

## Division Of Mental Health Services And Policy Research

Susan Essock, PhD, Director  
Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University  
College of Physicians and Surgeons  
New York State Psychiatric Institute  
April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

### Overview

The Division of Mental Health Service and Policy Research's work is practical. Investigators examine the structure, content and outcomes of services as they occur in real world settings. Researchers aim to gain an understanding of what interventions are most helpful in allowing people to maximize their recovery from mental illnesses. This includes examining which interventions work, how well they work, for whom they work best, the cost of these interventions, and the organizational and financing strategies that facilitate implementing and sustaining such interventions. Policy makers want research of high public health significance to guide them, yet too often data are not available to inform decision making. Similarly, services researchers want to address questions of high policy relevance to decision makers so that services issues determine research topics but often do not have open channels of communication to policy makers. Hence, the Division emphasizes research partnerships among researchers and public sector administrators as well as other payers.

The Center for Practice Innovations (CPI), directed by Lisa Dixon, MD, M.P.H., supports the New York State Office of Mental Health's mission to promote the widespread availability of evidence-based practices to improve mental health services, ensure accountability, and promote recovery-oriented outcomes for consumers and families.

The Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program, headed by Harold Pincus, M.D., provides a unique opportunity for professionals in health and aging to receive the experience and skills necessary to make a positive contribution to the development and implementation of health policies that affect older Americans.

### Current Research

Research and initiatives in the reporting period in the in the Division include:

**Susan Essock, Ph.D**, Division Director, completed 5 years of service as Acting Deputy Commissioner for Evaluation for the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH). She continues as an investigator on Recovery After Initial Schizophrenic Episode (RAISE), an NIMH-funded study of best practices for limiting disability and enhancing recovery with early intervention for individuals who have experienced an initial psychotic episode and is assisting with the State's roll-out of this intervention to new locations in NY. She is PI on an NIMH-funded study using secondary data from multiple states to determine patterns of service use predictive of poor clinical outcomes.

**Lisa Dixon, M.D., M.P.H.** directs the Center for Practice Innovations (CPI) which supports the New York State Office of Mental Health's (NYS-OMH) mission to promote the widespread availability of evidence-based practices to improve mental health services, ensure accountability, and promote recovery-oriented outcomes for consumers and families. Over this year, she assumed the role of PI of the NIMH-funded Recovery After Initial Schizophrenia Episode contract. This project has provided the foundation for the newly funded OMH initiative, OnTrackNY, which will expand services for young people recently experiencing non-affective psychosis.

The **Center for Practice Innovations (CPI)** supports the NYS OMH's mission to promote the widespread availability of evidence-based practices to improve mental health services, ensure accountability, and promote recovery-oriented outcomes for consumers and families. The CPI serves as a key resource to the NYS-OMH by spreading those practices identified by OMH as most critical to accomplish OMH's system-transformation initiatives. Directed by **Lisa Dixon, M.D., M.P.H.**, CPI uses innovative approaches to build stakeholder collaborations, develop and maintain practitioners' expertise, and build agency infrastructures that support implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices. In addition to traditional in-person training, CPI offers interactive, web-based training and concurrent supports such as learning collaboratives to the following initiatives:

- Focus on Integrated Treatment (FIT): which now offers 39 online training modules including three dedicated to tobacco cessation. Year-long learning collaboratives help PROS programs and state-operated clinics with implementation of integrated treatment. In addition, webinars help practitioners and supervisors to develop competencies to treat people with co-occurring disorders.
- Supported Employment via Individual Placement and Support (IPS): which now offers an online training module focusing on IPS principles and practices. Beginning in 2013, focused, data-driven learning collaboratives are helping PROS programs with implementation of this approach.
- ACT Institute: which now offers two online training modules, one focusing on the core principles and practices of ACT and the other focusing on engagement of consumers into ACT. Core in-person training is now required of all new hires as well as ACT staff who have been members of ACT teams for greater than five years. This core training focuses on fundamental principles of ACT as well as treatment planning. Program-specific consultations are provided as requested and needed. A learning collaborative focuses on integrated treatment for dual disorders.
- Wellness Self Management (WSM): WSM and its adaptation WSM+ (which focuses on integrated care for mental health and substance use issues) is now used by programs across NYS (and increasingly across the country). An online training module is supplemented by the availability of workbooks that are used by consumers and practitioners.

