NKI Administration Enters New Era

With the retirement of Tom O’Hara, NKI begins a new administrative era. Tom arrived at NKI (then called the Rockland Research Institute) in 1982, the Institute’s 30th anniversary. He retires on NKI’s 70th anniversary, after 40 years of service including 23 years as the Deputy Director, Institute Administration (DDIA). Tom’s retirement and contributions to NKI were celebrated on November 15th in the conference room.

The departure of Tom O. brings the arrival of Tom C. Tom Cunningham, NKI’s new DDIA, is an MBA with more than 28 years of administrative experience, 20 years of which was as a research administrator at Memorial Sloan-Kettering and at Weill Medical College of Cornell University. He has exceptional expertise in research finance, compliance, human resources, and day-to-day management. He has always worked closely with investigators and understands how to support and facilitate research.

Tom’s future includes blue skies and green pastures in South Carolina.

Tom Cunningham
Tom O’Hara first joined the Information Sciences Division (ISD) as Fiscal Administrator. He is pictured here with ISD colleagues Bill Alexander (left) and Jim Robinson (right).

Dr. Helen Scharfman is the recipient of a 2022 Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). The Javits Award is a conditional, seven-year research grant given to scientists for their superior competence and outstanding productivity. Javits Awards provide long-term support to investigators with a history of exceptional talent, imagination, and preeminent scientific achievement.

Dr. Scharfman’s research focuses on neuronal excitability and plasticity, neuroendocrinology, and neurogenesis. She studies these basic mechanisms in the hippocampus with a special emphasis on their contribution to mechanisms underlying the development of epilepsy. She was the first to show the excitatory nature of mossy cells using electrophysiological recordings. Her project aims to examine the role of mossy cells during acute status epilepticus, the latent phase, and chronic spontaneous recurrent seizures, and in cognitive/emotional comorbidities in two animal models of temporal lobe epilepsy. This research could establish dual roles for mossy cells in acute and chronic phases of temporal lobe epilepsy and potentially give rise to new approaches for therapy development.

Matthew Hoptman, PhD (Clinical Research), received the 2022 Excellence in Research Award from NAMI-NYS, recognizing his decades of work studying impulsivity and aggression and his recent work on suicidality in schizophrenia employing a variety of neuroimaging modalities. The award was presented in November at NAMI New York State’s Education Conference by Dr. Abraham Goldring, Research Chair for NAMI-NYS.

Matthew Hoptman (right) with Abraham Goldring

Yohan Kim, a postdoctoral fellow in the Levy Lab (Dementia Research) won the 2022 Best Poster Award for Psychiatry Research Day at NYU, as voted on by the attendees. The title of Dr. Kim’s poster was “Sex differentially alters secretion of brain extracellular vesicles during aging: a potential mechanism for maintaining brain homeostasis”
Ayana Jordan, MD, PhD (Social Solutions & Services), has been selected by the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) to be the first recipient of ASAM’s Award for the Promotion of Inclusion, Diversity, Equality and Justice in Addiction Medicine. This award recognizes and honors an individual whose work in the area of injustice related to addiction care has improved the lives of people with addiction disorders who have been the object of discrimination, injustice, exclusion, or persecution. The presentation of the award will occur at the ASAM Annual Conference in Washington, DC, in April 2023.

Two NKI investigators have once again been recognized for their high-impact research. Drs. F. Xavier Castellanos and Michael P. Milham both appear on the 2022 list of Highly Cited Researchers compiled by Clarivate. Both have made the list every year since 2014, demonstrating their consistent output and influence.

The Highly Cited Researchers list recognizes the world’s most influential researchers of the past decade, demonstrated by the production of multiple highly-cited papers that rank in the top 1% by citations for field and year. This select group includes only 1 in 1,000 of the world’s researchers. Dr. Castellanos is a Senior Research Psychiatrist at NKI and an endowed Professor of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry and Professor of Radiology and Neuroscience at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine. Dr. Milham directs the Center for Biomedical Imaging and Neuromodulation (C-BIN) at NKI and is Vice President of Research at the Child Mind Institute.

Dr. Carla Nasca has a grant from the Dr. Ralph and Marian Falk Medical Research Trust with a subcontract to NKI titled “A novel therapeutic approach for major depressive disorder.”

A long article just published in Quanta Magazine features an extensive profile of Center for Dementia Research Director Ralph Nixon and his work at NKI. The article, “What Causes Alzheimer’s? Scientists Are Rethinking the Answer,” surveys alternative theories to the dominant amyloid cascade hypothesis and looks at Dr. Nixon’s work in depth. The article also includes a number of handsome photos of Dr. Nixon and NKI!

C-BIN Director Michael Milham was one of the main sources for this Slate article on the use of MRI in psychiatry: “Could Brain Scans Bring Psychiatry Into the 21st Century?”
Ralph Nixon and Ju-Hyun Lee (Dementia Research) posted their latest commentary on a recent publication on the Alzforum site.

