

MINDSCAPES

MGH DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS • SPRING 2008

Seeking Innovative Treatments for Anxiety Disorders *The Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Disorders*

Experiencing some degree of anxiety is probably a given in our society, in which headlines about terrorism, war and global warming appear virtually daily. But about one in four people at some point suffers anxiety that is so severe and/or persistent that it causes major difficulties in their



everyday lives. For some of these individuals, anxiety can become completely disabling.

Mark H. Pollack, MD, is director of the Department of Psychiatry's Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Disorders (CATSD), which annually treats or provides consultations for roughly 1,000 patients with anxiety disorders, and conducts research aimed at improving the outcomes of people with these conditions.

Dr. Pollack points out that there are several major types of anxiety disorders, each of which has distinctive features. These include social anxiety disorder (also called social phobia), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), generalized anxiety disorder, complicated grief and panic disorder. Not infrequently, a person with one of these conditions has overlapping symptoms of several, and may also suffer from depression.

CURRENT TREATMENTS LESS THAN IDEAL

According to Dr. Pollack, today there are many therapies for anxiety disorders, including pharmacologic agents such as benzodiazepines (Valium-type drugs) and antidepressants; non-pharmacologic approaches, such as cognitive behavioral therapy; and, frequently, a combination of these.

While certainly helpful, these treatments are "less than ideal," says Dr. Pollack. In fact, only about half of patients

substantially improve with initial treatment, and just one in four experiences a complete cessation of symptoms. "One of the main goals of the CATSD is to develop innovative treatments that will allow more patients with anxiety disorders to experience meaningful improvement and, ideally, achieve full remission that will markedly improve the quality of their lives," says Dr. Pollack.

All of the center's faculty, which includes psychiatrists, psychologists and research associates, are involved in a diverse program of research aimed at understanding the root causes of anxiety disorders and, building on this knowledge, finding new, more effective ways to treat them.

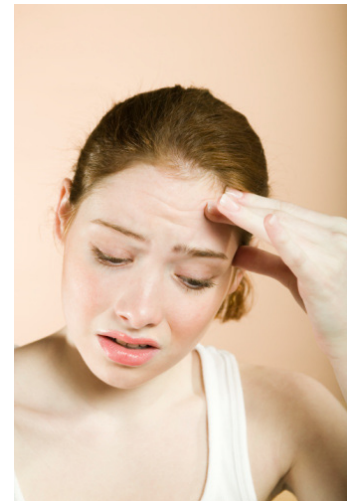
Among the many investigations currently underway within the CATSD are studies looking at the effectiveness of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapeutic interventions, the genetic and hormonal influences on anxiety disorders, the impact of sleep disturbance and its treatment on anxiety, and the potential benefit of alternative and complementary approaches, to cite just a few examples. Research conducted by CATSD faculty, all of whom also care for patients, is among the most frequently cited in professional journals.

NOVEL TREATMENT REDUCES ANXIETY

One of the most promising areas of research now underway involves the use of the drug D-cycloserine (DCS), an FDA-approved antibiotic that has been used for years to treat patients with tuberculosis.

Dr. Pollack explains that DCS affects the NMDA receptor in the brain, which scientists have discovered influences memory and learning. Research with animals that were conditioned to be fearful demonstrated that administration of DCS led to increased learning of safety and extinction of learned fear.

Following some early studies in humans with height phobias,
(Continued on page 2)



Message from the chief

Carefully conducted epidemiologic studies demonstrate how common the suffering from mental illness is. Major depression alone will afflict about one in five people, and anxiety disorders about one in four. All of us have

loved ones or close friends who have suffered from these or other psychiatric disorders, or have even grappled with them ourselves. The experience of mental illness, direct or indirect, is not the exception; it is the rule. No family goes untouched.

In this, our Spring 2008 issue of *Mindscapes*, we feature one of the department's important programs, the Center for

Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Disorders, founded and led by Dr. Mark Pollack. Combining patient care and innovative research, the center is seeking to advance knowledge and treatment of illnesses that affect so many individuals, including social phobia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and related complicated grief, panic disorder or generalized anxiety.

This issue includes an interview with Dr. Jonathan Alpert, our new director of Clinical Services. Dr. Alpert succeeds Dr. John Herman, who has become the associate chief of Psychiatry with responsibility for special initiatives in the department. Dr. Alpert oversees the hospital's outpatient psychiatry services, 24-bed inpatient unit, and emergency and urgent care services, as well as a variety of outpatient services in local health centers and other community settings.

The department continues to benefit from the creativity and hard work of a growing corps of volunteers, most recently demonstrated at the Mindscapes Gala Auction event last November. Please enjoy the images of this successful and inspiring evening held to support psychiatry and mental health.

