



Update from Department Head **Dr. Athanasios Zis**

Distinctions and Awards

Dr. Caroline Choo, (Geriatric Psychiatry) was honoured with a Distinguished Fellowship medallion by the American Psychiatric Association.

Dr. Alaa El-Husseini (Basic) Neuroscience was appointed Distinguished Junior Scholar by UBC. According to the President, this distinction is bestowed only to a select group of exceptional scholars. The appointment is conferred for five years is renewable and carries a permanent salary increase of \$10,000 !

Dr. Tim Murphy (Basic) Neuroscience received over \$80,000 for the first year of a three year grant from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC and Yukon to study the protective effects of glial glutathione against neuronal oxidative stress.

Results of the 2004 MSFHR Scholar and Trainee Awards competitions

This is the second year in a row that the Department's success in these competitions was outstanding. The successful applicants are:

Division of (Basic) Neuroscience:

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Ann Marie Craig | Senior Scholar | |
| Weihong Song | Scholar | |
| Kimberley Gerrow | Trainee | (Dr. Alaa El-Husseini) |
| Mannie Fan | Trainee | (Dr. Lynn Raymond) |
| Joshua Levinson | Trainee | (Dr. Alaa-El-Husseini) |
| Philippe Isope | Trainee | (Dr. Timothy Murphy) |
| Yigang Tong | Trainee | (Dr. Weihong Song) |

Division of Clinical Neuroscience:

| | |
|---------------|---------|
| Robert Holt | Scholar |
| Erin Michalak | Scholar |

Annual Clinical Neuroscience Conference

The second annual Clinical Neuroscience Conference organized successfully once again by Dr. William MacEwan (Clinical Neuroscience), and co-sponsored by the Brain Research Centre and the UBC CME Division took place in February. The theme of the two day event attended by over 150 participants was Onset of Psychotic and Mood Disorders and included plenary sessions, small group workshop sessions and a debate. Topics ranged from diagnostic and treatment issues to molecular neurobiology, neuronal signaling and neuroplasticity. This year's keynote speakers were Prof. Jean Addington, Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto; Prof. Peter McLean, Department of Psychiatry, UBC; Prof. Allan Young, School of Neurobiology, Neurology and Psychiatry, University of Newcastle and Dr. Hussein Manji, Chief, Laboratory of Molecular Pathophysiology, NIMH.

Psychotherapy Panel Presentation / Discussion

The Psychotherapy Program (Behavioural Science), under the leadership of Dr. William Piper is continuing with the popular Dinner Panel/Presentations. The third

such event since the inception of the Psychotherapy Program in September 2002, focused on Medication and Psychotherapy: Competent Management in Clinical Practice and Supervision. The panelists were Dr. Michael Myers, (Adult Psychiatry), Dr. Joan Pinkus (private practice) and Dr. Irena Straszak, (Behavioural Science) and was moderated by Dr. Rene Weideman (Behavioural Science). Topics of previous evenings were: Boundaries in Supervision: How does supervision differ from Psychotherapy and Establishing an Effective Supervisor – Supervisee Relationship? These events, approved as an accredited group learning activity by the Maintenance of Certificate Program of the Royal College, have been especially popular with our Clinical Faculty and are supported in total or in part by the STI Finance Committee (chaired by Dr. Valerie Gruson, Adult Psychiatry).

First Annual Frames of Mind Mental Health Film Festival

From May 13-16, 2004, the UBC Department of Psychiatry and Pacific Cinémathèque presented the 1st Annual Frames of Mind Mental Health Film Festival: four days and nights of screenings, workshops and discussions centered on issues of mental health and the cinema. The Festival was a resounding success with near capacity crowds for a number of the screenings. Opening night featured People Say I'm Crazy, John Cadigan's award-winning video diary of his struggle with schizophrenia. Other screenings included Sybil, the definitive cinematic treatment of multiple personality disorder; Dying at Grace, Allan King's powerful humanist documentary on the last days and dying moments of patients at Toronto Grace Health Center; Titicut Follies, Frederick Wiseman's raw and controversial documentary of the horrid conditions at a Massachusetts asylum for the criminally insane; and the Vancouver premiere of Elling, a popular Norwegian film that deals with the community transition of two outpatients from a state-run mental health facility. In a special workshop for high school students, the screening of Donnie Darko was the impetus for a discussion of Movies, Mental Illness, and Stigma. The driving force behind the success of this Festival was Dr. Harry Karlinsky, Director, Continuing Medical Education who is also responsible for organizing the equally successful monthly Frames of Mind series.

