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Research Training in Psychiatry: Our 5-Year Journey

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When I joined the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health 5 years ago, my mandate was to develop a clinical research program to compliment our clinical and educational programs. We thus set out to create the veritable “3-legged stool”.

Research training is an under-pinning of good research programs. There are 3 levels of research training: (1) didactics; (2) participation in studies; and (3) “mentoring”. Classroom instruction helps trainees to understand and appreciate that science is behind the art of healing. When students learn to read the literature critically, this can have a positive impact on clinical decision-making. Direct participation in research affords trainees the opportunity to function as a member of a research team, while learning about research methods and procedures; this experience also can help trainees decide whether (or not) research should be part of their overall career plan. Finally, for those who have caught the “research bug”, mentoring offers a one-on-one relationship with a seasoned researcher who makes a commitment to helping them develop a research career. Mentoring is a labor-intensive, long term (often lifetime) commitment. As our clinical research program approaches the 5-year mark, I would like to share some of our accomplishments, as well as feedback from faculty and trainees.

“Quotes” from recent trainees and faculty

“My experience as a part-time research fellow at St. Luke's has enabled me to develop a rich understanding of the complexities of research studies from their conception to their conclusion. The supervision, guidance, and mentorship I have received from Drs. Haller, Acosta, and Marsch has been invaluable in developing my identity as a true scientist-practitioner in substance abuse treatment with adolescents and young adults, as well with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. I look forward to seeing the research aspect of the training program continue to flourish and hope to be a part of its growth well beyond my position as a research fellow.”

*-Shelby Semino, EdM
Child Psychology Fellow
The Child and Family Institute
St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospital Center*

“... Mentoring on the BMT project has been a great experience for me. Sharing the expertise and knowledge with trainees is one of most exciting academic activities for me in the department. I would say that this experience has been rewarding for everyone involved!!”

*-Galina Mindlin, MD, PhD
Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry,
Columbia University,
Medical Director, CITPD (Center for Intensive
Treatment of Personality Disorders)
St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospital Center*

1. Beginning in 2009, we will be teaching the Research Course during the PGY2 year, as opposed to the PGY3 year. This will allow the residents to be exposed to research prior to having to decide whether (or not) to apply for a “Research Track” slot. Another change is that the course is being “team taught”, with most of our research faculty participating. Finally, we have expanded course content to include clinically relevant topics such as qualitative research, conducting research in real world settings, research with vulnerable populations, and the relationship between research and “evidence based medicine”. Thanks to our research faculty who have generously donated their time to our teaching efforts.
2. Two years ago, we expanded our “Research Track” from 3 to 4 slots in order to allow more residents to have a concentrated research experience should they desire one. For the past two years, 7 of 9 residents have applied for these slots, suggesting a high degree of interest in the program.
3. During each of the four years, we have sent research track residents to top-ranked research fellowships, including Columbia and Yale. These programs view us as a “pipeline” for well-trained students, both from a clinical and research perspective. We are extremely proud of our research residents and their accomplishments. Plus, this raises the stature of the department as a whole.
4. We also have developed and expanded research training experiences for psychology trainees. A recent fellow was the recipient of an NIH Minority Fellowship. Several fellows have functioned as Project Managers, study therapists and research assistants. Two years ago, we welcomed a psychology extern from Yeshiva University who came to us specifically for research training.
5. An important aspect of clinical research is culture and the research environment. It is essential that trainees be able to spend time with other researchers and research trainees, discussing ideas for studies and assisting each other with various tasks across projects. So that our research trainees can fully participate in the research community, we have provided them with dedicated work space on the Behavioral Science Research Unit.

Chairman's Message

Come January, 2009, I'll have been at SLR for 8 years. I'm stunned at how quickly the time has passed. But, when I look at what we've achieved, it puts things into perspective. We recently had a Departmental 5-year in-depth review that was organized by the SLR Medical Board, and led by an outside consultant. It was an opportunity for the leaders in many of our clinical and academic areas to let their hair down and discuss both the merits and disadvantages of working in our department, what works, what doesn't, and what's in our way. We don't have the formal report as yet, but the feedback I have gotten from review participants external to the Department is that what we do and how we do it is impressive. Impressive. So, I want to thank each and every one of you for your dedication to your work, compassion towards your patients, and support for our efforts as a Department to integrate, to develop and to prosper.

