

Growing Up With Autism: Life Transitions



Growing Up with Autism: Life Transitions An Autism Symposium for Families and Professionals

Weill Cornell Medical College
Friday, May 11 2012
Program Booklet

Sponsored by:
The Weill Cornell Autism Research Program
The Clinical and Translational Science Center
Weill Cornell Medical College



Weill Cornell Medical College



NewYork-Presbyterian
Phyllis and David Komansky
Center for Children's Health

Growing Up With Autism: Life Transitions

Friday, May 11 2012
8:00AM—5:00PM

Weill Cornell Medical College
1300 York Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Autism Symposium 2012 "Growing up with Autism: Life Transitions" Schedule of Events

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM: Breakfast and Registration

9:00 AM – 9:20 AM: Opening Remarks

9:20 AM – 10:00AM: Basic Science Panel

Weill Cornell Medical College scientists present their latest research projects concerning autism and brain development. Four unique presentations, followed by a question and answer round table with the speakers, are featured.

11:00AM – 11:20AM: Coffee Break

11:20 AM – 1:00 PM: Clinical Panel

Clinicians and researchers identify critical transition periods in the lives of those with autism, and provide insight into the practical experience of working with children on the autism spectrum. Included are four presentations followed by a question and answer round table with the speakers.

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM: Lunch and Tabling session

Learn about the local resources available to guide and assist during times of transition. Organizations range from those focusing on advocacy to groups that provide socialization, recreation, and vocational/residential opportunities.

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM: Breakout Groups

Select one of three interactive, small group sessions based upon age group of relevance: ages 5 – 13, 14 – 18, or 18+. Presenters from local organizations focus on age-specific changes as well as related topics of interest.

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM: Networking Mixer

A chance to speak directly with both panel and breakout speakers; an excellent opportunity to ask questions of the many experts on hand.



Weill Cornell Medical College



Science Panel Speakers

BJ Casey, Ph.D.

Director, Sackler Institute; Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medical College



Dr. Casey is the Sackler Professor and Director of the Sackler Institute at Weill Medical College of Cornell University. She is a pioneer in novel uses of neuroimaging methodologies to examine behavioral and brain development. Her program of research focuses on attention and affect regulation, particularly their development, disruption and neurobiological basis. She has been examining the normal development of brain circuitry involved in attention and behavioral regulation and how disruptions in these brain systems (prefrontal cortex, basal ganglia and cerebellum) can give rise to a number of developmental disorders. Using a mechanistic approach she has dissociated attentional deficits observed across the disorders of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Tourette Syndrome and Childhood Onset Schizophrenia. Further Casey and her colleagues have developed marker tasks that appear to tap the integrity of specific parallel basal ganglia thalamocortical circuits implicated across these disorders and to addiction. Most recently Casey and her colleagues have begun to examine the effects of gene-environment interactions on the development of affect and behavioral regulation and related brain systems.

Francis S.Y. Lee, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Attending Psychiatrist; Associate Professor of Pharmacology, Weill Cornell Medical College



Francis Lee, MD, PhD is an Associate Professor and Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Psychiatry, Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmacology, and an Associate Attending Psychiatrist at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center. He obtained his MD and PhD from the University of Michigan, followed by Psychiatry residency training at Payne Whitney Clinic, Weill Cornell Medical College. He completed further postdoctoral training in molecular neuroscience at the Skirball Institute, New York University and the University of California, San Francisco. He currently serves as director of a laboratory whose main area of research is in basic molecular and neural mechanisms relevant to neuropsychiatric disorders. His research is focused on using genetic models to delineate the role of growth factors, such as BDNF, in complex behaviors related to the pathophysiology and treatment of affective disorders. Dr. Lee is currently working with Dr. Barbara Hempstead on a project entitled "Alterations in BDNF Metabolism in ASD".

Science Panel Speakers

John T. Walkup, M.D.

Vice Chair, Department of Psychiatry; Director, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; Professor of Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medical College



Dr. Walkup has been involved in a number of the large definitive clinical treatment trials for childhood psychiatric disorders including the Treatment of Adolescents with Depression Study (TADS), Child/Adolescent Anxiety Multimodal Study (CAMS); the Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics Study (CBITS); the Treatment of Early Age Mania study (TEAM) and the Treatment of Adolescent Suicide Attempters (TASA).

