

2010 ACNP Educational Outreach Initiatives

John Krystal, Yale

Neuroscience 2010: Risk, Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery

The Neuroscience conference supported by the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP), and sponsored by the Connecticut Mental Health Center, the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), Yale University Department of Psychiatry, and the Connecticut National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) was held on Saturday April 10, 2010. This was the 19th annual neuroscience conference. There were a total of 329 participants in attendance. The attendee group was comprised principally of consumers, their family members, and community caregivers.

The session began with opening remarks by Patricia Rehmer, Ph.D. the Commissioner of DMHAS; Mr. Ralph Oriola the President of NAMI-CT, and John Krystal, M.D. the Pale Psychiatry chair. Dr. Krystal presented Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison, author of the best-selling book "An Unquiet Mind" and a Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, with the fifth Mental Health Research Advocacy Award for her contributions as an advocate on behalf of individuals with mental illness. She gave a riveting reading of works highlighting the cost of mental illness for the individual – and for society.

Dr. Jamison's talk was followed by a series of presentations:

An Introduction to Genetics and the Brain by Joan Kaufman, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry and the Child Study Center, Yale University School of Medicine

An Update on the Development of Novel Treatment Strategies for Treatment Resistant Depression by Dr. Jonas Hannestad, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Yale University School of Medicine

Schizophrenia: Moving Backwards to Prevention by Thomas McGlashan, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Yale University School of Medicine

Brain, Stress, and Chocolate by Dana Small, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Yale University School of Medicine and Associate Investigator at the Pierce Foundation, New Haven, CT

Adult Outcomes of Children with Tourette Syndrome and OCD by Michael Bloch, M.D., McNeil Fellow in Psychiatric Neuroscience, Yale University School of Medicine.

These scientific sessions presented for the predominantly lay audience were followed by "Ask the Experts" Clinical and Research Break-out Sessions that allowed participants to engage in in-depth dialogue with researchers and clinicians. The event was extremely well received by the consumer and advocacy community. It also has provided a context for highlighting the collaboration between DMHAS and Yale in advancing the study of the neurobiology and treatment of mental illness.

Steven Siegel, University of Pennsylvania

The aim of this program was to address the paucity of Underrepresented Minority (URM) students in medical school, with a corresponding paucity of URM trainees available to become future Psychiatrists and leaders in neuroscience research. There were three main components of the ACNP sponsored outreach effort:

- 1) **Engagement of underrepresented minority high school students** in psychiatric research and exposure to clinical practice. Students participating in the Penn Pipeline were invited to apply for an ACNP summer fellowship in the PI's laboratory. One URM high school student from an economically disadvantaged area of West Philadelphia (Sayer high school), Deana Merriweather, was selected for a paid full time summer research internship. Two additional URM high school students who were identified as part of this process were asked to join her, but could not be supported on this mechanism. Ntiense Inyang also joined the laboratory for the summer. However, the other student declined, sighting her inability to take an unpaid position. Both Deanna and Ntiense participated in full-time academic research, shadowed in Dr. Siegel in clinical practice, and attended a variety of classes including the ethical conduct in research, environmental and health and Research Services (EHRS) laboratory safety, as well as the translational research seminar series for visiting undergraduate summer students.
- 2) **Academic Career for Underrepresented Minority Students Series:** The second component of the ACNP outreach program supported a seminar series for the underrepresented minority community at Penn (dinner for 30 students). All notices and flyers noted that the series was supported by an educational outreach grant from ACNP. Four lectures were funded to engage URM medical students, who traditionally do not enter academic medicine at the rate of their peers. This self-imposed disparity in access to academic leadership positions leads to a propagation of disparities at the institutional and national levels. Speakers included the PI (Steve Siegel) and Co-I (Roy Hamilton) of this grant, as well as two URM senior faculty members (Francisco Gonzales and Chanita Hughes-Halbert).
- 3) **Health disparities in the minority community:** The final portion of funds was used to fund a medical student to spend the summer studying health disparities in the minority community while working with a minority faculty member.