Change is afoot, and there will be further changes to the structure of the department. I'll briefly review some of the recent accomplishments of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health, present what we've already changed and where we're headed. Ramon Solhkhah, MD was appointed Associate Chairman for clinical services. He is leading an important strategic planning committee of the Department that is reviewing our mission and accomplishments, identifying service gaps, and opportunities for clinical and academic development. Prameet Singh, MD, our Director of Training and Education, has been on board now for over a year, and is guiding the residency program forward with a steady hand. He and the Education Policy Committee are focused on improving the clinical and academic experience for all our trainees, including curriculum reform, review of supervisory methods and supervisor input, and location of clinical rotations.

2008 demonstrated our continuing development as a clinical and academic center of excellence. The largest development was the move of our Adult Outpatient Clinic from 910 9th

Avenue, into clean, newly reconstructed space at 411 W. 114th Street. Under the leadership of Lindy Koenig, PhD, as well as our terrific administrative staff, we had a relatively disaster-free transition. Having the adult clinic at 411 creates opportunities for services, academic and administrative integration of adult outpatient psychiatry. Over the past year, the Division of Integrated Psychiatric Services, under the direction of Hunter McQuiston, MD, has taken on the task of strategic re-design, with many important projects completed, the most important of which resulted in the integration of ITRP (itself the product of a re-design of our START and Dual programs) and the Case Management program, into a larger whole. The new program is called the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center. The Access Center has moved and integrated with the Addiction Institute Evaluation Unit at Roosevelt, so we have a front end for all of our referrals in one place. Now it gets interesting. With the move of the Adult Outpatient Clinic to 411, we have decided to include it and the PRC into IPS. The newly re-formatted Division is called The Division of Outpatient and Community Psychiatry, a name fitting our mission and clinical activity. It will continue with Dr. McQuiston at the helm, and, I'm pleased to announce, Lindy Koenig, PhD, will be the division's Clinical Director.

In tandem with the shifts and consolidation in the adult outpatient sphere, there is a shift in the services of the Division of Adult Acute (Inpatient and Emergency) Psychiatry, led by Gary Lefer, MD. The inpatient psychiatry services on Clark 8 and 9 have now moved into that Division, and Dr. Lefer has already begun his involvement in overseeing the care on those units.

Under the leadership of Ramon Solhkhah, MD, we submitted a certificate of need to NY State DOH and OMH to open 61 new inpatient child & adolescent beds. Pending approval, this will add an important level of service to our continuum of care for children and adolescents, as well as improving our opportunities for teaching and research. We welcome back Alexandra Krunik, MD who is developing our pediatric psychiatry consultation program. At the Addiction Institute of New York, we opened the Addiction Psychopharmacology Clinic, which is being run by Ricardo Restrepo,

MD, a welcome new addition to our faculty. More changes are planned as we redesign the inpatient detoxification program, led by our new Unit Chief, Anna Skiandos, MD. Petros Levounis, MD, director of the Addiction Institute, published an important and well-regarded book, "Sober Siblings."

We continue to expand our development and marketing efforts. We were the lead institution for the NAMI walk in May, and we had a great time while leading the participants onto the Brooklyn Bridge. We have created a monthly lecture series for the community that is well attended and well regarded. Susan Fenton, our Director of Special Projects, spearheaded a donor project that created the Garden at Morningside in a courtyard of the 411 building. Our opening party was a wonderful event, in a lovely space that will offer respite and quiet for our staff.

Under the direction of Robin Kerner, PhD and Barbara Linder, Administrator Psychiatry Services, we are moving forward with the addition of the Addiction Institute and the Child & Family Institute to the TIER electronic medical record system, as well as the workflow system upgrade, which will then include all of our outpatient programs, and all the inpatient services of the Department. This will increase our ability to track our clinical care, demonstrate our impact on patients, and implement quality improvement projects.

I am honored to lead this department. Although I'm sure we will face adversity in the future, I'm also sure that we will prevail in our endeavor to give the highest quality of care in an academically and professionally enriching environment.

I wish you and you loved ones a healthy and happy New year.



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CFI React on the road in Africa.

African Child Trauma Research Project

The national prominence of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health has now become international. Earlier this year, a multidisciplinary team from the Child and Family Institute (CFI) at St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals traveled to four countries in sub-Saharan Africa as part of a project entitled CFI REACT (Research on the Effects of African Child Trauma).

