MIKI KOHN: AN NKI INSTITUTION

Dr. Michael “Miki” Kohn came to the Research Facility at Rockland State Hospital in 1957, just five years after Nathan Kline arrived here with a small group of colleagues. This year marks Dr. Kohn’s 65th anniversary at NKI – a remarkable span for any life endeavor! To mark the occasion, NKI’s auditorium/conference room has been dedicated in Dr. Kohn’s honor. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on May 16, with laudatory words from NKI Director Dr. Donald Goff and a tribute from RFMH Managing Director Robert Burke read by NKI Deputy Director Tom O’Hara.

Born in Hungary on June 18, 1934, Dr. Kohn came to the United States in 1950. When he arrived at Rockland in May of 1957, he was just 22. He began his career here as a research assistant to Manfred Clynes, whom he met when they both worked at Bogue Electric in New Jersey. While working in Clynes’ Biocybernetic Laboratory, Dr. Kohn would obtain a bachelor’s and then a master’s degree from City College of New York. He would eventually complete a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from the NYU School of Engineering in 1974.

In the mid-1960’s, Dr. Kohn became head of the Bioengineering Laboratory at what was then called the Rockland Research Center. In 1982, he shifted his focus to administration and was appointed Chief of the Research Support Division. For many years, he worked closely with Dr. Robert Cancro, who was the Director of NKI from 1982-2005 as well as the long-time Psychiatry Department Chair at NYU. Dr. Kohn has also served as the Secretary of the Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene (RFMH) Board of Directors since 1978.

Over the past several decades, Miki Kohn’s leadership has been integral to NKI’s continued success and even its existence. More than once, his political savvy was key to keeping the doors open when NKI was threatened with closure. He also
played a critical role in the complete renovation and renewal of NKI’s headquarters in building 35, which opened in 1998. The naming of NKI’s conference room in Miki’s honor is a fitting tribute to his steadfast commitment and service to NKI over the last 65 years.

A group photo of the Research Facility staff, late 1950’s. Miki Kohn is sitting front and center (see close-up above). Dr. Nathan Kline is seated just above and to the right of Miki.
KUDOS

Crystal Lewis, PhD, Director of the Social Solutions & Services Division, received the NYU Department of Psychiatry’s “Research Mentorship of Faculty Award” in recognition of her exceptional mentorship and career development contributions. Dr. Lewis’s nominations for this award highlighted her work in social justice as informing her mentoring, and her impact through her committee work and professional organizations to mentor and support the scientific research careers of many including those with minoritized intersecting identities and those focused on research aimed at eliminating racial, ethnic, and other forms of health inequities. The award was announced at the NYU Psychiatry Department virtual Town Hall Meeting held on June 2.

NKI’s Director of Clinical Research Dan Iosifescu, MD, has been promoted to the rank of full Professor in the NYU Grossman School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry.

Congratulations Graduates!

Two staffers in the Division of Animal Laboratory Resources recently completed their college studies. Desiree Joseph-Jarvis received a BA in Psychology from Dominican College in Orangeburg, NY, and Christopher Buford received a BS in Psychology from St. Thomas Aquinas College in Sparkill, NY.

GRANTS RECEIVED

Dr. Kate Collins (Clinical Research), in collaboration with the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, received a subcontract for the project awarded by PCORI titled “Electroconvulsive Therapy versus Ketamine for Severe Resistant Depression”.

Dr. Carla Nasca (Dementia Research) has an R01 at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine with a subcontract to NKI titled “A translational approach for novel mechanisms of epigenetic regulation in treatment responses: toward a precision medicine model”.

In addition, Dr. Nasca recently transferred an R56 to NKI titled “Novel mechanisms of epigenetic regulation in stress and depression: toward a precision medicine model”.

Dr. Pasquale D’Acunzo (Dementia Research) received a fellowship from the LeJeune Foundation for the project titled “Propagation of mitochondrial dysfunction in the brain by mitovesicles”.

Desiree Joseph-Jarvis
Ayana Jordan, MD, PhD, joined the Social Solutions & Services Research group in April. Dr. Jordan is an Addiction Psychiatrist and an Endowed Associate Professor of Psychiatry at NYU. She is dedicated to creating spaces and opportunities for more people of color, specifically Black women in academia who are vastly underrepresented. The fundamental message of equity and inclusion has informed her research, clinical work, and leadership duties at NYU and beyond.

Passionate about helping racial and ethnic minoritized people achieve wellness and recovery from substance use disorders, Dr. Jordan has been drawn to community-based research. She is an NIH-funded researcher studying long term outcomes for providing addiction treatment in faith settings.

The New York Times Magazine

An article in a recent issue of The New York Times Magazine ("Doctors Gave Her Antipsychotics. She Decided to Live with Her Voices.") addresses the use of drugs to treat psychotic symptoms and the movement to treat auditory hallucinations with acceptance. NKI Director Donald Goff, MD, is quoted in the piece recounting his clinical experience with first- and second-generation antipsychotic drugs in the 1980’s and 1990’s.