Jerrold F. Rosenbaum, MD

Psychiatrist-in-Chief, Massachusetts General Hospital
Stanley Cobb Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School



Jerrold F. Rosenbaum, MD

— Innovative Treatments for Anxiety

(Continued from page 1)

in which investigators showed that DCS improved response to therapy, Dr. Pollack and colleagues at MGH and other institutions conducted a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial involving patients with social anxiety disorder, which is among the most common – and disabling – anxiety disorders. Their objective was to determine if short-term treatment with this drug would enhance the effectiveness of treatment for individuals receiving cognitive-behavioral therapy.

“One of the main goals of the Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Disorders [CATSD] is to develop innovative treatments that will allow more patients with anxiety disorders to experience meaningful improvement and, ideally, achieve full remission that will markedly improve the quality of their lives.”

— Mark H. Pollack, MD, CATSD director

Indeed, this study, which was published in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* (March 2006), demonstrated that patients who received DCS in addition to cognitive behavioral therapy reported significantly less social anxiety than those who received a placebo.

Based on the tantalizing results of this pilot study, Dr. Pollack received federal funding for a larger study involving patients with social anxiety disorder, and anticipates receiving additional federal funding to evaluate the potential of this drug in patients suffering from panic disorder.

“This is a good example of translational research, in which basic science done in the laboratory to better understand the circuitry of the brain has led to new, innovative treatments for patients,” says Dr. Pollack. “We are very excited about this work and its potential to benefit people with anxiety disorders.”



Mark H. Pollack, MD, director of the Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Disorders, confers with research coordinator Nanette Herlands.

Abram Bekker, MGH Photography

A Conversation with the Director of Clinical Services

Abram Bekker, MGH Photography



Jonathan E. Alpert, MD, PhD

Jonathan E. Alpert, MD, PhD, was recently appointed the new director of Clinical Services for the Department of Psychiatry. A highly respected member of the Department of Psychiatry faculty for 15 years, Dr. Alpert is also associate director of the department's Depression Clinical and Research Program, director of Medical Student Education in Psychiatry for Harvard Medical School and a chairperson of the Partners Human Research Committee.

In this interview, Dr. Alpert discusses his new role and some of the innovative ways the department is addressing current and future challenges.

Q. *What are the responsibilities of the director of clinical services, and what interested you in the job?*

Dr. Alpert: The clinical director's role is multi-faceted. It includes overseeing all aspects of inpatient and outpatient patient care, supporting innovation and quality in all clinical areas, and fostering the integration of all aspects of the department's mission – patient care, research, teaching and community service. I was honored to assume this role because I consider it a great privilege to work with this department's extraordinary staff on behalf of thousands of patients who entrust us with their psychiatric care.

Q. *What is one thing that readers should know about the department's clinical services that they might not be aware of?*

Dr. Alpert: Our department has a well-earned reputation for providing excellent specialty care of complex patients with treatment-resistant psychiatric conditions, some of whom come here from around the nation and the world for their care.

What may be less well known is that we also provide primary psychiatric care for thousands of adults, children and adolescents from our local area, many of whom may be seeking mental health services for the first time, through our outpatient and acute [emergency and urgent care] services. I'd like readers to know that we treat patients from all walks of life, and that we feel a deep responsibility to provide the best possible care to all patients.

Q. *What are some of the challenges facing the department, and what strategies are being employed to address them?*

Dr. Alpert: One of our priorities is to increase access to our outpatient services. Through a variety of efforts, we were able to increase the number of outpatient visits from 60,000 to 70,000 last year. Yet even at that volume, we unfortunately have to turn away up to 80 percent of those who seek to access our outpatient services, which is unacceptable. To help address this challenge, we significantly expanded our Urgent Care Center [UCC], which offers same or next day evaluation and treatment. Since this expansion, hundreds of patients have been seen promptly in the UCC, many of whom might have formerly had to endure long waits in the Emergency Department to be seen by a psychiatrist or psychologist.

Another challenge is ensuring that all the exciting, empirically-based knowledge we have acquired about the burgeoning range of treatment of psychiatric disorders is disseminated widely so that all patients have access not only to the best practices, but also the 'next practices' – the innovative practices and service models of the future.

Q. *Can you provide some examples of 'next practices' introduced by the department?*

Dr. Alpert: One is the MGH Psychiatry Academy [see *Mindscales*, Winter 2007], which is a revolutionary way to share information with clinicians worldwide. Another is our newly established Addiction Recovery Management Service (ARMS) [see *Mindscales*, Fall 2007], which provides young people who are misusing or addicted to alcohol or other drugs with the support and care they so urgently need.