Dr. William (Bill) Maurice

William (Bill) Maurice (Adult Psychiatry) retires from UBC in June 2004. Following an elective with Masters & Johnson during his Psychiatry residency in St. Louis, he pioneered the development of Sexual Medicine at UBC when he (together with Dr. George Szasz) began the Sex Therapy Unit at VGH. This became the Sexual Medicine Unit at Shaughnessy Hospital and eventually the Centre for Sexuality at VGH. He was a founding member and President of the Canadian Sex Research Forum and is the current President of the US based Society for Sex Therapy and Research (SSTAR). In 1999 he published "Sexual Medicine in Primary Care", a widely praised text.



Event Calendar

'Frames of Mind'

A Mental Health film series held the 3rd Thursday of each month at the *Pacific Cinémathèque* 7:30 P.M.
1131 Howe Street, Vancouver
Tickets \$7.50/6.00 at the door or on-line at www.cinémathèque.bc.ca

June 17, 2004

"Venus of Willendorf"

Discussant: Cynthia Johnston
Topic: Bulimia

July 15, 2004

Title to be Announced

August 19, 2004

Title to be Announced

Teaching Hospital /Division/Program Education Rounds

Information /details available at :
www.psychiatry.ubc.ca/cme/rounds/

Other Activities

June 19, 2004

Resident Graduation Dinner- Pan Pacific.
Information -please contact Lynn Falconer
604-822-7730

July 8, 2004 - 5:30 p.m.

Location: TBA
BBQ and Welcome
for PGY1 & PGY2 residents.
Information -please contact Lynn Falconer
604-822-7730

October 22, 2004

Location: UBC Robson Square
Hidden in Plain Sight: Depression and Anxiety related to Pregnancy & Postpartum, PMS & Menopause
Sponsored by: Reproductive Mental Health Program, Women's Hospital of BC
Division of CME, Faculty of Medicine

Editor - Dr. Harry Karlinsky

Managing Editor - Michelle Purcell

This newsletter is published quarterly as a vehicle to promote communication within the UBC Dept. of Psychiatry as well as with its wider community. Feedback and suggestions for invited submissions can be forwarded to the Editor at harryk@telus.net.

Annual Research Day

Dr. William Honer

The 19th annual Departmental Research Day was held on Thursday, April 1, 2004.

Research day is an opportunity for students and trainees in the Department to present their work to their peers and mentors. Graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, medical students and residents describe their research in oral and poster presentations. This year we had a total of 35 presentations. Of particular note were the four prize winners.

The Tsung-Yi Lin Award for Clinical Research (sponsored by Lundbeck) went to Sara Weinstein from Dr. Elton Ngan's lab. Sara's talk was on her work using functional magnetic resonance imaging and novel cognitive challenges to understand mechanisms of thought disorder in schizophrenia.

The McGeer Award for Basic Science (sponsored by Pfizer Canada) went to Dr. Oliver Prange from Dr. Alaa El-Husseini's lab. Oliver's talk concerned new molecular findings which may provide important clues on cell-cell communication in disorders such as autism.

The Clinical Research Poster Award (sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline) went to Dr. Megan Sherwood from Dr. Bill Honer's lab. Megan's poster described a meta-analysis of the time course of response to antipsychotic drugs, and demonstrated a two-phase response over the first 6 weeks of treatment.

The Basic Science Poster Award (sponsored by Janssen-Ortho) went to Helge Johannssen from Dr. Tim Murphy's lab. Helge's poster described his work on an important anti-oxidant mechanism which may protect neurons during stresses related to diminished oxygen supply such as ischemia.

