Manhattan Psychiatric Center’s Smartphone Group Project

Contributed by the MPC Inpatient Research Department

In August of 2018, Manhattan Psychiatric Center (MPC) implemented the OMH initiative to provide an affordable digital communication method to patients with severe mental illness. Such a modern communication method is a smartphone, which many patients do not have. Thus, MPC staff have been applying for patients’ smartphones through the Lifeline Assistance Program during their inpatient stay. Those who qualify under certain government assistance programs are provided with Android smartphones, free of charge. Every patient is asked whether they are interested in getting a smartphone at the start of their admission in order to be able to use it after their discharge from MPC. While many are interested, some are reluctant, either due to paranoia or unfamiliarity with this new technology.

We quickly became aware that many patients had never used a phone. Some had never even had an e-mail address. We decided to start an inpatient group to teach the navigation of a smartphone as well as to provide a safe space to use it.

When approved by the Lifeline Assistance Program, the phones are received by the patients’ respective social workers. Then, social workers contact the phone group leaders to store the phones in a designated locked cabinet in an office on the same floor where the class is held. Phones are charged on a weekly basis by group leaders. In the classroom, a hotspot has been set up so that the patients do not use their data plan during the group. Group leaders have a demo smartphone (Motorola Z3) with a Moto Insta-Share Projector to use when demonstrating and going through the lessons.

MPC Smartphone Project Staff:
Joanne Yoon, Dr. Jacob Kader, Isidora Ljuri
The group is led by two staff members, who use a smartphone manual developed internally to train patients on Android phone use. The manual includes lessons such as setting up a new phone, making calls, sending text messages, accessing the internet, making calendar alerts, etc. Within the group, patients have an opportunity to learn how to use different functions of the smartphone. They also have some free time to listen to music, surf the internet, and call or text family and friends. When asked about the smartphone group experience, one of the most common answers given by the patients was that they enjoyed being able to call friends and family as well as being able to use some of their favorite apps. They all expressed that they would continue to use their phones upon discharge.

In order to keep connected after discharge, we are working on adding an automated appointment messaging system, which would remind patients of their upcoming outpatient appointments.

With a continuing interest in technology-based treatments, we believe this is an important initiative and group to implement. This type of technology can help patients gain better access to health professionals. It may also be a source of empowerment for patients to be involved in their own treatment. And providing patients with smartphones not only allows them to be more connected to family and friends, but also helps patients connect with peers who have similar issues through group chats, blogs, and social media among other means, encouraging social interaction.

This project has been implemented by members of the MPC’s Research, Social Work, and Psychiatry departments. For further information contact Isidora.ljuri@omh.ny.gov.

KUDOS

Regina Sullivan (Emotional Brain Institute) received the 2019 Sigma Xi Christopher Clavius Award from St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, for her pioneering work on developmental and behavioral neuroscience. The award was presented on April 5 at the 30th annual Saint Joseph’s University Sigma Xi Student Research Symposium, where Dr. Sullivan was the keynote speaker. Sigma Xi is the Scientific Research Honor Society, with chapters throughout North America and beyond.

COMPLIANCE CORNER

The 3Rs of Animal Research: Part 2

By Karya Ottey, PhD
Director of Compliance

This is part II in the 3Rs of Animal Research series of Compliance Corner. The 3Rs of animal research are characterized as Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement. In this issue the concepts of replacement and refinement are examined. Often when these topics are considered, the focus turns to removing animals from the research model entirely. Such considerations should not be taken lightly, and researchers should ponder other options seriously. Providing proper justification for any animal that is used in a project is as important a decision as choosing the research topic. Models using cell lines and simulations may be valid options to garner sufficient preliminary data and should not be ignored.

The concepts of replacement and refinement are not limited to removing animals from the equation. Sometimes, it may be best to consider using an entirely different animal to answer the research
question. Researchers should keep abreast of new information that can alter their perspective on what they consider the “appropriate animal model”. Look to new data that highlights the way an animal may express a characteristic that can be effectively evaluated for new implications. For example, cephalopods can bring unique interpretations in understanding, but they are not the typical research animal.

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) exists to assist researchers in asking these questions to confirm that the correct animal model is used and that the methods that are utilized are refined in order to reduce the burden on the species. When a researcher indicates that a project should be conducted with a particular type of animal, careful deliberations should take place to ensure that the project is best done with that species. Progress in science depends on the successful translation of knowledge gained from animal research. The 3Rs are significant from a legal, ethical, and scientific standpoint as they help to focus on important considerations in animal use.

FROM AROUND THE INSTITUTE

Yoga, Dance, and Exercise in the NKI Library

Yin Yoga
Tuesdays at 4:30 pm – Led by Lindsay Laughlin. A simple 30-minute guided yoga/meditation. Bring a mat.

Dance
Wednesdays from 12-12:30 pm – Led by Qawi Telesford. Casino dance to Timba music. Sneakers preferred.

Cardio
Mondays at 5:15 pm and Thursdays from 4:30-5 pm – Led by Catarina Cunha. Full body cardio/strength training. Bring a mat and water.

Additional workouts can be undertaken using the Smart TV at your leisure. Grab a friend and go!

PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE

Helen Scharfman (Dementia Research) coauthored this paper in Science examining the role of adult neurogenesis in hippocampal brain circuitry. The authors found that adult-born neurons either inhibited or excited the dentate gyrus, depending on whether synaptic inputs originated from the lateral or the medial entorhinal cortex. The action of adult-born neurons depended on the demands of the environment, which alters cortical and subcortical input to the dentate gyrus. A Perspective article in the same issue provides additional context.


