

Division of Epidemiology

Myrna Weissman, PhD, Division Chief

Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons
New York State Psychiatric Institute

Annual Report for July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008

Overview

The Division of Epidemiology was established on July 1, 2007 as a consolidation of several existing divisions in epidemiology within the New York State Psychiatric Institute. The research mission involves studying the risk of psychiatric disorders and related disability associated with genetic, social, and environmental factors and developing interventions and programs to reduce these risks. Research methods cover the range of epidemiology and genetic studies, clinical trials, clinical, and community epidemiological surveys. Collaboration which will integrate or translate the newest methods from genetics, imaging and neuroscience with epidemiologic studies and training of graduate and young investigators are strongly emphasized. The Division is organized into four related areas: 1) genetics/high risk research, 2) epidemiology/health services, 3) prevention/therapeutics, and 4) international mental health. Core resource support is available to all members in administration, data management and subject tracking, biostatistics and statistical genetics.

Staff

Adams, Phillip PhD – Research Scientist IV
Anderson, Gabrielle PhD - Research Scientist I
Anglin, Dierdre PhD - Adjunct Associate Research Scientist
Banerjee, Poonam Nina PhD – Research Project Director
Barrow, Susan PhD- Research Scientist III
Brown, Alan MD, MPH - Research Psychiatrist II
Chen, Henian MD - Research Scientist III
Cohen, Patricia PhD – Research Scientist VI
Crawford, Tom PhD- Research Scientist III
Gameroff, Marc PhD- Research Scientist III
Greenberg, David PhD – Research Scientist VI
Gross, Raz MD- Assistant Professor
Hodge, Susan DSc- Research Scientist VII
Johnson, Jeffrey, PhD- Research Scientist IV
Kasen, Stephanie PhD – Research Scientist V
Mufson, Laura PhD- Research Scientist VI*
Murphy, Eleanor PhD – Associate Research Scientist*
Neria, Yuval PhD- Research Scientist VI
Neugebauer, Richard PhD- Research Scientist V
Olfson, Mark MD, MPH- Psychiatrist II
Ottman, Ruth PhD – Research Scientist V

Pal, Deb MD, PhD- Associate Research Scientist
Pilowsky, Daniel MD, MPH- Psychiatrist II
Reavuori, Anu, MD Adjunct Associate Research Scientist **
Shear, Katherine MD- Professor
Sourander, Andre MD- Adjunct Associate Research Scientist**
Shupf Nicole PhD - Assistant Professor
Talati, Ardesheer PhD - Post Doctoral Research Scientist
Verdeli, Helena PhD - Adjunct Professor in Clinical Psychology
Wallace, Rodrick PhD - Research Scientist III
Warner, Virginia MPH - Research Scientist III
Weissman, Myrna PhD - Research Scientist VIII
Wickramaratne, Priya PhD - Research Scientist V
Winograd, Greta PhD - Adjunct Associate Research Scientist

*Secondary Appointment ; **Nominations in Progress

Current Research

Genetics/High Risk Research: Drs. Greenberg and Hodge use linkage segregation analysis, and related strategies to advance the understanding of how genes have an impact on psychiatric and neurobehavioral disease and to develop new innovative statistical approaches to genetic problems. Dr. Weissman is engaged in a three generation longitudinal study of familial patterns of psychiatric and behavioral problems from childhood to adulthood of offspring at high and low risk for depression that involves brain imaging and genetic studies. She also leads several genetic studies involving clinical characterization and DNA collection of large samples of subjects with mood and anxiety disorders and controls.

Epidemiology/Health Services: Dr. Cohen's work assesses determinants of personality disorders based on a longitudinal, community survey from early childhood to mid-adulthood, which now includes three generations. Dr. Brown studies prenatal determinants of risk for bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and autism in large and well-characterized birth cohorts. He is also examining the relationship between early life risk factors and structural and functional brain abnormalities in schizophrenia utilizing MRI, magnetic resonance spectroscopy, and neurocognitive assessments, and characterizing developmental trajectories that are related to prenatal experience and predictive of these psychiatric outcomes. Clinical epidemiological studies of mental disorders and service needs of adults in low income primary care settings are led by Drs. Weissman and Olfson. Dr. Neria leads a study on the effects of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the risk and persistence of post-traumatic stress disorder in a large primary care sample. Dr. Olfson's research spans practice-based and secondary analysis of mental health service delivery with a focus on pharmacoepidemiology. This work addresses aspects of treatment effectiveness, quality of care, and clinical decision-making in the delivery of community mental health services. Dr. Wallace applies mathematical modeling to understand cultural systems to displacement of

minority populations. Dr. Neugebauer focused on depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms associated with bereavement and exposure to violence. Dr. Barrow examines treatment services and community contexts that influence social dimensions of recovery among homeless adults with mental illness and other marginalized groups.