During this year, CPI has also worked with OMH on several other initiatives:

- Suicide Prevention: CPI is working with content experts to develop three online training modules: Screening/Assessment (using the C-SSRS instrument), Safety Planning, and Follow-up Care.
- Clozapine: CPI has developed a module for consumers and families, encouraging them to consider clozapine in their decision-making process. (This is the first of what will be a number of modules, focusing on various topics that CPI will develop for and make available to consumers and family members.) A second module is now under development and is designed for prescribers.
- First Episode of Psychosis (FEP) initiative/ OnTrackNY: CPI is taking the lead in developing a clinical approach to working with consumers who are experiencing early psychosis. Based in part on earlier Division activity with the RAISE initiative, the goal is to work with consumers and families in a recovery-oriented and hopeful manner, to maximize the individual's early return to important life roles. An initiative director has been appointed, four initial sites identified, and treatment package developed.

Practitioners have completed over 80,000 on-line training modules via CPI.

**Nancy Covell, Ph.D.** manages and tracks the uptake of 39 free online training modules designed to help programs implement integrated treatment for co-occurring disorders (COD) and supports the implementation of integrated treatment within programs. As of the end of February 2013, learners across OMH-licensed and OASAS-certified programs throughout NYS completed over 77,000 modules. She also coordinates collection and analysis of data to inform Center initiatives and activities.

**Paul Margolies, Ph.D.**, continues as Principal Investigator for "Developing the Individual Placement and Support Guidebook: A practical tool to improve vocational outcomes for adults with serious mental illness". This SAMHSA/NASMHPD grant was awarded under the Special Initiative for State Mental Health Authorities to Address the Impact of the Economic Downturn through Employment Development. Work on this guidebook will be completed in the upcoming year.

**Thomas Smith, M.D.**, is Director of Operations, New York State Behavioral Health Organizations. In this role, Dr. Smith is involved in policy development and implementation regarding Medicaid managed care in New York State's public mental health system.

Dr. Smith is also Principal Investigator on 2 foundation-funded studies of factors that predict engagement in care for high-need individuals with serious mental illness. Dr. Smith also is the safety officer for the ACLAIMS study comparing injectable medications for schizophrenia, and is an investigator in the RAISE project, an NIMH-funded study of best practices for limiting disability and enhancing recovery with early intervention for individuals who have experienced an initial psychotic episode.

**Scott Stroup, M.D., M.P.H.**, continues to direct the Schizophrenia Trials Network. He is leading a NIMH-sponsored clinical trial comparing long-acting injectable medications

and a study evaluating the efficacy of computer-assisted cognitive remediation. He is also leading a AHRQ-sponsored comparative effectiveness project.

**Jonathan Morgenstern, Ph.D.'s** group continues its work on two primary areas of interest: (1) translational science of behavior change (SOBC) in alcohol and (2) the development and evaluation of new integrated models of addiction treatment. A major accomplishment this year was the funding of two five-year grant awards from NIH.

**Alexis Kuerbis, LCSW, Ph.D.,** conducts research that focuses on special populations struggling with substance abuse and dependence, including women on welfare, the GLBT community, and older adults. The current research projects with which she is involved include three NIAAA-funded research studies exploring the mechanisms of action within alcohol use disorder treatments focused on moderation, rather than abstinence. These studies utilize a variety methods to identify mechanisms within the context of randomized controlled trials, including genetics, functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), and ecological momentary assessment. Dr. Kuerbis is Co-Chair of the Mechanisms of Behavior Change Satellite Conference at the Research Society on Alcoholism's annual meeting.

**Andrew C. Chen, M.D., Ph.D.'s** research has been focusing on personalized treatment of alcohol and substance use disorders and pharmacogenetics. He continues receiving support through a 5-year K-23 Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award from the NIH/NIAAA entitled "Personalized treatment with pharmacotherapy and CBT for moderate problem drinking".