NKI’s Community Building Committee spearheaded the 4th annual food drive to benefit People to People of Rockland County. The result was a donation of over 300 pounds of food and over $400 in cash for a total of over $1,300 of needed food for the Rockland County community.

Staff members of the NKI/OMH Clinical Lab contributed to the food drive.

**RETIREMENTS**

Dr. Gary Linn has retired from NKI after 36 years of service. Gary’s educational and training background is in Zoology and Physical Anthropology (BS in Anthropology-Zoology from the University of Michigan; PhD in Physical Anthropology, specializing in Primatology, from Rutgers University). Throughout his long career, he pursued an interest in nonhuman primate gonadal hormone influences on social and sexual behavior, nonhuman primate behavioral psychopharmacology relating to schizophrenia, and nonhuman primate neurophysiology and neuromodulation.
Gary’s first connection with the Rockland Research Institute was through his dissertation research project with stumptail macaques on Hall’s Island in Bermuda, where he first met Terry O’Keeffe in 1978. After finishing his Ph.D., Dr. Linn came to NKI where he worked under Ken Lifshitz, who was studying effects and side-effects of antipsychotics, antidepressants, and other pharmacological manipulations on Cebus monkey behavior and neurophysiology as a model for treatment development.

Gary then worked in Dan Javitt’s group developing nonhuman primate models of schizophrenia using NMDA receptor antagonists such as PCP.

Most recently, Gary worked in Charlie Schroeder’s group and contributed to projects studying the effects of different types of neuromodulation on nonhuman primate fMRI and neurophysiological measures of brain activity. These neuromodulation modalities include designer receptors exclusively activated by designer drugs (DREADDs), transcranial focused ultrasound (tFUS), transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), and transcranial alternating and direct current stimulation (tACS/tDCS).

Retirement will allow Gary more time for fishing, tennis, exploring the outdoors, and projects around the house.

**PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE**

Daniel Javitt, the longtime Director of Schizophrenia Research at NKI, is the author of a new review article in the Annual Review of Pharmacology & Toxicology.


Christos Lisgaras and Helen Scharfman (Dementia Research) published new research in *Epilepsia* demonstrating high frequency oscillations in a mouse model of Alzheimer’s.


Arielle Tambini (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) is a coauthor of this open access opinion paper published in the December issue of *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*.


Dr. Tambini also coauthored this new article appearing in *Neuron*.

**JAMA Psychiatry**

**Panos Roussos** (Dementia Research) is a senior author of this recent publication in *JAMA Psychiatry*.


Dr. Roussos is also the senior author of these two papers published in *Nature*-branded journals:


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**Nature Communications**

Two new articles by NKI authors appear in the open access journal *Nature Communications*.

**Ying Jiang, Ralph Nixon**, and several colleagues in the Center for Dementia Research published this paper:


And **Brian Russ** (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) is a coauthor of this one:


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**Journal of Latinx Psychology**

**Carrie Masia Warner** (Social Solutions & Services) is the senior author of this paper published in the latest issue of the *Journal of Latinx Psychology*.

Mohammed Milad (Clinical Research) is the corresponding author of this paper appearing in the September issue of *Learning & Memory*.


Xavier Castellanos (Clinical Research) is a senior author of this new article in the open access *Journal of Big Data*.


John Sidtis and Diana Van Lancker Sidtis (Brain & Behavior Laboratory) with Kelly Bridges and Helen Mayberg, recently published their latest work in the *Journal of Neurolinguistics*.

Bridges KA, Mayberg H, Van Lancker-Sidtis D, Sidtis JJ. **Familiar language in treatment-resistant depression: Effects of deep brain stimulation of the subcallosal cingulate.** Journal of Neurolinguistics 2023; 65:101110.

Samuel Neymotin (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) is the corresponding author of this open access paper in *Frontiers in Computational Neuroscience*. David D’Onofrio and Haroon Anwar are C-BIN coauthors.


Vilma Gabbay (Clinical Research) is a coauthor of this paper appearing online in *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*.


Balapal Basavarajappa and Shivakumar Subbana (Dementia Research) contributed this review to the open access journal *Biomolecules*.

Salvador Dura-Bernal (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) is a corresponding author of this research paper in the open access journal *Frontiers in Neuroinformatics*.


Gilbert Nick, Sharifa Williams, Helen-Maria Lekas, Kerstin Pahl, Chloe Blau, and Crystal Lewis (Social Solutions & Services) published this open access paper in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence Reports*.


**INFO UPDATE**

A long-awaited search feature was recently added to PubMed. Proximity searching enables you to search for multiple terms appearing in any order within a specified distance of one another in the [Title] or [Title/Abstract] fields. For more details and examples, check out the NCBI Insights blog and the NLM Technical Bulletin. An interactive video tutorial can be found here.

**TESTING FOR COVID-19**

Free COVID tests are again being offered by mail from the federal government. For more information and to order, go to [https://www.covid.gov/tests](https://www.covid.gov/tests).