Ray Anton, Medical University of South Carolina

MUSC hosted a conference on Dec 1, 2010 for high school educators and guidance counselors to provide training in how to deliver a science-based substance abuse prevention program designed for 8th-12th grade students called "Just Say KNOW." This program was developed and standardized in 2006 and has been delivered to over 8,000 students to date; requests for this program exceed capacity to accommodate. The education award by ACNP afforded the opportunity to provide training to frontline education professionals to allow them to bring the program to their school and schools in

their area, thus sharing the JSK program with students across the state. Participants also received continuing education credits for attending the conference.

All attendees were provided with resources to allow them to adopt the program, including a sample DVD of the presentation being delivered, a PowerPoint file of the presentation, additional brain/neuroscience resource CDs, and notes from the conference. In addition, all attendees were given access to a “brain buddy” (neuroscience graduate students and neurology medical students at MUSC) to whom they could email questions they may have prior to or following delivery of their own presentation to students.

Eighty participants attended the conference. We assessed change in knowledge (pre- vs post-test) and satisfaction using an audience response system (TurningPoint AnyWhere, Turning Technologies, 2006). At pre-test, the average correct response rate was 50%; at post-test, the average score was 82% correct. In addition to knowledge change, participants reported high rates of satisfaction with the conference. Ninety-two percent (92%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the conference, and 100% reported that the information was useful or extremely useful. Finally, participants were asked how likely they were to employ the JSK program in their own school. Eighty-three percent (83%) reported that they were likely or very likely to employ it; none of the participants said they were unlikely to use it.

Kristin Cadenhead, University of San Diego, California

The Cognitive Assessment and Risk Evaluation Program (CARE) at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) was established in 2000, under the direction of Dr. Kristin Cadenhead to study prodromal schizophrenia with ultimate goals of identifying those individuals at greatest risk for psychosis, beginning treatment interventions earlier, targeting treatment more effectively, and ultimately preventing some of the devastating aspects of a first psychotic episode.

An Educational Outreach Initiative generously provided by the ACNP allowed CARE to develop an Outreach Program for high school students to gain a better understanding of the relationship between substance use and mental illness, specifically schizophrenia; to destigmatize schizophrenia and promote mental health; and to stimulate interest in behavioral health research.

Five high school classes with students ranging in age from 14 to 21 received an hour long interactive workshop focusing on schizophrenia and related disorders; neurocognitive effects of substance abuse; interactions between substance use and development of mental illness; and myths and stigma attached to mental illness. The curriculum was developed by CARE program staff and included material provided by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. These workshops were presented by a psychologist from the UCSD CARE Program and a volunteer with a family history of schizophrenia.

In each of the classes, students were engaged with and receptive to the information. Animated discussions among students were common, particularly in relation to substance use. Additionally, several of the students shared very personal and poignant accounts of their own personal struggles with mental health issues. Many of the students asked questions regarding their own mental health symptoms and/or substance use while others

sought (and were provided with) referral information. At the conclusion of each presentation students were queried on specific learning objectives. All students were able to identify common symptoms of schizophrenia, negative and inaccurate stereotypes associated with schizophrenia, and substances that may influence the onset of schizophrenia.

For participating, each student received a pencil eraser in the shape of a brain and a novelty pen embossed with the ACNP logo, the CARE program logo and phone number for additional information or referral. Students responded very enthusiastically to the incentives, particularly enjoying the floating action pens with which they were able to make a brain float back and forth against the backdrop of a neuron.

The need to continue this outreach program is evident and CARE is currently scheduling presentations at additional schools within San Diego County throughout 2011.

Ronald Duman, Yale

Neuroscience Outreach thanks the ACNP for the support of High School Brain Awareness Day at Yale, which took place on March 20, 2010. The event brought together ~50 high school students from all over Greater New Haven and 30 volunteers including graduate students, faculty, staff and post-doctoral fellows. Below is a letter from the parents of one of the attendees:

Hi,

We just wanted to tell you our son, Kevin Kelly Jr., had a fantastic time today at The Pathways Brain Day. He said it was amazing. It was very informative and run very well. Your teachers made the experience fantastic. When we picked him up at 3:30, he couldn't believe that the time went by so fast. He felt that he had just gotten there.

So on his and our behalf we wanted to thank you and your Pathways staff for holding this event and we wanted to let you know how our son felt about it. He can't wait for the next event.

Thank you so much!

Sincerely,

Kevin Sr. & Anne Kelly

Parents of Kevin Kelly Jr.-Sound School-Junior