**Frederick Muench, Ph.D** is the PI on an NIAAA grant to develop an interactive mobile intervention for problem drinking and compare it to various types of other mobile messaging types (e.g. consequences based messages) and works with the faculty practice in Psychiatry to develop technology based assessment and feedback for clients and clinicians.

**Alice Medalia, Ph.D.'s** research focuses on treatment of cognitive disorders in schizophrenia and other populations, and the role of various psychological factors in treatment success. Her group examines the impact of motivation, insight, and beliefs in cognitive remediation and recovery outcomes.

**Jimmy Choi, Psy.D.'s** directs the Neurocognitive Rehabilitation Research Laboratory. The lab studies methods to promote cognitive and functional recovery for people with schizophrenia, mild cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease, depression, and clinical high risk. Current projects include: enhancing treatment engagement and quality of life in older adults at risk for dementia; addressing motivation for learning in schizophrenia, developing neuroimaging paradigms to study the neural basis of intrinsic motivation, studying a memory training program developed by Dr. Choi to mitigate ECT-related cognitive impairments, testing cognitive remediation models for adolescents and young adults at clinical high risk for psychosis, and decisional informatics for psychiatric rehabilitation.

The lab continues to study (a) memory training and CBT in those at risk for Alzheimer's disease and those with early dementia, (b) decisional informatics in psychiatric rehabilitation, (c) neuroimaging paradigms in schizophrenia, (d) processing speed in individuals at high clinical high, and (e) memory training for ECT-related cognitive impairments in people with treatment-resistant depression.

**Alice Saperstein, Ph.D.**, is a co-investigator on a NIMH grant examining whether providing cognitive remediation to homeless youth residing in a transitional living program who receive remedial education and job support services improves cognition and employment outcomes.

**Harold Pincus, M.D.**, is Vice-Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Director of Quality and Outcomes Research at New York Presbyterian Hospital and is developing a series of initiatives to enhance collaborative activities between the Hospital and the medical schools. A part of this effort includes the goal of a more coherent career development effort focused on hospital priorities of quality, safety, and translational research. He is Co-Director of the Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Science. He is a member of the Measurement Applications Partnership Steering Committee (this component is empowered by the federal government, as required by the Healthcare Reform legislation to coordinate recommendations for quality and patient safety measurement) and co-chairs National Quality Forum's Behavioral Health Committee.

Dr. Pincus is the National Director of the Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies ([www.healthandagingpolicy.org](http://www.healthandagingpolicy.org)). The 2012-2013 fifth class of fellows began their fellowship year in October 2012. Four of the nine fellows are working as staff on Capitol Hill, at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) as well as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Drs. Pincus and Pike have led very successful workshops for the fellows, bringing together leaders from the legislative branch and executive agencies, and other leaders in health policy, focusing on issues in health care reform, enhancing effective communication and the legislative/policy process.

Dr. Pincus is leading a project, "Measuring Quality of Mental Health Care: An International Comparison", which was initiated by a group of clinical experts under the auspices of the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL) Clinical Leaders Group.

Led by Columbia University in New York, the project aims to raise awareness amongst clinicians and policymakers regarding the quality of care of the mental health systems they are working in across a number of countries and, ultimately, to be able to compare system performance across countries to inform initiatives for transformation of mental health services.

**Joshua Kantrowitz, M.D.'s**, career has focused on investigating novel mechanism psychopharmacology and treatment, primarily in schizophrenia for the past four years. He has extensive experience leading clinical research projects in psychiatric

populations of novel mechanism agents, including as a site PI for a TURNS network project. He has been the principal/co-investigator and first author of several completed/ongoing trials including several NIMH-funded multicenter trials of D-serine, a proof of concept trial of a GABA<sub>B</sub> agonist for negative symptoms and impaired sleep in schizophrenia.

### **Education and Training**

The **Division's Weekly Series** continues. The series meets on Thursdays from 12:00 noon to 1:00 PM. The format of the series varies from week to week and includes seminars by local and national researchers in Mental Health Services and Policy Research, insights from practitioners and policy makers in the field, a journal club, and a research forum where investigators can discuss ideas and works in progress.