NKI’s former Director of Technology Bill Alexander retired in 2018, but he has not been idle. Some may recall that Bill published his first book, The $64 Tomato, to great acclaim in 2006. He went on to publish two more books, 52 Loaves and Flirting with French, while still working full-time at NKI. Having resettled across the country on Bainbridge Island, near Seattle, Bill has returned to his “roots” ... with another book about tomatoes – Ten Tomatoes That Changed the World is hot off the press!

Calling all soccer players! The return of warm weather and longer daylight hours brings the return of pick-up soccer at NKI. You can find these games in front of NKI on Fridays from about 5-6 pm. If you would like to join in, just show up or email Phil Stavrides or Edenia Menezes for more details.
A new open access paper in *Nature Neuroscience* by lead investigator Ju-Hyun Lee, Center for Dementia Research Director Ralph Nixon, and colleagues presents the latest evidence from the Nixon Lab challenging the prevailing theory of how Alzheimer’s disease originates. Rather, this research suggests that Alzheimer’s disease develops due to lysosomal dysfunction within cells, causing waste buildup which is a precursor to the extracellular amyloid plaques characteristic of Alzheimer’s. The paper is featured on the June issue cover of *Nature Neuroscience* and also highlighted in an Alzforum piece titled “Behold PANTHOS, a Toxic Wreath of Perinuclear Aβ That Kills Neurons” which has received numerous comments.

NKI coauthors of this paper are Dun-Sheng Yang, Chris Goulbourne, Eunjoo Im, Philip Stavrides, Anna Pensalfini, Cynthia Bleiwas, Martin Berg, Chunfeng Huo, James Peddy, Monika Pawlik, Efrat Levy, and Mala Rao. To read more about these findings, check out the NYU press release: “Evidence Mounts for Alternate Origins of Alzheimer’s Disease Plaques”.


Clinical Research Director Dan Iosifescu is the senior author of this clinical trial report appearing in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. The collaborative study with Axsome Therapeutics showed promising results for a novel treatment for depression. The study was highlighted in an American Psychiatric Association News Alert and in *Psychiatric Times*.


Ricardo Osorio (Clinical Research) is the senior author of this open access paper published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*. Babak Ardekani, Nunzio Pomara, and Antonio Convit are among the coauthors.

In their latest study of the relationship between COVID-19 and mental illness, NKI researchers Katlyn Nemani (Clinical Research), Donald Goff, Sharifa Williams, Jean-Pierre Lindenmayer and Jim Clelland and colleagues report on the risk of COVID-19 infection among hospitalized patients taking psychotropic medications. The paper was published in JAMA Network Open and featured in a Psychiatric News Alert.


Jean-Pierre Lindenmayer (Manhattan Psychiatric Center) is a coauthor of this clinical trial report in the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry. The authors found that medication with a digital sensor reduced psychiatric hospitalization rates in patients with schizophrenia.


Panos Roussos (Dementia Research) is a coauthor of these four papers recently published in the Nature family of journals:


The latest paper on violence and schizophrenia by Menachem Krakowski (Clinical Research), Umit Tural, and Pal Czobor appears in the Journal of Psychiatric Research.


This article in Substance Abuse by Crystal Lewis, Sharifa Williams, Babak Tofighi, Helen-Maria Lekas, Adriana Joseph (Social Solutions & Services) and colleagues assesses an Internet-based intervention for drug users.


Regina Sullivan (Emotional Brain Institute) is the senior author of this Mini Review appearing in Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience.


A paper by Pearl Lie and Nixon Lab researchers Lang Yoo (co-first author), Chris Goulbourne, Martin Berg, Philip Stavrides, Chunfeng Huo, Ju-Hyun Lee, and Ralph Nixon (Center for Dementia Research) has been published in Science Advances. This groundbreaking research defines a mechanism linking dysfunction and mistrafficking in lysosomal pathways to neuritic dystrophy under neurodegenerative conditions. The article is featured in a May 5 commentary on Alzforum titled “Presenilin Mutations Stall Endosomal Transport, Swell Axons”. You can follow the Nixon Lab on Twitter @cdrnixonlab.


Sam Neymotin (corresponding author), Haroon Anwar (first author), and others in the Center for Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation have a new open access article in PLoS One.

Center for Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation Director Michael Milham is the senior author of this medRxiv preprint. The study is a collaboration between researchers at NIMH and The Child Mind Institute.


Pasquale D’Acunzo (corresponding author), Bryana Barreto, Efrat Levy, and other members of the Levy Lab (Dementia Research) and the Neurochemistry Department published this paper in Neurochemical Research.


INFO UPDATE

This free website (https://www.aiolingua.com/) offers 35 multimedia language manuals (with audio files) to help “enthusiastic students” learn English, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, German, and Chinese.