He has been funded for large projects working with American Indian tribes in the Southwest United States. "Cradling our Future," funded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse, is a clinical trial of an in-home intervention delivered by Native American paraprofessionals to pregnant teens. A second project is "Celebrating Life and Empowering our Spirits" a SAMHSA sponsored suicide prevention study funded under the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. Additionally, Dr. Walkup has won a number of awards and honors. In 2009, he received the Charlotte and Norbert Reiger Award for Scientific Achievement from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Anjali M. Rajadhyaksha, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Neuroscience in Pediatrics; Assistant Professor of Neuroscience, Weill Cornell Medical College



Anjali Rajadhyaksha, PhD is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Child Neurology, Department of Pediatrics, Weill Cornell Medical College. She received her undergraduate degree from Bombay University, India and obtained her PhD in Molecular Biology from Purdue University, Indiana where she focused on regulation of gene expression in mammalian cells. She then moved to the field of Neuroscience and obtained postdoctoral training at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts. She gained expertise in calcium signal transduction pathways relevant to neurological and neuropsychiatric disorders. Her lab at WCMC is currently pursuing two autism projects (1) screening families with autism for genetic abnormalities in calcium channel genes and (2) examining dysregulation of Ca²⁺ channel genes in mouse models of autism.

Clinical Panel Speakers

John Brown, Ph.D.

Co-Director, Hunter College Autism Center; Director of Training and Programs in Applied Behavior Analysis, Hunter College



Dr. Brown is the Director of Training and Programs in Applied Behavior Analysis at Hunter College. He is a founding member of the board of directors of the New Jersey Association for Behavior Analysis (NJABA) and is the current president of NJABA. Before joining Hunter College, Dr. Brown was executive director of a private, non-profit program serving individuals with autism. He completed his doctoral studies in the Learning Processes program at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York as well as doctoral fellowships in autism intervention and developmental disabilities at the Princeton Child Development Institute and the NYS Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities respectively.

Linda Meyer, Ed.D., MPA, BCBA-D, CPT

Executive Director, Autism New Jersey; Co-founder, Alpine Learning Group



Linda Meyer is the Executive Director of Autism New Jersey and a consultant in private practice (Linda S. Meyer Consulting LLC). She is the co-founder of the Alpine Learning Group in Paramus, NJ and served as its founding executive director from 1989 until 2005. She serves on the professional advisory boards of several schools and agencies serving individuals with autism spectrum disorders. Linda has presented at regional, national, and international conferences, and authored articles and book chapters on various special education, nonprofit management, and personal fitness topics. She has taught doctoral and masters level students in educational and clinical psychology programs and is currently an adjunct professor at Caldwell College, in Caldwell, NJ.

Clinical Panel Speakers

Catherine Lord, Ph.D.

Director, Institute for Brain Development, a subsidiary of Weill Cornell Medical College; Assistant Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medical College



Dr. Lord is a licensed clinical psychologist with specialties in diagnosis, social and communication development and intervention in autism spectrum disorders (ASD). She is renowned for her work in longitudinal studies of social and communicative development in ASD. She has also been involved in the development of standardized diagnostic instruments for ASD with colleagues from the United Kingdom and the United States (the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) an observational scale; and the Autism Diagnostic Interview – Revised (ADI-R) a parent interview), now considered the gold standard for research diagnoses all over the world.

Her work at the Institute for Brain Development involves continued research in validity and longitudinal studies, early diagnosis of children with autism, and regression in children with autism and clinical evaluations and diagnoses of children and adults who may have autism.

Michael Siller, Ph.D.

Co-Director, Hunter College Autism Center; Assistant Professor of Psychology, Hunter College



Michael Siller received his Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of California at Los Angeles. He accepted a faculty position in the Psychology Department at Hunter College in 2007, where he also co-directs the Hunter College Autism Center. Dr. Siller's research focuses on the social and communicative development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), parent-child communication, and the efficacy of parent mediated interventions. Dr. Siller is currently collaborating with Dr. Connie Kasari (UCLA) on a treatment study for toddlers who are at "high risk" for ASD. This research is funded as part of the Autism Speaks Toddler Treatment Network, which Dr. Siller co-directs with Dr. Sally Rogers (UC Davis).