Eugene Laska began working at the Rockland Research Institute (RRI) in 1963, lured away from IBM by Nathan Kline. At IBM, Gene had served as a consultant to companies wanting to make innovative uses of computers. Nate, besides being a strong advocate for pharmacological research, felt that computers could be productively used in psychiatry. At RRI, Gene founded the Information Sciences Division (ISD) to concretize Nate’s vision. Carole Siegel and Morris Meisner joined Gene on a part-time basis two years later, as Gene saw the value of growing a statistical research and applied program with mathematical colleagues. The resulting “industrial triplets” had been graduate students at NYU’s Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences. They remained working partners for more than 50 years. Shortly after their arrival at RRI, Gene obtained a large grant from NIMH to develop and disseminate a computer-based information system for psychiatric patient record keeping. At the time, it was the largest grant NIMH had ever awarded. He successfully created the Multistate Information System (MSIS), and for several years it was used not only in New York but in seven other states.

Over time he added innovative components to the system, such as the drug exception reporting system, a predecessor to the current widely used OMH PSYCKES drug monitoring system. Nate, perhaps prescient of the potential of data mining, encouraged ISD to examine the accumulating MSIS data and to conduct epidemiological data searches for outcome patterns related to service use.
Gene wanted to return to statistical research and consultancy activities for the Institute, so he passed the MSIS torch to Zebulon Taintor and the reigns of ISD to Jim Robinson. With the proliferation of desktop computers, MSIS (which was developed to operate on mainframe computer systems) became obsolete and the system was disbanded after 10 years. Jim shifted the focus of ISD to clinical trials data management with Gene’s collaboration and support.

Gene’s statistical research activities have been numerous and impactful. He has made substantial contributions to clinical trial methodology, with original work on crossover designs and analyses, measurement of onset and duration, simple methods for testing for synergy, and methods to evaluate combination treatments. In services research, he created new counting methods for annualizing one-week survey data (used today by the NYS Office of Mental Health), unduplicating counts across multiple lists, and counting elusive populations such as the homeless. The semiannual homeless street count by New York City uses his “plant-capture” method. He received five more NIMH grants supporting his statistical analysis research, working closely with Morris and Carole in many areas including cost-effectiveness analysis.

Gene was the director of the NKI World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Center for over 20 years, and most notably spearheaded the effort to complete the long term follow up outcome study of international cohorts of people with psychosis. The Center was one of only five WHO centers in mental health in the US.

He is a fellow of the American Statistical Association and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and has served on numerous NIH study sections and FDA consensus panels. Gene will continue his statistical research and consulting work at NYU and looks forward to conducting and contributing ideas to ‘big data’ set analyses. To relax, he intends to undertake more woodworking projects, build two more guitars, and entertain his many grandchildren.

Joseph Wanderling was an important research partner of Gene and Carole. Not only did he conduct applied statistical analyses, he worked with Gene to sharpen his ideas and to conduct simulations of their validity and feasibility. He worked with Carole on services research projects, conducting the statistical analyses and honing the statistical models they used. He is a co-author on many of Gene and Carole’s papers. Joe will definitely be playing more golf, and participating in joyous activities with his grandchildren here and in Arizona.

FROM AROUND THE INSTITUTE

Outpatient Department Community Events

The Outpatient Research Department is hosting several upcoming programs, including a special Saturday afternoon event on Feb. 20 on the topic of “Optimizing Your Brain Potential”. There will also be an 11:00 am Coffee Talk on Feb. 24 ("Brain Training Programs: Fountain of Youth or Snake Oil"), and talks on child and adolescent mental health on Feb. 10 and 22. The next NKI Brain Day will be held on Sunday, March 13, just in time for Brain Awareness Week. You can learn about these events and more on the Rockland Sample Community Events page.

