



SBN

Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology

E-Newsletter

May 2008

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SBN ANNOUNCEMENTS

1) OUR 2008 ANNUAL MEETING

Be sure to mark your calendars for the 2008 meeting in Groningen July 7-10th! Remember registration fees are reduced for members, so it is an excellent time to renew your membership in SBN (see below).

Please see the conference website for details and documents: <http://www.rug.nl/bcn/sbn/index?lang=en>

2) MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2008 please go to the SBN website and fill out your renewal notice. In addition if you have new students, post docs or colleagues that would benefit from becoming SBN members please direct them to our website.

3) TRAVEL AWARDEES SBN 2008

We are pleased to announce that the SBN awards committee has chosen the following young investigators to receive travel awards to attend the 2008 Annual meeting in Groningen. Congratulations to them all!

Melissa Holmes - U Mass, Amherst
 Jamie Johansen -MSU, East Lansing
 Joseph Normandin -GSU, Atlanta
 Katharine Northcutt -MSU, East Lansing
 Kyle Gobrogge -FSU, Tallahassee
 Benedetta Leuner -Princeton Univ., NJ
 David Kabelik -Indiana Univ.
 Bridget Wyan -GSU, Atlanta
 Davaleena Pradhan -UBC, Vancouver, Canada
 Luis Martinez - GSU, Atlanta
 Diana Fleischman -UT, Austin
 Suzanne Brummelte - UBC, Vancouver
 Mathew Paul - U.Mass. Med. Sch., Worcester
 Hiroyuki Arakawa -SUNY, Binghamton
 Anne Konkle - Canada
 Nina Hansen - U. Wisconsin-Madison
 Louis-David Lord -Bowdoin College
 Kris Singletary -UT Austin

4) CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR THE "MEET-THE-PROFESSOR LUNCHEONS"

Following the SBN tradition, we will be having "Meet-the Professor" luncheons between 12:00-1:30PM during 3 days of the meeting, July 8-10, 2008. This is an opportunity for the post-doctoral trainees and students to meet and chat with the Senior Faculty in an informal setting. On behalf of the Education committee, I am requesting several

volunteers for these sessions. A mix of faculty from small and large schools, Research and/or Education-based institutions would be a great asset. Please send me an email with your acceptance and a brief description of your research program (1-2 sentences) and your lab URL, so that I can compile a list of the faculty and get back to you regarding your preference for the days.

Lets give our younger scientific generation some guidance that they need.

Thank you

Shaila Mani
Chair, Education Committee
SBN
smani@bcm.tmc.edu

5) FRANK BEACH AWARD NOMINATIONS (updated April 8, 2008)

Nominations are being accepted for the 19th Frank A. Beach Award in Behavioral Neuroendocrinology. This award is meant to recognize a junior faculty member conducting outstanding independent research in the area of Behavioral Neuroendocrinology. Investigators conducting original research in any area of Behavioral Neuroendocrinology may be nominated, by any SBN member. Coordination of the nominating process could be done by having the nominating individual work with the nominee's PhD and/or post doctoral advisor(s). Nominees should meet the following requirements. 1) They should not be more than 12 years post receipt of the Ph.D., 2) They must hold a tenure-track academic rank of Assistant Professor (or foreign equivalent if outside the United States), and 3) They should be nominated before a tenure decision has been made. An ideal candidate would be an Assistant Professor in their third or fourth year doing high quality, independent, original research in Behavioral Neuroendocrinology. The nominator(s) should submit a single letter of nomination and a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae. Additional materials will not be considered in the selection process. The winner will present a short lecture (about 20 minutes) and receive the award and a honorarium check at the Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology Social at the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience (Nov. 15-19 in Washington, DC). The text of the lecture will also be published in *Hormones and Behavior*. Nominations are due by August 1, 2008.

General Announcements

1) 5th INTERNATIONAL MEETING "STEROIDS AND NERVOUS SYSTEM" February 15-18, 2009, Torino, Italy.

An international conference on “**Steroids and Nervous System**” will be held in Torino, Italy in February 2009.

Symposia:

- Importance of co-regulatory factors for steroid receptor action in the brain
- Steroids and pain
- Estrogen-induced non-classical signaling in the brain: mechanism and role
- Pathogenetic mechanisms mediated by glucocorticoid receptors in psychiatric disorders: from bench to clinics
- Vitamin D the forgotten neurosteroid
- Sex differences in, and hormonal influences on, cannabinoid-regulated biology
- Neurosteroids and GABA-A receptors

Round Tables:

- Neurosteroids and pregnancy: long term effects on development
- Androgens and androgen receptors

Satellite Symposia:

- Unexpected actions of steroid receptors regulating reproductive and social behaviors
- Gender-specific therapeutic strategies based on neuroactive steroids: in search for innovative tools for neuroprotection

Further information: <http://www.dafml.unito.it/anatomy/panzica/neurosteroids/index.html>

The conference will be held in **Torino** at Villa Gualino, in the pleasant environment of the hill of the town close to the river Po. Torino can easily be reached either by train or by airplane.