Prevention/Therapeutics: Dr. Mufson is developing strategies to implement evidence-based psychological treatment in school settings. Dr. Verdeli focuses on a therapeutic intervention for children at high risk for bipolar disorder. The division also maintains an active collaboration with the Division of Child Psychiatry in their research center grant that develops and tests evidence-based mental health interventions in community settings. The Principle Research Core and Research Network Core of the Child Center Grant funding are led by Drs. Weissman and Olfson respectively. Dr. Shear conducts research on mechanisms and treatment of bereavement-related depression and complicated grief.

International Mental Health: Drs. Verdeli and Neugebauer have modified and tested interpersonal psychotherapy through a randomized controlled trial for depressed adults in Uganda and Dr. Verdeli has ongoing clinical trial collaborations in Goa, Greece, China and Kenya. Requests for training in Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT) collaboration are coming in from Kenya, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. An international meeting in IPT is being planned for March 2009. Dr. Neugebauer has assessed the prevalence of major depressive disorder in civil war related post-traumatic stress syndrome among Rwandans. Dr. Brown is conducting epidemiological and genetic research on risk factors for autism and schizophrenia in a national birth cohort in Finland.

Education and Training

Staff in the Division are highly involved in training pre- and post-doctoral fellows and psychiatric residents. The diversity of the faculty is represented in the types of training they conduct. Hodge and Greenberg's NIMH training grant in Psychiatric Genetics and Family Studies: Robust Models has 4 fellows and continues to train young investigators in a field with shortage of personnel. They are assisted by Dr. Pal, who runs the journal club in methods in genetic epidemiology.

A partial sample of educational activities includes:

- Dr. Brown's seminar in national birth cohort studies.
- The CHPS Scholar Program Center for Homelessness Prevention Studies, which Dr. Barrow directs.
- Dr. Olfson's role as an active member of the committee to review the medical school curriculum in psychiatry and behavioral sciences.
- Dr. Cohen's co-directorship of the Psychiatric Epidemiology Training Program.
- Dr. Weissman teaching of two courses in Interpersonal Psychotherapy to PGY 2 residents.

- Mentoring of pre- and post-doctoral fellows across the Medical Center and University during the past year by Drs. Verdeli, Gameroff, Kasen, Neugebauer, Murphy, Mufson, Brown, Weissman, and Wickramaratne. Pre- and post-doctoral fellows are an integral part of the Division. This year there was mentorship of five K awards, ten pre-doctoral fellows, nine post-doctoral fellows and one minority supplement. The Division employs seven graduate students part time.

Grant Awards

Barrow, S. (PI) 1 P20 MH078188 (Alexander), The Context of Parenting: Formerly Homeless Mothers with Mental Illness and their Extended Family Networks

Brown, A. (PI) NIMH/R01 MH073080, Prenatal Factors and Risk of Bipolar Disorder

Brown, A. (PI) NIMH 2K02 MH065422 (Shaffer), Epidemiology of Prenatal Factors and Adult Psychopathology

Brown, A. (PI) NIMH/R01 MH069819, Subcontract on Prenatal Determinants of Schizophrenia

Brown, A. (PI) NIMH 1R01 MH082052-01A1, Prenatal Factors and Risk of Schizophrenia in a Finnish National Birth Cohort

Cohen, P. (PI) NIMH/R01 MH060911-07, Personality disorder over 20 years: Risks, Course & Impact

Crawford, T. (PI) APA, Developmental Change in Personality Disorder Syndrome

Gameroff, M. (PI) NARSAD, The Prospective Validity of the Mood Disorder Questionnaire in Primary Care

Greenberg, D. (PI) NINDS/R01 NS27941, Multicenter Study of Idiopathic Generalized Epilepsy

Greenberg, D. (PI) NIDDK/R01 DK31775, Two-locus Models, Heterogeneity and Diabetes

Hodge, S. (PI) NIMH/T32 MH65213, Genetic Analysis: Psychiatric and Other Complex Diseases

Hodge, S. (PI) NIMH/2R01 MH48858, Psychiatric Genetics and Family Studies: Robust Methods

Hodge, S. (PI) NIMH, Development of "Evidential" Methodology for the Development of Genetic Data (Subcontract to Strug grant)

Kasen, S. (PI) AFSP, Transmission of Suicidal Behavior in Three Generations of the Same Families: A 30 Year Community Study

Mufson, L. (PI) NIMH/1R01 MH076340, Group IPT-A in School-based Clinics

Murphy, E. (PI) NARSAD Junior Investigator Award, Investigating the Challenges of Recruiting Ethnic Minorities in Genetic Research

