Letter from the Directors

The year 2013 marked an exciting time of transition here at the Eating Disorders Clinical and Research Program at Massachusetts General Hospital. We have jumped into our new roles as Co-Directors of the EDCRP while former director, Dr. Anne Becker, became Founding Director, and former Harris Center leader, Dr. David Herzog, retired from the MGH. Associate Director Dr. Debra Franko will continue in her role. With this changing of the guard has come many new research, clinical, and educational developments. We are delighted to share some of the highlights of our work this year with you!

Kamryn T. Eddy, PhD and Jennifer J. Thomas, PhD

Inaugural Research Public Forum, April 26, 2013

This spring, we organized a full afternoon program highlighting the latest research and clinical advances in the field of eating disorders. Held at the Taj Boston, and attended by patients, families, clinicians and other community advocates, this event featured speakers from the EDCRP, the Department of Psychiatry, and the Neuroendocrine Unit. Presentations highlighted recent advances in how eating disorders are diagnosed and treated, innovative studies identifying the neurobiology and genetics of appetite regulation in eating disorders, and treatment of key complications such as osteoporosis.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was a personal recovery story from a former EDCRP patient who shared her triumph over her eating disorder. Many patients and their families thanked her and shared how her compelling story resonated with their own experiences.

Dr. Jennifer Thomas’s New Book!

In July, Dr. Thomas and her co-author, Jenni Schaefer, published Almost Anorexic: Is My (or My Loved One’s) Relationship with Food a Problem? The book was released as a part of Harvard Health Publication’s “Almost Effect” series.

“When Harvard Medical School approached me about writing Almost Anorexic, I was thrilled to collaborate on such an important topic. The gray area between normal eating and an officially recognized eating disorder is home to a lot of pain and suffering. I know firsthand from personal experience, so I jumped at the chance to write a book that could not only provide hope but also encourage people to seek help much earlier than I ever did.”

Please visit www.almostanorexic.com to learn more.
We are delighted to announce that the EDCRP has received a generous grant from the Rubenstein Foundation, supporting our education and training initiatives. With this gift, we will grow our Teen Mentor Program, support a new full-time summer research fellowship program, and host a full-day community education event.

Do you see a thin or a large woman? Created by Emily Wirenga

Newest Members of Our Team

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Emily Gray, Dr. Sarah Shea, and Helen Burton to the EDCRP team! Drs. Gray and Shea and Ms. Burton have proven to be wonderful assets to our team and we are looking forward to our continued work with them.

Emily K. Gray, MD
Dr. Gray joined the EDCRP team as a Staff Psychiatrist in September. She is also the new director of the EDCRP Teen Mentor Program that trains girls to be mentors and leaders at Boston-area schools. In addition to her work with the EDCRP, Dr. Gray is a recipient of a Klarman Family Foundation grant to support her clinical work and research in eating disorders through McLean’s Klarman Eating Disorder Center.

Sarah E. Shea, PhD
Dr. Sarah Shea joined the EDCRP team as a Staff Psychologist in November. She specializes in Pediatric Behavioral Medicine, including cognitive-behavioral interventions for children with co-occurring medical and mental health difficulties. She is trained in family-based and cognitive-behavioral therapies for children and teens with eating disorders. Her research interests include emotion regulation and coping processes in children and families.

“I am excited to be joining this team of skilled and dedicated clinicians!”
— Sarah Shea

Helen Burton, BA
This year, we have also welcomed a new clinical research coordinator, Helen Burton, to our team. Helen coordinates our program by both assisting with research projects and overseeing day-to-day operations of our outpatient clinic. Her research interests include maintenance factors and treatment of feeding and eating disorders.

Matina S. Horner, PhD Fellowship

We established the annual Matina S. Horner, PhD Summer Research Fellowship in 1997 to encourage young researchers in the field. Over the past 17 years, our Matina S. Horner, PhD, Fellowship Program has sponsored 50 undergraduate and graduate students for independent research projects. This year, the EDCRP had the pleasure of supporting 5 research fellows:

Deirdre Buckley
Deirdre, a sophomore at Harvard University studying History of Science and Human Evolutionary Biology, conducted a literature review of determinants of bone mineral density in women with anorexia nervosa.

