Center

2013            Neurobiology of Development, Erasmus University

## MENTORING EXPERIENCE

---

2014	Desana Kocevskaja (PhD student, Erasmus University), Direct supervision
2013-2014	Fadila Serdavic (PhD student, Erasmus University), Direct supervision
2014	Thiago Modesto (Medical Student, University of Brasilia), Direct supervision and project design, coaching
2013	Joëlle van der Meiracker (Master student, Leiden University), Direct supervision and project design, coaching
2013	Merlijn van Geerst (Bachelor student, Vrije University Amsterdam) Biweekly meetings and coaching
2012	Natasja Kok (Medical Student, Erasmus University), Direct supervision and project design, coaching
2011	Jessica van den Brink (Medical Student, Erasmus University), Direct supervision and project design, coaching
2011	Sehrash Mahmood and Ayse Dogan (Medical Student, Erasmus University), Biweekly meetings and coaching

## INVITED PEER-REVIEWER

---

The Lancet Endocrinology  
 British Medical Journal  
 Pediatric and Prenatal Epidemiology  
 Pediatrics  
 PLOS One  
 Acta Paediatrica  
 Endocrine  
 European Journal of Endocrinology  
 European Journal of Epidemiology

## REPORTS

---

- February 2014** Nutrimenthe Project, European Community's 7th Framework Programme final report Workpackage 1 - "Long term effects of maternal dietary intake in pregnancy on cognitive and behavioural development within preschool children. The Generation R Study"
- August 2014** Nestlé, Carbohydrates and proteins intake and child's sleep up to age three years: Generation R Study

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

---

Short course: Life history processes: Recurrent events and multistate analysis. 2014

Visiting researcher, Vermont Center for Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Psychiatry, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT, USA, 2014

Symposium: Nutrimenthe meeting (role of diet in mental performance of children, European Community's 7th Framework Programme), Granada, Spain 2013

Master Class in Epidemiology, Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2013

Visit Prof. Leslie Rescorla's Lab (Language Development Survey), Department of Psychology, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA, USA, 2012

Symposium: Nutrimenthe meeting (role of diet in mental performance of children, European Community's 7th Framework Programme), Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2012

Symposium: Brain Development and Developmental Disorders, Utrecht University, Utrecht, the Netherlands, 2012

Workshop: Integrity in Scientific Research, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2012

Workshop: Writing Successful Grant Proposals, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2011

Symposium: Standardized Assessment of Child Psychopathology: New Developments, Erasmus university, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2011

Course: Epidemiology of Major Mental Disorders, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg school of Public Health, Baltimore, MD, USA, 2010

Course: Longitudinal Data Analysis (LDA) with Latent Variables, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg school of Public Health, Baltimore, MD, USA, 2010

Course: Neurocognition of Memory and Attention, Utrecht University, Utrecht, the Netherlands, 2010

Course: Biomedical English Writing and Communication, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands 2010

Erasmus Winter Programme in Clinical Research, Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2008

Workshop: Scientific Writing (Basic and Intermediate), Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran, 2007

Workshop: Management of Tuberculosis, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran, 2006

Course: Health Management, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran, 2005

---

---

## LANGUAGES

---

---

Native speaker of **Farsi**

Fluent in **English** and **French**

Advanced Knowledge of **Dutch**

Elementary knowledge of **Arabic**

---

---

## COMPUTER LITERACY

---

---

Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Endnote, SPSS, STATA, SAS