This paper from the Nixon Lab (Dementia Research) was recently published in The Journal of Neuroscience.

**The American Journal of Psychiatry**

**Xavier Castellanos** (Clinical Research) is one of the coauthors of this large-scale analysis of brain imaging samples in ADHD.


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**Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience**

**Maya Opendak** and **Regina Sullivan** (Emotional Brain Institute) recently published this open access paper on trauma processing in infants.


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**BMC Biology**

**Michael Milham** (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) and **Arno Klein** (Child Mind Institute) published a commentary piece in the open access journal *BMC Biology*, advocating open science practices.


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**Brain Structure & Function**

**John Smiley** (Neurochemistry) and several NKI colleagues published a new paper in *Brain Structure & Function*, showing a developmental sequence of neonatal ethanol effects.


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**Biological Psychiatry**

**Michael Milham** and **Charles Schroeder** (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) are coauthors of this study of interindividual variation of brain connectivity in nonhuman primates.


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**Community Mental Health Journal**

**Sharifa Williams** (Social Solutions & Services) coauthored this new article appearing in *Community Mental Health Journal*.

Kerstin Pahl (Social Solutions & Research) and colleagues at NKI and NYU published this new paper on sexual risk behaviors in the *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*.


This paper by Joshua Kantrowitz, Daniel Javitt, and colleagues at NKI (Schizophrenia Research) and Columbia reports on the effects of tDCS for auditory verbal hallucinations in schizophrenia.


**INFO UPDATE**

*PsychiatryOnline*, the electronic resource platform for publications of the American Psychiatric Association, now includes resource centers on topics including *schizophrenia, depression,* and *gun violence*. Each resource center gathers relevant information from books, journals, and other APA sources into a single place.

*Psychiatry Unbound* is APA Publishing’s Books Podcast, hosted by APA Books Editor-in-Chief, Laura Roberts, M.D. This podcast offers the opportunity to hear the voices behind the most prominent psychiatric scholarship in the field today. Some recent topics include telepsychiatry, transgender and LGBTQ mental health, psychopharmacology, and physician suicide.

A redesigned and rebuilt version of My Bibliography, the National Library of Medicine’s citation management application, was recently released. My Bibliography version 3.0 includes useful new tools and a streamlined interface. The new version also facilitates compliance with the NIH Public Access Policy. To learn about the new interface and features, see this *article in the NLM Technical Bulletin* and this *additional information for eRA Commons users*. 
**Health Statistics Tutorial**

The National Information Center on Health Services Research and Health Care Technology (NICHSR) has released a newly revised tutorial on *Finding and Using Health Statistics*. This tutorial is aimed at students and other professionals interested in an introduction to the principles behind health statistics. The interactive course is divided into four sections: About Health Statistics; Common Terms; Health Data Sources; and Finding Health Statistics. [Click here](#) to link to this free tutorial.

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**NYS Historic Newspapers**

The [NYS Historic Newspapers](#) project provides free online access to millions of pages from a wide range of newspapers documenting the history of New York State. Some of the titles recently added are from Rockland County and nearby areas. These include:

- **The Journal-News**
  Nyack, N.Y., 1932-1990
- **The Palisades**
  Camp Shanks, N.Y., 1943-19??
- **The Rockland News**
  Nyack, N.Y., 1???-192?
- **Rockland County Times Weekly**
  Haverstraw, N.Y., 1889-current
- **The Shanks Villager**
  Orangeburg, N.Y., 1946-19??

From the NYS Historic Newspapers home page, you can select a county on the state map to see all the publications from that county. You can also use the search function to search all or some of the content on the site.

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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](#) 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.

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**DEPARTMENT OF WONDER**

A [paper](#) recently published in *PNAS* documents the discovery of an extraordinary fossil deposit in North Dakota. According to the authors, the site provides powerful evidence of the asteroid collision that wiped out the dinosaurs around 66 million years ago. This discovery and its significance are the focus of an article in *The New Yorker* called “The Day the Dinosaurs Died”. But piecing together the available evidence is highly complex and scientists are not all in agreement about what it means, as [this Nature editorial](#) makes clear.
The Society of Biological Psychiatry held its 74th Annual Scientific Meeting recently in Chicago. Presenters representing NKI were Dan Iosifescu (Clinical Research), Joshua Kantrowitz (Schizophrenia Research), and Emily Stern (Clinical Research). Dr. Iosifescu was co-chair of a symposium on “Neuromodulation with Near-Infrared Light: Cell Survival, Neurophysiology, Cognition and Mood”. Dr. Kantrowitz participated in a symposium on “Psychotropic Drug Development in the 21st Century; The NIMH Experimental Medicine Program” and presented a poster titled “A Randomized, Single-Blind, Parallel-Group Study to Evaluate the Effects of TS-134 on Ketamine-Induced Bold Signals in Resting fMRI in Healthy Adult Subjects”. Dr. Stern presented a poster on “Patterns of Functional Connectivity Associated with Phenotypic Heterogeneity in Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder”.

Below is a list of references that have been added to the NKI publications database since the previous update. The full database contains over 6,000 items dating back to 1995, and can be searched from the myNKI website.


Schizophrenia International Research Society 2019 Abstracts