Tiffany Graves
Tiffany is a 2011 graduate of the Master’s Psychology Program at Boston University. During her summer fellowship, conducted a meta-analytic review of the effect of therapeutic alliance on treatment outcome in eating disorders.

Mun Yee Kwan
Mun Yee, a second year clinical psychology doctoral student at North Dakota State University in Fargo, North Dakota, examined gender differences in the relationship between coping and bulimic symptoms. Mun Yee will be presenting her fellowship research at the International Conference on Eating Disorders (ICED) in the Spring 2014.

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“Woman Painting” Created by Emily Wirenga

Melissa Stone
Melissa, a fourth-year student in the clinical health psychology doctoral program at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, used the Matina Horner fellowship to complete her doctoral thesis. She examined the effect of therapist self-disclosure of personal recovery from an eating disorder on anticipated therapeutic alliance and treatment outcome. Melissa will also be presenting her work at this spring’s ICED.

Charlotte Delaney
Charlotte, a second-year medical student at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in NY, explored the new DSM-5 classification of pica and rumination disorder. Charlotte received private funding through the Albert Einstein College of Medicine for her summer fellowship. The EDCRP presented her research at the Eating Disorder Research Society conference in September.

From left, Kwan, Buckley, Graves, Stone and Delaney
Research Program.

Angela Lee, a senior at Harvard University majoring in social anthropology, conducted fieldwork at Walden Behavioral Care for her majoring in social anthropology, conducting research on the individual recovery experience. She received funding from the Harvard College Office of National Education Disorders Association at the 2013 NEDA Conference in Washington, DC. Shown here is Dr. Becker receiving the award from Craig Johnson, PhD. Congratulations, Dr. Becker!

In the Spring, Dr. Eddy was recognized for her research contributions to the field of eating disorders as she became a Fellow of the Academy for Eating Disorders. Congratulations, Dr. Eddy!

Dr. Becker was recognized for her six-year service on the Academy for Eating Disorders Board of Directors at the AED Business Meetings when she concluded her year as AED Past President at the 2013 ICED.

The American Psychiatric Association released the DSM-5 in May 2013; Dr. Becker was one of 12 members of the American Psychiatric Association’s International Eating Disorders Work Group for the DSM-5.

Drs. Eddy and Thomas received a generous grant from the Hilda and Preston Davis Foundation to support the interpretation and dissemination of findings from their new complete DSM-5 Eating Disorders Field Trial.

Recent Publications

Here are examples of our 2013 research articles:


Awards and Recognition

Dr. Becker received the Price Family Award for Research Excellence from the National Eating Disorders Association at the 2013 NEDA Conference in Washington, DC. Shown here is Dr. Becker receiving the award from Craig Johnson, PhD. Congratulations, Dr. Becker!

We present our research findings at conferences all over the world. In September, Dr. Eddy presented research from our 15-year Longitudinal Study at the Eating Disorders Research Society Annual Meeting in Bethesda, MD. As recipient of an award for one of the “top-rated abstracts” of the conference, she presented data defining recovery from anorexia and bulimia in women followed for 25 years. These findings offer hope that recovery is possible, even for individuals who have been ill for many years.

Here are some of our other presentations from 2013:

➤ At the annual American Psychiatric Association meeting in San Francisco, Dr. Becker presented on DSM-5 changes to the feeding and eating disorder criteria.

➤ At Walden Behavioral Care in October, Drs. Eddy and Thomas presented on cognitive behavioral therapy and Dr. Karen Miller from the Neuroendocrine Unit presented on new hormone treatments for anorexia nervosa.

➤ At the Harvard Institute of Politics and Undergraduate Council’s “Harvard Women Think Big,” in the context of women in leadership roles, Dr. Becker presented about her work in Fiji on eating disorders.

➤ As keynote speakers, Dr. Becker and her colleague Pere Eddy Eustache, presented on youth mental health in Haiti at MGH’s Chester M. Pierce Global Psychiatry Division Dinner Series

➤ For Harvard College’s “Emerging Agendas in Global Mental Health” symposium, Dr. Becker spoke about bridging the gap between disease burden and treatment in global mental health.
We welcome your comments and suggestions!
For further details on our program or for information covered in this newsletter, please contact us at:

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In the News
Describing outcome data from the MGH Longitudinal Study, Dr. Eddy presented the hopeful message that long-term recovery from anorexia nervosa is possible in the April 2013 Vogue magazine article, “Mirror, Mirror.” The New York Times quoted Dr. Thomas in an article on the overlap between eating disorders and obesity called “Fat and Thin Find Common Ground.” Dr. Thomas’ and Dr. Eddy’s research suggests that nearly one-third of individuals seeking weight loss treatment struggle with eating disorders.