2) NIMH HOLDS ANNUAL "PROFESSIONAL COALITION ON RESEARCH PROGRESS" BRIEFING (From the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences newsletter)

On April 18th NIMH hosted its now annual briefing for the Professional Coalition on Research Progress, of which the Federation is a member. This briefing was intended to promote a dialogue between the professional societies the work of whose members NIMH supports. At this year's briefing, four topics were on the agenda: a sneak preview NIMH strategic plan; a report on research on Public-health and Disasters, War and Trauma; an update on NIMH's intramural research on autism; and a report on new opportunities for early detection of and intervention related to schizophrenia.

NIMH director Tom Insel reported on the development of a strategic plan for NIMH which will be made public in the next few months. While he was not free to reveal exactly what would be in the plan, he did present the general thrust of the plan. At the most general level he discussed disruptive innovations in mental health that are shaping the way we think about mental disorders. He mentioned four fundamental changes in our thinking: 1) mental disorders are brain disorders; 2) mental disorders are developmental disorders; 3) mental disorders result from complex genetic risk plus experiential factors; and 4) current treatments may be necessary but are not sufficient for recovery. He went on to elaborate on these points and gave examples of how they have changed the kind of research that is being done, using research on depression and schizophrenia as examples.

In the discussion, several members from the associations noted that the thrust of Dr. Insel's remarks indicated a shift away from a more purely biological explanation of mental disorders and a move toward the effects of experience and the environment in the development of mental disorders, that is, more emphasis on behavioral factors and less on brain and genetic factors. Dr. Insel agreed with this interpretation and noted a renewed emphasis on non-pharmaceutical interventions in treatment. In particular, cognitive-behavioral therapies were mentioned several times as proven effective treatment methods and in many instances more effective than drug therapies.

Dr. Robert Ursano, Director of the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, gave an overview of research on stress in the aftermath of traumatic events such being a victim of violent acts, natural disasters and combat. He stressed PTSD as a public health problem that was much more common than is generally believed and called for increased research and training for first responders and others involved with those who have suffered from traumatic experiences.

Dr. Susan Swedo, Chief of the Pediatric and Developmental Neuropsychiatry branch, spoke about the NIMH intramural program of research in autism. This program is just getting underway and involves the study of autistic children who are being treated in NIMH facilities. The program studies sudden onset of autism and concentrates on new ways to predict autism as early as a child's first birthday. While there is some promising research in identifying the underlying genes involved, we are still a long way from understanding the causes of autism or developing effective interventions to prevent or ameliorate the disease.

Dr. Robert Heinssen, Jr., the Acting Deputy Director, Division of Services and Intervention Research, reported on research that has led to the development of promising methods of early detection of schizophrenia before the onset of full-blown psychoses. Early detection offers the opportunity for interventions that appear to be effective in preventing or ameliorating later stages of more deteriorated functioning. In early interventions, therapies such as CBT appear to be more effective and drug therapies that are effective after psychoses have developed.

3) REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI): To Solicit Ideas for Common Fund / Roadmap Trans-NIH Strategic Initiatives

To Our Current and Potential Grantees: **Issued by** National Institutes of Health, Office of the Director, Office of Portfolio Analysis and Strategic Initiatives (OPASI), <http://opasi.nih.gov/> The NIH is seeking input from the scientific community, health professionals, patient advocates, and the general public about innovative and cross - cutting initiatives to be funded through the NIH

Common Fund. The NIH Common Fund / Roadmap was created by the NIH in 2004 and enacted into law by Congress through the 2006 NIH Reform Act to support cross-cutting, trans-NIH programs. Because NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs) regularly collaborate in areas of shared interest, the IC Directors and the NIH Leadership developed specific criteria for Common Fund / Roadmap programs. Primary among these criteria is that Common Fund programs are expected to have exceptionally high impact and to transform the way research is conducted. All Common Fund / Roadmap programs are relevant to multiple diseases. They address common challenges that are faced by investigators working in multiple disease areas.

The Common Fund / Roadmap supports programs that address fundamental knowledge gaps, develop transformative tools and technologies, and/or foster innovative approaches to complex problems. These programs are supported for a limited duration of 5–10 years. Long-term support is not consistent with the intent of the Common Fund / Roadmap. A limited duration keeps the fund nimble and able to respond to new opportunities and emerging challenges. It also allows the NIH to regularly test new ways of fostering innovative science. Common Fund / Roadmap programs use these 5–10 years of support to develop tools and technologies and establish new scientific paradigms which can then be adopted by the community through IC-funded awards.

Collecting these ideas is an initial step in the process of identifying a new cohort of Common Fund / Roadmap programs for Fiscal Year 2011. This RFI provides an opportunity for respondents to submit their own ideas. The NIH expects to spend \$30 - 50 million per year from within the currently projected Roadmap budget for new 5-year initiatives.

For more information go to: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-RM-08-014.html>