We are also very excited about two new services recently launched by our Bipolar Clinic and Research Program: the Collaborative Care Initiative and the

Comprehensive Care Program. Both of these innovative programs, which are designed to enhance the care of individuals with bipolar disorder, provide patients and their primary psychiatrists with access to the department's unique resources and expertise regardless of their geographic location.

Another exciting development is the recent opening of the Phillips House Psychiatry Service, which provides comprehensive inpatient care for patients who require intensive, multispecialty treatment. We anticipate that this new service will be particularly attractive for patients coming to MGH from long distances who can receive care in a regular hospital setting.

Last but hardly least, we are now actively engaged in measuring clinical outcomes, and last summer appointed a new director of Quality Management. Having 'real-world' outcomes data will not only make us all more effective clinicians; it will also enhance our patient-advocacy initiatives to improve mental health care coverage and reimbursement.

Q. *What would make you feel you've been successful as director of Clinical Services?*

Dr. Alpert: We are all aware of the department's national reputation for excellence. But we are also well aware that our reputation is only as good as the care we provide to the next patient we see, so we continually ask ourselves what we can be doing better. A decade from now, I want to be able to look back and honestly say we did everything possible to advance the care of patients with psychiatric disorders at MGH and around the world. For me, that would be the true measure of success.

Second MINDSCAPES Gala Art Benefit

Paintings, etchings, photography, mixed media, ceramics and sculptures by 68 local, national and international artists were displayed at MINDSCAPES, the Massachusetts General Hospital Department of Psychiatry's second biennial gala art auction.

More than 400 guests attended the department's signature fund-raising event held Nov. 3 at the InterContinental Hotel, Boston. A volunteer committee, co-chaired by Stacy L. Sweeney and Wendy G. Tulman, planned the dinner and silent and live auctions, which netted \$160,000 to support psychiatric research, clinical initiatives and professional and public education.

On these pages, we share with you some of the highlights of this special evening.

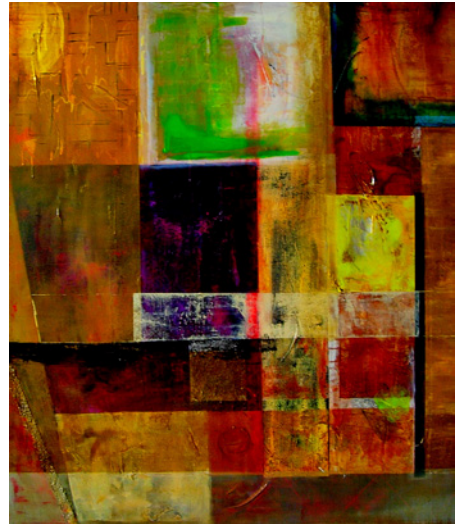
- 1) Vicki J. Brown, event committee
- 2) Priscilla O' Reilly, John Pynchon and Stacy L. Sweeney, event co-chair
- 3) Norma Fine
- 4) (From left): Richard Tedlow, MBA, PhD, Harvard Business School, and Andrew Nierenberg, MD, medical director of the Bipolar Clinic and Research Program
- 5) Helen Charlupski and Joseph Biederman, MD, chief of the Clinical and Research Program in Pediatric Psychopharmacology and the Adult ADHD Program
- 6) Maria Muth and Matt Tulman
- 7) Mary O'Neil Herman and John B. Herman, MD, associate chief of Psychiatry
- 8) (From left): Judy Brown Caro, event committee; Gloria Lieberman, auctioneer; Barbara Goldstein Sidel and Peter Sidel
- 9) Event co-chair Wendy G. Tulman (center) with Stephanie and Harry Carry
- 10) W. Gerald Austen, MD; Carol Taylor, director of development for Psychiatry; Michael Jenike, MD, director of the Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Program; and Katelyn Quynn, executive director of Development
- 11) (From left): Patty Austen, Joyce Lawrence and Edward P. Lawrence, chairman of the Board of Trustees
- 12) (From left): Priscilla Kauff, PhD, and Patricia Doherty, PhD, Endowment for the Advancement of Psychotherapy, with Ramon Alonso, PhD
- 13) (From left): Edelmeyer Kruger and Maddy Bragar with Jerrold F. Rosenbaum, MD, psychiatrist-in-chief and honorary co-chair
- 14) Barbara J. Beck, MD, staff psychiatrist and contributing artist
- 15) Renee Hill and Paul English
- 16) Robert Smith

Artists (clockwise from top left): Jon Sarkin, Sheryl Light and Thomas Slattery, Anthony Fisher, Andy Dibner, Pablo Picasso, Katherine Houston and B.J. Beck