Season 7 of the public television series Healthy Minds with Dr. Jeffrey Borenstein is now available to watch on PBS.org. The Emmy nominated series features inspiring personal stories from people who have experienced mental health issues, as well as the latest information from experts on new approaches to the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illness. Season 7 guests include Drs. Joshua Gordon, Nolan Williams, Karl Deisseroth, Helen Mayberg, Rachel Yehuda, and others. Click here to see all 11 episodes.

The NIMH has released the 2022 annual update for its Strategic Plan for Research. The Plan guides NIMH grantees, potential grant applicants, and staff in the design and implementation of future research. Also available is a Progress Report highlighting the accomplishments toward the Plan’s goals made during the 2021 fiscal year.

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, etc.).
EVENTS AND SEMINARS

Department of Psychiatry
Grand Rounds

The Root Causes of Racism

Crystal Fuller Lewis, PhD
Associate Professor and Laurie M. Tisch Scholar for Racial Equity in Mental Health
Department of Psychiatry
NYU Grossman School of Medicine
Head, Social Solutions & Services Research, NKI

Thursday, June 9th, 11:00 am

Zoom link:  
https://nyulangone.zoom.us/j/95936414616
Password: psych

Statewide Grand Rounds

COVID-19 & Schizophrenia: Updates on a Systemic Immune Challenge

Presenter
Katlyn Nemani, MD
Clinical Research Psychiatrist, NKI
Research Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, NYU Grossman School of Medicine

Wednesday, June 15th, 1:00 – 2:15 pm

Center for Biomedical Imaging and Neuromodulation Science Series

Held on Mondays at 11 am via Zoom
(Meeting ID: 214 282 6575)

Alex Dranovsky, MD, PhD
New York State Psychiatric Institute
June 13

Eduardo Gonzalez-Moreira, PhD
Nathan Kline Institute
July 11

Ting Xu, PhD
Child Mind Institute
July 18

Joel Voss, PhD
University of Chicago
July 25

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.

At the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biological Psychiatry, Dr. Carla Nasca (Dementia Research) chaired a symposium titled “Innovation in Translational Neuroscience: From Exosomes to CNS Deep Molecular Phenotyping In-Vivo for New Models of Personalized Treatments of Mood and Cognitive Disorders”. As part of the symposium, Dr. Nasca presented the talk, “From exosomes to in-vivo Molecular Signatures of Aberrant Brain Mitochondrial Metabolism: Mapping the Signaling from Early Life Stress to Trajectories of Main CNS Diseases”.

NKI ON THE ROAD

At the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biological Psychiatry, Dr. Carla Nasca (Dementia Research) chaired a symposium titled “Innovation in Translational Neuroscience: From Exosomes to CNS Deep Molecular Phenotyping In-Vivo for New Models of Personalized Treatments of Mood and Cognitive Disorders”. As part of the symposium, Dr. Nasca presented the talk, “From exosomes to in-vivo Molecular Signatures of Aberrant Brain Mitochondrial Metabolism: Mapping the Signaling from Early Life Stress to Trajectories of Main CNS Diseases”. 
Drs. Efrat Levy and Pasquale D'Acunzo (Dementia Research) contributed to the program of the 11th International Society for Extracellular Vesicles Annual Meeting (ISEV2022) held in Lyon, France. Dr. Levy co-chaired a session on “Mitochondrial Dysfunction or EV Transportation Mitochondria Components” in which she presented the talk “Cocaine stimulates brain mitovesicle secretion and alters mitovesicle cargo in a sex-dependent fashion”. She also gave a presentation titled “Cocaine modulates the neuronal endosomal system and extracellular vesicles in a sex-dependent manner”. The abstracts for these talks can be found in the Journal of Extracellular Vesicles here.

NYU Langone Health
Department of Psychiatry
Grand Rounds

Drs. Donald Goff and Dan Iosifescu both participated as panelists for the NYU Psychiatry Department Grand Rounds on May 12. The topic was “Neuromodulation for Treatment-Resistant Schizophrenia”.

Dr. Goff also gave a Research Update for the Department of Psychiatry at the Department’s Town Hall meeting on June 2. Dr. Goff noted that NYU’s Department of Psychiatry has risen rapidly over the last several years to become the #3 ranked recipient of NIH funding. He also highlighted the addition of several new faculty members, including Ayana Jordan, MD, PhD, Carla Nasca, PhD, Katlyn Nemani, MD, and Arielle Tambini, PhD, who have joint appointments at NKI.

Psychiatry Department Chair Dr. Charles Marmar thanked Dr. Goff for his successful leadership of the Department’s research program and for making NKI a valuable and integral partner.

NKI Publications Update

Below is a list of references that have been added to the NKI publications database since the previous update. The full database contains over 6,800 items dating back to 1995 and can be searched from the myNKI website.


Dong Z, Kantrowitz JT, Mann JJ. Improving the reproducibility of proton magnetic resonance spectroscopy brain thermometry: Theoretical and empirical approaches. NMR Biomed. 2022 Apr 26:e4749. PMID: 35475306.