ICRS

ISD Open House Event

On Wednesday, February 17, the Information Sciences Division (ISD) will be hosting an informal Open House to present its services and software to NKI investigators. Nationally recognized for its role in study data management, including the recently publicized RAISE study, ISD has numerous offerings that can benefit the NKI investigator, from developing mobile-ready survey instruments, to managing project data, to complying with NIH data-sharing requirements. Following a brief introduction, attendees will have an opportunity to try out ISD’s offerings first-hand. The Open House will be held in Conference Room B at 10 a.m. Refreshments will be served.
EBI Director Joseph LeDoux’s book Anxious: Using the Brain to Understand and Treat Fear and Anxiety appears on Forbes’ list of “The Must-Read Brain Books of 2015”.

Dr. LeDoux also contributed a piece titled “Run, Hide, Fight’ Is Not How Our Brains Work” to the Times Sunday Review in December.

Babak Ardekani (C-BIN Medical Physics Laboratory) has been selected to become a Senior Editor of the Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease. Only Associate Editors who significantly contribute over the year (5 or more Acts of Service) are invited to become Senior Editors.

In addition, two ISD employees were recently certified by rigorous exams in specialty fields:

Anina Klein, MSW, JD, CCRA has been certified by the Association of Clinical Research Professionals as a Certified Clinical Research Associate. Anina is ISD’s monitor going to clinical sites to assure FDA and protocol compliance, to assure the rights of human subjects are protected, and to assure the principals of Good Clinical Practice are in operation. Anina is also active in study development including forms and data dictionaries, and she is an alternate member of the NKI IRB.

Audrey Bauzó-Rosario, MA, CCDM has been certified by the Society for Clinical Data Management as a Certified Clinical Data Manager. Audrey has been at NKI for 12 years and is involved in all aspects of data management, from protocol review to study database development through to study closure. She works closely with site staff, reviewing their data and issuing queries and following them to resolution. Audrey has been active in many different aspects of ICRS (Innovative Clinical Research Solutions) growth including Standard Operating Procedures development, training, and mentoring newer data managers.

ISD Director Jim Robinson received an award from NYULMC for 35 years of dedicated service. It is a beautiful circular Tiffany glass artifact.

Jim Robinson (right) with NYU SOM Dean Robert Grossman
**COMPLIANCE CORNER**

*By Challace Pahlevan, MS, CIP  
Compliance Director*

**Compliance Corner** is a new feature of the NKinformer intended to highlight various compliance-related matters pertinent to the research enterprise at NKI. This month's content features human subjects research regulation and its proposed reform.

**Notice: The following proposed regulations are not in effect! Researchers engaged in human subjects research must still abide by the regulations set forth in 45CFR46 and 21CFR312 or 812 as applicable.**

**Regulatory Reform: Broad Changes to Regulations Governing Human Subjects Research.**

On September 8, 2015, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in collaboration with fifteen other federal agencies, published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the Federal Register for review by stakeholders involved in the regulation, review, and conduct of human subjects research. This proposal comes four years after an Advance Notice was likewise published, which sought comments on how to modernize and strengthen federal policies for the protection of human subjects. Although open for comment and thus further revision, the proposed rule has the potential to drastically change the way research involving human subjects is regulated.

What are these proposed changes? DHHS has identified eight revisions as the “most significant.” For more information on each proposed change and to learn how they will potentially affect research, click [here](#) (or link from myNKI under Institutional Review Board).

**Proposed Changes:**

1. Improve informed consent by increasing transparency, and by imposing stricter requirements regarding information that must be given to subjects, and the manner in which it is given to them.

2. Generally require informed consent for the use of stored biospecimens in secondary research, even if the investigator is not being given identifiable information.

3. Change the conditions and requirements for waiver or alteration of consent such that waiver of consent for research involving biospecimens (regardless of identifiability) will occur only in very rare circumstances.

4. Exclude from coverage under the [Common Rule](#) certain categories of activities that are deemed not to be research, are inherently low risk, or where protections similar to those usually provided by IRB review are separately mandated.