Our panel of judges deserves great thanks for the difficult task of selecting the winners. This year the judges were: Dr. Chris McIntosh from Physiology, Dr. Richard Williams and Dr. Steve Vincent.

Also thanks to the Chairs of the oral presentations, Drs. Kerry Jang and Weihong Song.

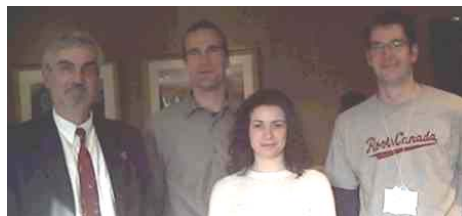
Research Day also provides an opportunity for students and faculty to hear plenary presentations from leading researchers in neuroscience and mental health. This year we had two plenary speakers. Dr. Adele Diamond, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School presented a talk titled "The Development of Prefrontal Cortex and Executive Control Functions: Genetic, Biochemical, and Environmental Modulation". This was an excellent exposition of a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding cognitive mechanisms in childhood development, and how these may contribute to abnormalities in adults with mental disorders.

The afternoon plenary presentation was from Dr. Trevor Young, Cameron Wilson Chair in Depression Studies in the Department of Psychiatry at University of Toronto. Dr. Young's talk was titled: "Signalling, Sprouting & Neuroprotection: Rethinking the Cause and Treatment of Mood Disorders". His work is an excellent example of translational research, incorporating animal models, brain imaging and molecular studies to inform efforts to develop new treatments for mood disorders.

The formal program was followed by a well-attended reception at the UBC Golf Club.

Credit, and many thanks for all the arrangements goes to Ms. Barb Humphries, as well as Linda Kompauer, Archana Harit and the front office staff.

We hope to have an equally good or better Research Day next year (Thursday, April 7, 2005) and look forward to seeing you there. Mark your calendar now!!



From left to right: Dr. A. Zis, A. Prange, S. Weinstein & H. Johannssen. (M. Sherwood was unavailable for picture).

Upcoming Annual Research Days

April 7, 2005
March 30, 2006
March 29, 2007

STAY TUNED!!

The New Genetics: Implications for Mental Disorders
2005 Clinical Neuroscience Conference
Feb 25 & 26, 2005
SFU Harbour Centre,
Vancouver, BC

The human genome project is complete, and we are now in the era of applied genetics. Understanding of the role of genetic factors in mental disorders is advancing rapidly. The public is optimistic about molecular advances in medicine, but at the same time concerned about the implications of genetic research. The 2005 Clinical Neurosciences Conference will bring together international and local experts on genetics, to discuss both molecular findings and the societal consequences of the new genetics. This will be an excellent opportunity for practitioners and members of the community to hear the latest research, and enter into a dialogue on the implications.

This popular conference, now in his third year, will appeal to Psychiatrists, Psychologists, General Practitioners, Mental Health Professionals, and others with an interest in this area

Guest Speaker

Dr. Veronica Pearson
Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong

Conference sponsored by:

The Division of Clinical Neuroscience, Department of Psychiatry
The Brain Research Centre
The UBC Division of Continuing Medical Education

Target Audience

Psychiatrists, primary care physicians and other professionals in the field of mental health

More Information

www.cme.med.ubc.ca
email: cme@cehs.ubc.ca

Antidepressants in Children & Adolescents | Dr. Jane Garland

Editor's Note: *Dr. Garland was invited to contribute this article in view of the importance of the topic and the pivotal role she played in bringing this issue to public and professional attention.*

Beginning in July 2003, regulatory agencies in several countries have issued advisories about an observed doubling in the rate of suicidality, and increased rates of aggression and behavioral disturbances in young people treated in trials with selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) compared to placebo. These advisories also revealed for the first time an unexpected lack of efficacy in major depressive disorder (MDD) in clinical trial data most of which had been unpublished although completed several years ago. This conflicted with practice guidelines and medication algorithms which have made the assumption, based on limited published data, that antidepressants were effective in pediatric MDD.