Neria, Yuval (PI) NIMH/1R01 MH72833, Long Term Impact of the World Trade Center Attacks in Primary Care

Neugebauer, R. (PI) AFSP, Suicidality among Childbearing Women

Olfson, M. (PI), NARSAD Distinguished Investigator Award, SSRI Treatment and Suicide in Depressed Youth

Olfson, M. (PI), Lilly, Economic Consequences of Relapse in Schizophrenia,

Olfson, M. (PI) Subcontract from Rutgers on AHRQ Grant, Center for Education and Research on Mental Health Therapeutics

Olfson, M. (PI) BMS, Aripiprazole Dosing and Titration in the Community Management of Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder

Olfson, M. (PI) AstraZenica, Antidepressant Switching in the Community: Management of Depression and Generalized Anxiety Disorder,

Pal, D. (PI) PACE, Identification of the cotemporal sharp wave susceptibility gene

Sourander, L. (PI) NARSAD, Early Developmental Risk Factors for Bipolar Disorder in a Finnish National Birth Cohort

Sourander, L. (PI) Autism Speaks Pilot Award, Prenatal Factors and Risk of Autism in a Finnish National Birth Cohort

Talati, A. (PI) NARSAD, The Genetics of Panic Disorder and Social Anxiety Disorder: A Pilot fMRI Study

Verdeli, H. (PI) NIMH/ K23 MH071530, Prevention for Symptomatic Offspring of Bipolar Parents

Verdeli, H. (PI) Sol Goldman Charitable Trust, Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT) for Adolescents of Bipolar Mothers: A Randomized Clinical Trial

Verdeli, H. (PI) Association Canadien Francophone Psychotherapie Interpersonelle, ISIPT Conference Grant

Vidair, H. (PI) ACSIR Pilot, Treatment of low income parents in a family practice and the effect on their children

Vidair, H. (PI) NIH, Loan Repayment Award

Vidair, H. (PI) OMH Policy Scholar Award, Evaluating the Effects of a Psychosocial Treatment Program For Depressed Mothers and Their Suicidal Adolescents

Weissman, M. (PI) NIMH/R01 MH36197, Children at High and at Low Risk for Depression

Weissman, M. (PI) Admin supplement to above from NIDA

Weissman, M. (PI) NIMH/P30 MH071478, Principal Research Core of ACISR for Pediatric Psychiatry Disorders (David Shaffer, PI) (Myrna Weissman, Core PI)

Weissman, M. (PI) NIMH/P01 MH060970, Clinical Studies of Human Anxiety Disorders, a Project of the PPG Molecular Genetic Study of Fear and Anxiety, (Rene Hen, PI) (Myrna Weissman, Project PI)

Weissman, M. (PI), NIMH/R01 MH60912, Genetics of Recurrent Early-Onset Major Depression

Weissman, M. (PI) NIMH Minority Researcher Supplement for Murphy on above

Weissman, M. (PI) NARSAD Distinguished Investigator Award, Three Generations at Risk for Depression: Genetic Studies

Weissman, M. (PI) NIMH/T32 MH16434, Research Training in Child Psychiatry (D. Shaffer, PI,)

Weissman, M. (PI) Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology (Myron Hofer, Director, Weissman, Director of Clinical Division)

Weissman, M. (PI) Sackler, Genetic Effects in Three Generations

Weissman, M. (PI) NIMH MH082255, Parental Remission from Depression and Child Psychopathology

Awards and Honors

Dr. Alan Brown gave keynote addresses to the International Society of Psychoneuroimmunology in Munich, Germany.

Dr. Laura Mufson gave the Jack Tizard lecture at the Association of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Association in England.

Dr. Eleanor Murphy won a travel award to the ACNP, Scottsdale, Arizona December 2008 for her paper "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Willingness to Participate in Psychiatric Genetic Research."

Dr. Ardesheer Talati won a travel award to ACNP, Boca Raton, Florida December 2007 for his paper, Panic Disorder, Social Anxiety and a possible Medical Syndrome Previously linked to Chromosome-13.

Dr. Talati's paper "Serotonin Receptor 1B moderates the association between prenatal nicotine exposure and offspring psychopathology" was selected for a travel award, to be presented at the 16th World Congress of Psychiatric Genetics, Osaka, Japan. October, 2008.

Dr. Elena Verdeli was selected to Chair the 3rd International Meeting of the International Society of Interpersonal Psychotherapy to be held March 27-29, 2009.