Photos by Mark F. Bogacz





Books by Department of Psychiatry Faculty

Feeling Good about the Way You Look: A Program for Overcoming Body Image Problems

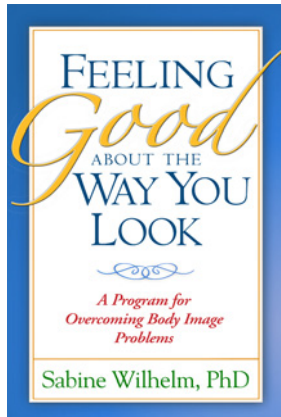
by Sabine Wilhelm, PhD

Published by Guildford Press, 2006

Because our culture puts such a high value on physical beauty, many people – even those who are very attractive – feel ashamed of the way they look. For some individuals, an excessive preoccupation with appearance robs them of their time, money, self-confidence and the opportunity for a fulfilling life.

Using the principles of cognitive behavioral therapy, this compassionate, step-by-step book offers a wealth of practical advice designed to help anyone with a body image problem identify and overcome self-defeating beliefs, set realistic goals to reduce time-consuming appearance and avoidance rituals, and learn to develop a peaceful relationship with his or her body.

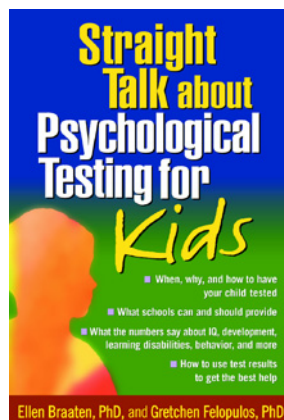
Dr. Wilhelm is founder and director of the Body Dysmorphic Disorder Clinic and Research Unit of the MGH Department of Psychiatry.



Straight Talk about Psychological Testing for Kids

Ellen B. Braaten, PhD, and Gretchen Felopulos, PhD

Published by Guildford Press, 2004



This authoritative guide walks parents through the complex process of psychological testing and explains when and how to use testing to get the best help for their child. The authors describe testing for dyslexia, ADHD, math and reading disorders, Asperger syndrome, autism, depression, anxiety and other childhood disorders. In easy-to-understand terms, the authors describe what the different tests measure and how to decipher reports, scores

and educational recommendations. The book also addresses evaluator qualifications, what types of testing schools are required to provide, and when to consider paying for private testing.

Drs. Braaten and Felopulos are child psychologists in the Psychology Assessment Center, a program of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Service of the MGH Department of Psychiatry.

David B. Herzog, MD, Named to HMS Professorship

On Feb. 14, Harvard Medical School (HMS) hosted a celebration to honor MGH Department of Psychiatry faculty member David B. Herzog, MD, who was recently named the initial incumbent of the newly created HMS Professorship in Psychiatry in the field of eating disorders. The event, held at the Gordon Hall of Medicine at HMS, was attended



David B. Herzog, MD

by many of Dr. Herzog's well-wishers, including HMS and MGH leaders, donors, family members and friends.

Contributions from more than 200 generous donors funded this HMS endowed professorship, or "chair," which is a high honor to be bestowed on a senior faculty member. Funded largely

or entirely through philanthropic support, endowed chairs provide incumbents and their successors with a secure reservoir of financial support with which to carry on their research and clinical initiatives, which is especially critical in this era of declining federal support.

An internationally renowned expert on eating disorders, Dr. Herzog is a distinguished researcher, teacher, clinician and patient advocate who, among many other achievements, has authored more than 250 peer-reviewed publications and three books and received numerous prestigious awards.

Dr. Herzog is also director of the Harris Center for Education and Advocacy in Eating Disorders at MGH (formerly the Harvard Eating Disorders Center), which he founded in 1994. Staffed by leaders in the field, the Harris Center advances the understanding, prevention and treatment of eating disorders through research, education, training and advocacy.

This is the second HMS professorship in the Department of Psychiatry. The first, held by MGH Psychiatrist-in-Chief Jerrold F. Rosenbaum, MD, was named for the department's first chief, Stanley Cobb, MD.

Philanthropic support is being sought for five other HMS professorships by the end of 2009: one in medical psychiatry, one in child psychiatry/pediatric psychopharmacology, one in reproductive psychiatry and two in depression.

Psychiatry Faculty News

Jonathan E. Alpert, MD, PhD, was recently appointed the new director of Clinical Services for the Department of Psychiatry (*see page 3*). In 2007, the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Committee on Medical Student Education awarded Dr. Alpert the 13th Annual Nancy C. A. Roeske, MD Certificate of Recognition for Excellence in Medical Student Education, which is awarded to APA members who have made outstanding and sustaining contributions to medical education.