These advisories have triggered a re-examination of the evidence base for antidepressant treatment in children and adolescents. As a result, several articles including my own commentary in the February 17, 2004 CMAJ, and two regulatory agencies have made the strong case that the current evidence based on 15 large randomized placebo controlled trials, of which 12 were negative, refutes the efficacy of antidepressants in child and adolescent MDD, with the exception of some symptom improvement with fluoxetine, particularly in the presence of co morbid anxiety disorder. In addition, a pattern of increased psychiatric adverse events with medication compared to placebo is found in many of these trials, including emotional lability, aggression, hostility, disinhibition, hyperkinesia and suicidal behaviors with up to 10% of patients discontinuing medication due to these effects compared to 0-1% with placebo. More detailed discussion of the trial data including adverse event data is found elsewhere, and will also be provided in summary form to BC physicians in an article I was asked to prepare for the Therapeutics Initiative newsletter.

Beyond the specific issue of antidepressants in children, these developments have highlighted a broader problem of what has been called "evidence-biased medicine" characterized by nonpublication of negative data,

duplicate publication, and statistical manipulation to distort the evidence base, and complex conflicts of interest. In many areas of medicine, we may be operating with a collective delusion of undertaking evidence-based medicine when even our meta-analyses are carried out on a biased dataset.

The implications of these developments for academic medicine as a whole are alarming. Clinician-researchers and medical educators like myself who, under nondisclosure agreements, saw negative results of these earlier trials were prohibited from discussing them until they became public domain as a result of the actions of regulatory agencies. In other words, for the last few years when teaching or presenting at Continuing Medical Education, I was prohibited from commenting on the negative trial results which outweighed the small amount of published data. It is hoped that changes being taken to rectify the SSRI situation will prevent future problems of this nature. However, continued concerns about conflicts of interest in academic-industry relationships and the startling refusal of leaders in American child psychiatry to objectively examine the evidence base, suggest that it may be some time before this tangled web is unraveled.

What is the current status of antidepressant prescription for young people? In Canada, no antidepressant is approved for pediatric use. Health Canada has required new labeling regarding the potential for suicidality, and emotional or behavioral disturbances including agitation, disinhibition, emotional lability, hostility, aggression and impulsive thoughts for all SSRIs and SNRIs. In the US, fluoxetine is approved for depression in individuals aged 8 years and older, and several other SSRIs are approved for pediatric obsessive compulsive disorder. However, the FDA's recent labelling change includes a strong warning about the potential for suicidality and various emotional and behavioral adverse effects. The British regulatory agency actively advises against prescribing any antidepressants except fluoxetine for MDD as the risk benefit balance has been deemed "unfavorable". Despite this status, the rate of prescription of antidepressants to individuals under 19 years of age has risen steadily over the last decade, increasing 7 times from 1989 to 1996, and doubled in this province from 1998-2003.

It has been difficult for the profession to come to terms with these disappointing trial results. This is probably because clinical practice resembles an open trial. The high placebo response rate (59% in a sertraline trial), patient

and doctor expectations of active treatment, supportive care, spontaneous remission, and effects on anxiety create an apparent drug response which reinforces prescribing behavior. Unrealistic public expectations of medications have risen due to direct to consumer advertising as well as educational campaigns by mental health and professional organizations. In the context of the new evidence, suggestions for evidence-based and practical management of adolescent depression are outlined elsewhere. In brief, there may be an indication for a trial of medication in more severe depression nonresponsive to psychological interventions, or in the presence of comorbid anxiety disorder; there is sufficient evidence to support the efficacy of SSRI's for symptom reduction in OCD, and accumulating evidence in mixed anxiety disorders. However, the 10-25% rate of psychiatric and behavioral adverse events, including increased suicidal behavior (1-2% versus 0% in placebo) is evident in anxiety trial data for several medications. There is also unpublished negative data from anxiety trials which has yet to be made public.