Dr. Rodrick Wallace's book Collective Consciousness and its Discontents: Institutional Distributed Cognition, Racial Policy, and Public Health in the United States received high praise in a JAMA review

Dr. Myrna Weissman was selected for her work on depression by the American College of Epidemiology as 1 of the 10 epidemiologists in the United States who has had an impact on public policy and public health.

Dr. Weissman et al's paper, "Offspring of depressed parents: 20 years later" from the high risk study was selected by McMaster Online Rating of Evidence as the "second most read and clinically relevant psychiatry and mental health journal article.

Dr. Priya Wickramaratne became a regular member of the NIMH Family and Child Intervention Study Section and Editor-at-large for Methodology and Statistics, Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Many members serve on editorial boards. During the period, Dr. Weissman became Deputy Editor of Depression and Anxiety, Dr. Mufson was named to its Editorial board. Dr. Wickramaratne was appointed to the Editorial board of the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Dr. Brown was appointed to the editorial boards of Schizophrenia Bulletin and BMC Psychiatry.

Highlights

The Division was especially pleased that it had four first-time grant awardees (Drs. Gameroff, Kasen, Talati, Crawford). During the period, seven new NIMH grants and twelve new private foundation or pharmaceutical grants were funded.

The Division published two books, 145 papers and twelve chapters and this work has received recognition and awards (see Awards/Honors). All of this work was highly collaborative and cited in reference below are the lead authors.

Dr. Brown has identified several environmental risks for schizophrenia including elevated prenatal homocysteine levels, decelerated growth trajectory in infant girls and prenatal infections.

Drs. Crawford and Cohen showed that psychiatric prognosis was consistently worse for adolescents with comorbid Axis I and personality disorders. These findings are important for DSM V deliberation and Dr. Crawford has become a consultant to the committee.

Dr. Hodge pioneered a unified approach to population stratification in case-control studies; showed that many initially significant findings have low replication power, even when the effect found is real; therefore, replication failure should not be surprising or be interpreted as necessarily refuting one's initial findings. She demonstrated that for multipoint genetic linkage analysis, as sample size increases, for any given critical value, type I error values decrease.

Dr. Kasen found that child/adolescent obesity was associated with long-term (twenty-year) mental distress in women throughout their adult years.

Dr. Murphy found that college educated, young African Americans (AA) have increased willingness to participate in genetic psychiatry research. Mistrust remains but is markedly reduced in this group as compared to older, less educated AA. These findings suggest how to recruit AA who are underrepresented in genetic research.

Dr. Olfson documented a forty-fold national increase between 1994 and 2003 in the number of youth treated for bipolar disorder. This report received widespread coverage in the national press and prompted NIMH and OMH to issue statements calling for increased attention to the clinical diagnosis of bipolar disorder in young people.

Dr. Olfson also found a sharp decrease in outpatient psychotherapy usage in the United States between 1996-2005, sparking discussion concerning the appropriate role of psychotherapy in the delivery of psychiatric services and the changing roles of psychiatrists in the delivery of mental health care.

Dr. Pal mapped the centrotemporal sharp wave EEG trait to a gene on chromosome 11p13, demonstrating comorbidity and familial aggregation of speech disorder and reading disability in rolandic epilepsy families, and mapping of reading disability to two loci at 1q42 and 7q21.

Dr. Wallace presented the first formal mathematical model of distributed cognition, and applied it to the failure of AIDS control and treatment in the U.S., generalizing qualitative techniques previously used to study medical error in emergency room settings to public health venue.

Dr. Weissman, as part of a collaborative genetics study of early onset recurrent depression reported the first findings of a genome scan. Linkage was observed on chromosome 15q25-q26. These findings are being followed up in a second sample and the sample has entered into an international genome wide association study (GWA).

Dr. Wickramaratne explored changes in psychiatric symptoms and global functioning among children of depressed mothers during the year following remission of maternal major depressive disorder (MDD). Children of remitted mothers continued to show statistically significant improvement in functioning and decrease in psychiatric symptoms. In contrast, among children of mothers who did not remit, no significant improvement was observed. The results suggest that remission of mothers' depression has long-lasting positive effects on their children.

New Faculty

Leif Andre Sourander, M.D., Professor at Turku University in Finland will be at Columbia part time, working on the Finnish Birth Cohort data. He has been awarded two grants to support his work.

Ruth Ottman, Ph.D., is returning from sabbatical and will be joining the Division.

Publications

Books

Cohen, P (Ed.) (2008). Applied Data Analytic Techniques for Turning Point Research. New York; Taylor & Francis.

Wallace, R. and Fullilove, M. 2008, Collective Consciousness and its Discontents: Institutional Distributed Cognition, Racial Policy, and Public Health in the United States, Springer, NY.

Papers

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