Eugene Beresin, MD, director of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Residency Training Program at MGH and medical director of the MGH Child Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic, received the American College of Psychiatrists Bowis Award for 2008, which is given to a member or fellow who has played an important leadership role in the organization.

In March, **Joseph Biederman, MD**, will receive the Schonfeld Award from the American Society for Adolescent Psychiatry. This award recognizes individuals for their outstanding contributions to the field of adolescent psychiatry, as well as their excellence and dedication to the clinical practice of adolescent psychiatry throughout their career. Dr. Biederman is chief of the department's Clinical and Research Program in Pediatric Psychopharmacology and of the Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Program.

Deborah Blacker, MD, ScD, director of the Gerontology Research Unit and assistant vice-chair for Research of the Department of Psychiatry, was the recent recipient of two awards: the Memory Ride Award from the Alzheimer's Association and the Community Award from the Alzheimer Research Forum.

A. Eden Evins, MD, MPH, was one of 10 scientists invited by the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP) to give a prestigious "Hot Topics" talk at the ACNP's annual meeting this year. Dr. Evins will present her novel research findings about the mechanism by which nicotine is addictive. Dr. Evins is co-director of the Center for Addiction Medicine and an attending psychiatrist with the Depression Clinical and Research Program and the Schizophrenia Clinical and Research Program.

Gregory Fricchione, MD, director of the MGH Division of Psychiatry and Medicine and director of the MGH Division of International Psychiatry, was recently appointed to the Carter Center Mental Health Task Force. The Carter Center is committed to advancing human rights and alleviating unnecessary human suffering worldwide. Also, Dr. Fricchione was named to the American Psychiatric Association Council on Global Psychiatry last year.

Andrew Nierenberg, MD, medical director of the Bipolar Clinic and Research Program and associate director of the Depression Clinical and Research Program, was promoted to professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School (HMS).

Dr. Nierenberg was also named director and principal investigator of the National Institute of Mental Health-funded LiTMUS study, a multicenter, \$6 million investigation that will compare lithium plus optimized treatment to optimized treatment alone for patients with bipolar disorder. In addition, Dr. Nierenberg was recently elected to the Board of Councilors of the International Society for Bipolar Disorders.

Mark H. Pollack, MD, director of the Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Disorders, was appointed editor-in-chief of the journal *CNS Neuroscience and Therapeutics*.

Psychiatrist-in-Chief **Jerrold F. Rosenbaum, MD**, faculty members **Theodore A. Stern, MD**, **Maurizio Fava, MD**, **Joseph Biederman, MD**, and former faculty member Scott L. Rauch, MD, are editors of the textbook, "Massachusetts General Hospital Comprehensive Clinical Psychiatry," which will be published this spring by Mosby/Elsevier. This textbook includes chapters written by nearly 150 clinicians and researchers from the MGH Department of Psychiatry.

In January, **Theodore A. Stern, MD**, chief of the Avery D. Weisman, MD Psychiatry Consultation Service, was appointed editor-in-chief of the journal *Psychosomatics*. In March, Dr. Stern will receive the Donald Oken Award from the American Psychosomatic Society, which is given to a researcher, clinician and teacher who effectively influences medical students, residents and fellows.



Department's Faculty Well Represented in "Best Docs"

Once again, MGH's Department of Psychiatry faculty was heavily represented in the annual "Best Docs" listing published by *Boston Magazine* (Nov. 2007). In psychiatry, 26 MGH doctors were listed; 13 doctors were listed in child and adolescent psychiatry.

Boston Magazine's list was created by the company, Best Doctors, which was founded by Harvard Medical School-affiliated physicians. Every other year, the company surveys doctors who, in previous years, were identified by their peers as "best doctors" and asks them, "If you or a loved one needed a doctor in your specialty, who would you choose?" *Boston Magazine's* listing includes only doctors practicing in the Boston region.

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, May 17, 2008

Spring Symposium on Mental Health and Wellness

Advances in Diagnosis and Treatment of Youth to Young Adults with High-Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome

Presented by the Massachusetts General Hospital
Department of Psychiatry

Mood & Anxiety Disorders Institute Resource Center and
The Alan and Lorraine Bressler Clinical & Research Program
for Autism Spectrum Disorders
of the

Clinical and Research Programs in
Pediatric Psychopharmacology and Adult ADHD

Sponsored by the Sidney R. Baer Jr. Foundation

**Program details and registration information available after
April 14 at www.moodandanxiety.org or 617.724.8318**



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MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

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