Dr. Thomas highlighted how eating disorders affect boys and men in the Cosmopolitan magazine article “Rise of the Dieting Dude.”

The Today Show featured interviews with both Dr. Thomas and her co-author Jenni Schaefer about their new book, Almost Anorexic. At the end of the piece, co-host Matt Lauer remarked “I think a lot of people are going to identify with that.”

Dr. Thomas’s book Almost Anorexic reveals that while only 1 in 200 American adults will ever meet diagnostic criteria for anorexia nervosa, more than 1 in 20 (including 1 in 10 teen girls!) will struggle with some of the key features. These statistics were quoted in the Huffington Post, Daily Mail, and New England Cable News.

Dr. Becker was named by Best Doctors, Inc. as one of the Best Doctors in America, 2013.

Recovery Record
EDCRP goes high-tech with Recovery Record, a mobile application for eating disorders, based on cognitive behavioral therapy and self-monitoring approaches. With an integrative and interactive platform, the EDCP is using the application to support both group and individual therapy, providing patients with critical between-session tools.

To learn more about Recovery Record, which is free for patients, visit recoveryrecord.com.

Do’s and Don’ts of Supporting a Loved One Who Has Almost Anorexia

Don’t
1. Blame yourself for your loved one’s eating problem
2. Simply ignore the eating problem and hope it goes away on its own.
3. Be hostile, critical, or bullying; this will only give your loved one opportunities to practice arguments for not changing.
4. Collude with the eating disorder (such as preparing “diet” meals or taking over responsibilities for your loved one, which will only reinforce the illness).
5. Try to talk your loved one out of eating disorder beliefs by using logic, or beat yourself up for not completely understanding his or her struggle.
6. Provide constant reassurance around food and weight (for example, “Yes, it’s okay to eat that much,” “No, you aren’t fat”); this is a battle you cannot win.
7. Forget about your own self-care; you need to care for yourself in order to retain the calmness and compassion necessary to care for your loved one.

Do
1. Educate yourself about eating disorders; appreciate that the symptoms are not a product of willfulness.
2. Express your concern and ask your loved one how you can be helpful.
3. Be warm, firm, and direct; ask your loved one if he or she has his or her own reasons for wanting to change.
4. Encourage your loved one to seek professional help if needed, and attend sessions if invited by your loved one’s clinician.
5. Let your loved one know that you believe that he or she feels fat or is worried about having eaten too much, but that you yourself do not agree.
6. Gently let your loved one know that it is unhelpful to get into arguments about weight or shape; then try changing the subject instead.
7. Get support for yourself, including professional help, if necessary; model healthy eating and self-esteem by avoiding fat talk and unhealthy dieting.

Excerpted from Dr. Jennifer’s Thomas and Jenni Schaefer’s book Almost Anorexic ©2013 Harvard University

Follow Dr. Thomas on Twitter @drjennythomas
Eating Disorders Clinical and Research Program Team

**Professional Staff**
- Kamryn T. Eddy, PhD, **Co-Director**
- Jennifer J. Thomas, PhD, **Co-Director**
- Anne E. Becker, MD, PhD, ScM, **Founding Director**
- Debra L. Franko, PhD, **Associate Director**
- Emily K. Gray, MD, **Staff Psychiatrist; Teen Mentor Program Director**
- Sarah E. Shea, PhD, **Staff Psychologist**
- Aparna Keshaviah, MS, **Biostatistician**
- Helen Burton, BA, **Clinical Research Coordinator**
- Judith C. Craver, PhD, **Clinical Teaching Faculty**
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- Nicole Simi, PhD

**Clinical Teaching Faculty**
- Melissa Abraham, PhD
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WAYS TO GIVE

For information about ways to support the clinical care, research, teaching and advocacy activities of the MGH Eating Disorders Clinical and Research Program, please contact Frank Soldo at (617) 724-0186 or fsoldo@partners.org.