5. Add additional categories of exempt research to better calibrate the level of review to the level of risk involved in the research.

6. Mandate that U.S. institutions engaged in cooperative research rely on a single IRB for that portion of the research that takes place within the United States, with certain exceptions.

7. Eliminate the continuing review requirement for studies that undergo expedited review and for studies that have completed study interventions and are merely analyzing data or involve only observational follow-up in conjunction with standard clinical care.

8. Extend the scope of the policy to cover all clinical trials, regardless of funding source, conducted at a U.S. institution that receives federal funding for non-exempt human subjects research.
Many thanks to all of the NKI employees who filled holiday gift tags or made holiday contributions to the CREF inpatient unit this year. A good holiday was had by all! The residents of the CREF were very appreciative of their gifts, which they received on Christmas morning, along with coffee and donuts. In addition, almost all of the patients were treated to an outing at a local Chinese restaurant for a holiday luncheon the week before Christmas. The entire CREF Unit wishes all of NKI a very happy New Year!

On August 26, Audrey Bauzó-Rosario, MA, CCDM (ISD) and her husband Omar welcomed their second daughter. Baby Gabriela joins her older sister, Riley.

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**PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE**

Nunzio Pomara, Chelsea Reichert, and John Sidtis (Geriatric Psychiatry) published a chapter in this new book edited by David Bruno, who formerly worked with Dr. Pomara at NKI.


Dr. Pomara – along with colleagues including Jay Nierenberg and John Sidtis – also has a paper in a recent issue of *Neuropsychologia*.

Bruno D, Grothe MJ, Nierenberg J, Sidtis JJ, Teipel SJ, Pomara N. *Output order and variability in free recall are linked to cognitive ability and hippocampal volume in elderly individuals*. Neuropsychologia. 2016 Jan 8; 80:126-32.

Alexander Opitz, Michael Milham, Cameron Craddock, and Stan Colcombe (C-BIN) have a new TMS paper in *Neuroimage*.

Joseph LeDoux and coauthors including Robert Sears and Christopher Cain (Emotional Brain Institute) have a review article in Current Topics in Behavioral Neurosciences.


Charles Schroeder, Daniel Javitt, and Pejman Sehatpour (Schizophrenia Research) are coauthors of this paper describing the simultaneous use of fMRI and EEG measurements.


Crystal Fuller Lewis (Social Solutions & Services) is the first author of this article published in the Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities.


Peter Lakatos, Monica O’Connell, and Annamaria Barczak (Schizophrenia Research) contributed this Preview commentary piece to the January 6 issue of Neuron.


The latest work from the Lakatos Lab on neuronal oscillations appears in Frontiers in Human Neuroscience.


John Smiley, Cynthia Bleiwas, Eva Petkova, et al. (Schizophrenia Research) have a new paper online in the Journal of Chemical Neuroanatomy.

Robert Smith (Neurochemistry) and colleagues at NKI and elsewhere published the results of a trial of varenicline in schizophrenia.


Donald Wilson (Emotional Brain Institute) is a coauthor of a new paper in the open access journal Scientific Reports. This work was covered by the Science 2.0 blog site – “Odor Biomarker for Alzheimer’s Disease”.


Donald Wilson and Benjamin Sadrian (Emotional Brain Institute) published their latest work in Frontiers in Neural Circuits.


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 still offers a comfortable, quiet space for reading, work, and small meetings. And we now have Wi-Fi. Just ask the library staff for the password.

You can link to the NKI Library’s website 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, PsychiatryOnline, etc.). Remote access is available using NKI’s VPN.