Five **OMH Policy Scholars** were identified and they worked on their projects, under the tutelage of a research mentor and a policy mentor. This includes Neil Aggarwal, M.D., M.B.A., M.A.; Carolyn Rodriguez, M.D., Ph.D.; Sapana Patel, Ph.D.; Cassis Henry, M.D., M.A; and Jennifer Humensky, Ph.D. Dr. Stroup continued to oversee this program.

**Dr. Thomas Smith** directs the Schizophrenia Lecture Series for PGY 2 Columbia Psychiatry residents and supervises PGY 3 and PGY 4 residents. In 2011 Dr. Smith was the faculty mentor for a Columbia resident OMH Policy Scholar and a Columbia Public Psychiatry Fellow, who was awarded a T32 fellowship.

**Dr. Scott Stroup** co-teaches the PGY2 psychopharmacology course. He directs the Division of Mental Health Services and Policy Research Policy Scholars program and mentors policy scholars. He mentors a CTSA fellow in comparative effectiveness research.

**Dr. Alice Medalia** is the primary mentor on K award of Dr. Jimmy Choi. She is also the Director of Marie Kessel Fellowship.

**Dr. Jimmy Choi** is a mentor in the CUNY Pipeline Honors Program (Elaina Montague) to study avolition in schizophrenia. He also mentors on a senior honors thesis to Barnard student (Mary Feng) to study cognitive training and social functioning in adolescents and young adults at clinical high risk for psychosis. Dr. Choi co-mentors on a PhD dissertation (Amanda Gooding) to study executive predictors of memory training outcome in mild cognitive impairment and early dementia. Students in Dr. Choi's lab presented posters at 3 international conferences in 2012: International Neuropsychological Society in Toronto (Gennarina Santorelli), Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies in National Harbor (Elaina Montague, Amanda Chue), Alzheimer's Association International Conference in Vancouver (Jackie Helcer). He also organizes a seminar series for trainees on patient advocacy.

**Dr. Harold Pincus** continues to host bi-monthly dinner meetings for residents interested in research, working with a Resident planning committee to schedule specific topics and

invited guests. He co-leads the Resident Research Seminar with Diana Martinez, Carlos Blanco, and Josh Gordon. Additionally, he is the Course Director for the Career Development Award Seminar for research fellows and junior faculty in the Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Pincus also teaches seminars in the Public Psychiatry Fellowship, Columbia University's Clinical Epidemiology Summer Institute, and other Columbia University/New York Presbyterian programs.

**Dr. Alice Saperstein** is a consultant and externship supervisor for a cognitive remediation program treating people with serious mental illness at a Personalized Recovery Oriented Services Program in the Bronx.

### **Honors and Awards**

**Dr. Susan Essock** was appointed to the Center for Scientific Review's Advisory Council for a 3 year term beginning April, 2013. CSR receives all research grant applications sent to NIH and handles the review of more than 70% of those by organizing peer review groups (study sections) to evaluate research grant applications.

**Dr. Alice Medalia** was honored the Productive Lives Award from the Brain Behavior Research Foundation (formerly NARSAD). She was also named a Reviewer for NIMH Scientific Review Group, Board of Directors: American Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation, and Director of conference: Cognitive Remediation in Psychiatry. She was an Invited Lecturer at Neuroscience School of Advanced Studies Italy.

**Dr. Harold Pincus** co-chairing the Quality and Safety Topic Advisory Group (Q&S TAG) and is a member of WHO's overall ICD 11 Steering Committee.

He presented the draft final report for Phase II of the "Measuring Quality of Mental Health Care: An International Comparison" project at the 2013 Annual Leadership Meeting in Auckland, New Zealand. In connection with this meeting, he was asked to lead a workshop with mental health commissioners from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and representatives from the United States, England, Scotland, and Ireland in Sydney (March 2013).

**Dr. Andrew Chen** was again selected as America's Top Psychiatrists by the Consumers' Research Council of America in 2012, four years in a row.