New *National Guidelines for Child and Youth Behavioral Health Crisis Care* are available for download from SAMHSA.

Here is a website that helps you find local recycling information according to the zip code you enter: [https://berecycled.org/](https://berecycled.org/)

The NKI librarian is always available to assist with literature searching, citation searching (Web of Science, Scopus), bibliographic reference management, and the like. When you have any information needs, or questions about available resources, don’t hesitate to turn to us. The library offers a comfortable, quiet space for reading, work, and small meetings. To use the library’s Wi-Fi network, ask the library staff for the password.

You can [link to the NKI Library’s website](https://myNKI.nki.org) from myNKI. The Library site includes quick links to the NYU Health Sciences Library and to the New York State Library, as well as links to NKI’s own library resources (journal finder, online catalog, etc.).
EVENTS AND SEMINARS

Center for Biomedical Imaging and Neuromodulation Science Series
Held on Mondays at 11 am via Zoom
https://childmind.zoom.us/j/2142826575?pwd=dXISeDRCaW9RNWRpZ2R5Y0dPQkw4UT09

Pat Stanton, PhD
New York Medical College
N-methyl-D-aspartate Receptor Modulators as Treatments for Neuropsychiatric Disease
December 19th

Anna Wang Roe, PhD
Zhejiang University, China
January 9th

Vincent Costa, PhD
Oregon National Primate Research Center
January 23rd

Statewide Grand Rounds

Perinatal Psychopharmacology

Presenter
Kristina Deligiannidis, MD
Director, Women’s Behavioral Health
Zucker Hillside Hospital, Northwell Health

Sarah Osgood, LCSW
Hutchings PC Madison Street Clinic
Wednesday, December 21st
1:00 – 2:15 pm

Center for Dementia Research Neuroscience Seminar Series
Held on Thursdays in the NKI conference room

Frederick Maxfield, PhD
Weill Cornell Medical College
Interaction of microglia with amyloid plaques
January 5th

Tae-Wan Kim, PhD
Columbia University
Microglial TREM2 interactome in Alzheimer’s disease
January 19th

Yadong Huang, MD, PhD
UCSF Gladstone Institute
ApoE4 and Alzheimer’s Disease: Molecular Mechanisms and Therapeutic Strategies
February 2nd

The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) regularly hosts an interactive video broadcast covering the latest research, technology, and treatment implementation in the fields of psychiatry and psychology. These programs are recorded, and the archived Statewide Grand Rounds programs can be viewed on the OMH website.
Clinical Research Psychiatrist Katlyn Nemani gave the OMH Statewide Grand Rounds presentation on October 19th. Her topic was “COVID-19 & Schizophrenia: Updates on a Systemic Immune Challenge”. The recorded presentation can be viewed [here](#).

Three members of the Social Solutions & Services Department – Marilena Lekas, Gilbert Nick, and Sharifa Williams – presented their work at the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in Boston on these projects:

Williams S.Z., Granger D., Blevins K., Green N., Pahl K. *Salivary uric acid reactivity to discrimination stress and associations with cardiometabolic risk.*

Nick G., Williams S.Z., Sanichar N., Pahl K. *Psychosocial Determinants of Well-Being Indicators during the COVID-19 Pandemic.*

Lekas H-M, Lewis C., Pahl K. *Development and evaluation of a training program in social and cultural determinants of health for family and youth peer advocates in New York State.*

Several NKI researchers participated in the 2022 meeting of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology held earlier this month in Phoenix. Posters were presented by Xavier Castellanos (Clinical Research), Antigona Martinez (Schizophrenia Research), Nunzio Pomara (Geriatric Psychiatry; presented virtually) Robert Smith (Neurochemistry), and Catia Teixeira (Emotional Brain Institute). In addition, Mohammed Milad (Clinical Research) was a study group participant.

On December 15th, Drs. Helen-Maria Lekas, Crystal Lewis, and Kerstin Pahl (Social Solutions & Services) gave the final grand rounds presentation of 2022 for the NYU Department of Psychiatry. Their topic was “Rethinking Cultural Competence: Shifting to Cultural and Structural Humility”

Also on December 15th, Dr. Catia Teixeira of the Emotional Brain Institute gave a departmental talk titled "Role of PFC Activity in the Behavioral Deficits Induced by Maternal Separation".

Christos Lisgaras (Dementia Research) gave a talk in October for the NextGen Epilepsy Seminar, part of the University of California Irvine Epilepsy Research Center Seminar Series.
Below is a list of references that have been added to the NKI publications database since the previous update. The full database contains over 7,000 items dating back to 1995 and can be searched from the myNKI website.


Lisgaras CP, Oliva A, McKenzie S, LaFrancois J, Siegelbaum SA, Scharfman HE. Hippocampal area CA2 as a novel therapeutic target in epilepsy. Epilepsia 63[Suppl. 2], 5. 2022. [Abstract]