INFO UPDATE

Relative Citation Ratio: A New Way to Measure Impact

For a long time, the Journal Impact Factor has been used (and misused) as a measure of scientific impact. But there is a fundamental problem with trying to assess any specific paper using a tool that is designed for journal-level assessment. Now, a group of researchers at NIH have come up with a new article-level metric to better assess scientific influence. An overview of this new metric, called Relative Citation Ratio (RCR), can be found here. And you can try it out for yourself with iCite, an online tool that enables you to calculate the RCR for specified papers.
NIH Body Weight Planner

The January issue of NIH News in Health introduced a free, research-based tool called the NIH Body Weight Planner. The Planner “allows users to make personalized calorie and physical activity plans to reach a goal weight within a specific time period and to maintain it afterwards”.

A new educational resource is now available through NKI’s PsychiatryOnline license. Understanding Mental Disorders: A Patient and Family Resource is a collection of up-to-date, disorder-specific chapter/handouts for distribution to patients and families. Topics already available are:

- Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar Disorder
- Anorexia Nervosa
- Bulimia Nervosa
- Binge-Eating Disorder
- Alzheimer’s Disease
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

The following topics will be added in March:

- Anxiety
- Obsessive-Compulsive
- Addiction
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

**DEPARTMENT OF WONDER**

The Year That Was

The start of a new year provides an opportunity to look back at the year that just ended with a bit of perspective. Here are several links pointing out research highlights from 2015.

- The NIH Director’s blog summarizes a few of the year’s top scientific breakthroughs.
- Nature has a website devoted to notable people, events, and discoveries from the past year in science.
- NIH Research Matters brings together noteworthy research highlights in three categories – Clinical Breakthroughs; Promising Medical Advances; and Insights from the Lab.

Concern about the mosquito-borne Zika virus has been making headlines lately. What has caused it to spread so rapidly? This Harvard Health Blog post suggests that planetary changes may have a lot to do with it.

**NKI ON THE ROAD**

At the Annual Meeting of the American Epilepsy Society, held last December in Philadelphia, Helen Scharfman (Center for Dementia Research) was one of the coordinators of a Special Interest Group session on “Epilepsy and Aging: Clinical, Cognitive and Basic Science Aspects of Aging and Epilepsy”.

[8]
UPCOMING EVENTS AND SEMINARS

**ISD Open House**

Wednesday, February 17th, 10 am
Conference Room B
See “From Around the Institute” above for details.

**Center for Biomedical Imaging and Neuromodulation Presents**

*Held on Mondays at 11 am*

**Matthew Hoptman, PhD**
NKI Schizophrenia Research Division
*Neural correlates of impulsivity in schizophrenia*
Monday, February 22nd

**Michael Milham, MD, PhD**
Director, C-BIN
*TBA*
Monday, February 29th

**Arnaud Falchier, PhD**
NKI Research Scientist
*TBA*
Monday, March 7th

**Alexander Opitz, PhD**
Design, Acquisition, and Stimulation Laboratory
*In vivo measurement of electric fields during transcranial electric stimulation*
Monday, March 14th

**Center for Dementia Research Seminar Series**

*Held on Thursdays at 10 am*

**Dani Brunner, PhD**
Early Signal Foundation
*Robust preclinical model validation and drug screening*
Thursday, February 25th

**Linda Van Eldik, PhD**
University of Kentucky
*Title TBD*
Thursday, March 17th

The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) hosts a monthly 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 by OMH employees on the OMH intranet. Anyone can view the programs on the OMH website.
Below is a list of references that have been added to the NKI publications database since the previous update. The full database contains over 5,000 items dating back to 1995, and can be searched from the NKI web site.


Bruno D, Grothe MJ, Nierenberg J, Sidtis JJ, Teipel SJ, Pomara N. Output order and variability in free recall are linked to cognitive ability and hippocampal volume in elderly individuals. Neuropsychologia. 2016 Jan 8;80:126-32.


David F, Courtiel E, Buonviso N, Fourcaud-Trocmé N. Competing Mechanisms of Gamma and Beta Oscillations in the Olfactory Bulb Based on Multimodal Inhibition of Mitral Cells Over a Respiratory Cycle(123). eNeuro. 2015 Dec 8;2(6).