**Alexis Kuerbis, Ph.D.** is Co-Chair of the Mechanisms of Behavior Change Satellite Conference at the Research Society on Alcoholism's annual meeting.

**Dr. Frederick Muench** is a steering committee member for the Society for Technology and Psychology American Psychological Association

**Dr. Joshua Kantrowitz** was named Associate editor of BMC psychiatry. He received the Young Investigator Travel Award, Schizophrenia International Research Biennial Conference, Florence, Italy 2012.

### **Divisional Highlights**

The **CPI** continues to produce on-line training and supports to promote the use of evidence-based practices such as motivational interviewing, stage-wise treatment for co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, the individual-placement-and-support model of supported employment, and tobacco use cessation, with users completing over 80,000 online training modules to date.

**Dr. Jeffrey Lieberman** and colleagues were awarded the Psychotic Spectrum Disorders (**FAST-PS**) contract from NIMH. NIMH is supporting the Fast-Fail Trials (FAST) initiative through three NIMH Contracts awarded in September 2012 (period of performance from September 24, 2012 through September 23, 2015), to provide a rapid way to test new or repurposed compounds for their potential as psychiatric medications. There are three FAST teams of researchers, focused on different mental disorders.

New York State Office of Mental Health awarded a contract to the Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene, Inc., (RFMH) to support OMH's demonstration program for the delivery of services to individuals with **First Episode Psychosis (FEP)**. This program will deliver four separate FEP demonstration teams, located at OMH and Article 31 provider locations. Under the direction of **Lisa Dixon, M.D.**, RFMH is responsible for administering the program and contracting with Article 31 providers and technical assistance centers to hire clinicians, train and deliver services for FEP.

The New York State Office of Mental Health also renewed for another 3 years its **Science to Service** contract that underwrites several initiatives in the Division.

CPI produced its first direct-to-consumer on-line training module "**Considering Clozapine**", for individuals considering trying clozapine. OMH Policy Scholar **Cassis Henry, M.D.**, helped develop the module and will evaluate its impact. It can be accessed at: <http://practiceinnovations.org/Clozapine/tabid/198/Default.aspx>.

### **Publications (Selected)**

Keefe RSE, Vinogradov S, **Medalia A**, Buckley PF, Caroff SN, D'Souza DC, Harvey PD, Graham KA, Hamer RM, Marder SM, Miller DD, Olson SJ, Patel JK, Velligan D, Waldker TM, Haim AJ, **Stroup TS**. Feasibility and Pilot Efficacy Results from the Multi-site Cognitive Remediation in the Schizophrenia Trials Network (CRSTN) Study. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 2012; 73: 1016-1022.

**Muench, F**, Weiss, R A, **Kuerbis, A**, & **Morgenstern, J**. Developing a theory driven text messaging intervention for addiction care with user driven content. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* 2013; 27(1): 315-321. PMID: PMC3531566.

Rodriguez CL, Arbuckle MR, Simpson HB, Herman DB, **Stroup TS**, **Skrobala AM**, Sederer LI, Appel A, **Essock SM**. Public-academic partnerships: A rapid small-grant program for policy-relevant research: Motivating public Academic Partnerships. *Psychiatric Services* 2013; 64 (2): 106-108.



Slade EP, McCarthy JF, Valenstein M, Visnic S, **Dixon LB**. Cost savings from assertive community treatment services in an era of declining psychiatric inpatient use. *Health Services Research* 2013; 48:195-217.

**Stroup TS**, Byerly MJ, Nasrallah HA, Ray N, Khan AY, Lambert J, Glick ID, Steinbook RM, McEvoy JP, Hamer RM. Effects of switching from olanzapine, quetiapine, and risperidone to aripiprazole on 10-year coronary heart disease risk and metabolic syndrome status: Results from a randomized controlled trial. *Schizophrenia Research*, Epub before print.

Tillman RE, Jang S, Abedin Z, Richards BF, **Spaeth-Rublee B, Pincus HA**: Policies, Activities, and Structures Supporting Research Mentoring: A National Survey of Academic Health Centers With Clinical and Translational Science Awards, *Academic Medicine*, 2012; [Epub ahead of print]