Personally, as I have struggled to understand these issues I have become aware that there are indeed powerful forces within ourselves, our profession, and the current academic climate which discourage this kind of critical questioning. My own involvement with both industry and peer reviewed trials, and my efforts to actively examine the evidence base after the initial reports arose last summer, have raised many ethical and moral issues with respect to the practice of psychiatry and of clinical research. I am grateful to several members of this department, particularly Dr. Athanasios Zis, Dr. Campbell Clark and Dr. Derryck Smith for strongly supporting my stand on behalf of academic integrity when I had the temerity to give talks with titles such as "What is Truth?". Dr. Marc Levine of Pharmaceutical Sciences and consultants at the BC Research Institute have also provided helpful and generous consultation. I am grateful for Australian and British colleagues who have also had the courage to question the prevailing views, thus ensuring that I am not a lone voice in the wilderness. I remain very concerned, however, that this critical re-evaluation of the evidence base for depression treatment in children does not appear to be occurring to the same degree at many major academic centers or among "opinion leaders" in the field.

For references and more information, contact Jane Garland at jgarland@cw.bc.ca

2004 American Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting First Prize for Mixed Media Art

Editor's Note: The artwork "This Is How I'll Look When We Say Goodbye" is on death and cultural surprise. It won first prize for mixed media installation at the APA Art Exhibit in the Javits Centre in New York in May 2004. It provoked much discussion at the show and was unusual on a few counts - Canadian content for the art show, images of death, Asian content, art that was a result of a collaboration, and art by a Distinguished Fellow of the APA, Dr. Caroline W.H. Choo, UBC Department of Psychiatry Clinical Associate Professor.

This is how I'll look when we say goodbye

The mixed media art installation, "This is how I'll look when we say goodbye", deals with the theme of death and cultural surprise within one's Chinese family.

Three large translucent banners that reference Chinese scrolls honour one woman's majestic approach to her final journey.

The piece is a collaboration between Richmond psychiatrist Dr. Caroline W.H. Choo and award-winning writer Paula Stromberg.

Dr. Choo commented, "As a psychiatrist, much of my work (except in palliative care) is to steer people back from the brink of death. When someone dies despite our efforts, that death can represent a failure."



The second image in this installation, the pink hand of the living holding the cooling hand of the newly-dead, portrays an aspect of death that as professionals, some psychiatrists rarely experience.

The work documents the unexpected death preparations made years earlier by Dr. Choo's uneducated 88-year-old Chinese grandmother who dressed in dull cardigans, padded jackets and polyester trousers throughout her life --- yet surprised those who thought they knew her well by embracing her own death with confidence, nobility and elegance.

Artists' Statement—By Dr. Caroline W. H. Choo and Paula Stromberg

This is how I'll look when we say goodbye



The day my grandmother Lan Hoe died, we were surprised to find the clothes and portrait she had been murmuring about in the hospital actually existed. She also told us ancestors were gathering by her pillow so at first we feared morphine clouded her mind.

From her hospital deathbed, she bid her son and three daughters to give the box stored at the back of her closet to the undertaker. Funeral preparations began.

Lan Hoe, dead at 88, was born in a remote orchid-farming village in China and emigrated to Singapore as a young woman. Although Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew

encouraged Singaporeans to adopt modern ways, Lan Hoe kept many mysterious customs.

We discovered that when she turned 60, she had a large photo portrait taken, framed and stored in a box. We had never seen it before although she lived with us many years in Canada. *This is how I'll look when we say goodbye.*

Stored in the same large box at the back of her closet was a breathtaking silk robe. She had gone to a tailor to be measured and fitted, then kept the majestic clothes nicely folded in her box, waiting for the big day.

In everyday life, she wore

casual Chinese grandma clothes – grey cardigans, padded jackets and loose pants – but she planned to be splendidly dressed when she crossed over. *This is how I'll look when we say goodbye.*

Lan Hoe amazed us, lying in her white coffin, attired for her grand journey. Her floor length 'sou yi' was indigo brocade with a brilliant blue collar. Her daughters tucked slippers on her spotted, plump feet. She held a red zippered purse. Clearly she was ready. *This is how I'll look when we say goodbye.*

by Dr. Caroline W.H. Choo
and Paula Stromberg