One of the underlying motives for this project was a conscious move within CFI to embrace the concept of social responsiveness as one of the expanded four missions of an academic department (including the other three "legs" of: clinical care, education and training, and research). The concept of social responsiveness grew primarily out of Post-Apartheid South Africa. *The White Paper for the Transformation of Higher Education* (1997) and the *Higher Education Act of 1997* promotes "responsiveness to societal interests and needs" (aka, "social responsiveness") as one of the key activities of (publicly funded) higher education in South Africa. Social Responsiveness values the distinct and intentional connection of academic work to the public good through engagement with a range of external constituencies.



Matt in Rwanda

This pilot project was initiated as an attempt to ascertain the similarities and differences in psychosocial functioning (mental health and educational impacts) of the traumatic experiences on and the extent to which there exist rehabilitation programs for former child soldiers in the countries of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda. The team consisted of a child and adolescent psychiatrist (Ramon Solhkhah, M.D; Director of the Child and Family Institute), an administrator with an interest in international health policy (Jennie Johanson, M.P.A; Program Coordinator, Children's Community Mental Health Services of the Child and Family Institute), two educators (Matt Meyer, M.A., Educational Director for CFI's Comprehensive Adolescent Rehabilitation and Education Service and Jenny Bordo, M.A., international education consultant), and two research assistants (Lindsay Feldman and Kate Charles). The group traveled to Africa in late May and early June, 2008 to conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders [medical and mental health professionals (including psychiatrists, other physicians, psychologists, and social workers), educational professionals (including teachers and other school personnel), government officials and policy makers, and, most importantly, African children impacted by trauma, including nearly a hundred former child combatants] in each of the four African countries.

Although each of the countries visited is dealing with unique issues, they all face many difficulties concerning children. Some of the major similarities are poverty, difficulties finding employment, the need for trained mental health professionals, and children being sent or choosing to live on the streets. Most of the interviewees felt the mental health needs of children could only be prioritized once the more fundamental needs of food, clean water, shelter, and clothing are addressed.

In each country, we were told of street children--children being sent to or voluntarily choosing to live on the streets. Often, when this happens, the child leaves home and takes to the streets, which causes extreme trauma. Numerous interviews documented this phenomenon, which was a particular problem in DRC, where many of the children were being labeled as "sorcerers," which causes great stigmatization and results in isolation and makes

the child feel like a pariah.

Despite some differences in political and geographic issues, the people and organizations we met with in each country share concern for their country's children and many of the key issues affecting children in each country overlap. However, before they can manage the mental health needs of children in their respective countries, broader public health issues, such as poverty, nutrition, housing, and employment, must be addressed. Despite this, the people we spoke to in each country recognized and were addressing the mental health needs of children in some way. We were repeatedly asked to provide training and education for the mental health professionals but were also told about the dearth of mental health professionals for children. We, as an academic Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health, hope to contribute training and education to some of the locations we visited.

A preliminary project report was presented to a standing-room-only crowd at the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health's Grand Rounds on Wednesday, September 10, 2008. We plan to continue our preliminary work with these agencies and conduct further research and evaluation of programs for all children, but particularly former child combatants and street youth.



In a small Sierra Leonean village right near the border of Liberia, the CFI REACT team stopped to meet a group of local children. In this picture, Jennifer Bordo shows the children pictures she has taken of them with her digital camera.

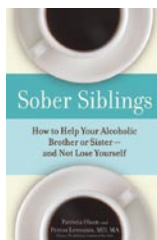


Ramon at orphanage

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On September 18, 2008, the department held a book signing and intimate discussion to introduce *Sober Siblings*, an empowering practical guide that helps brothers and sisters of alcoholics learn the difference between helping and enabling. This project started in 2005 when Dr. Levounis was interviewed by Pat Olsen, a freelance New York Times journalist, for an article in an airline magazine about problems faced by people in the broadcast industry who suffer from alcoholism.

After, they became friends and conversations always included the topic of alcoholism. Pat had two brothers who suffered from the disease while she had somehow managed to “dodge the genetic bullet,” as she put it. With the understanding of how special sibling relationships are, and with how little information has been written, both Dr. Levounis and Pat agreed to start this book project. This book is comprised of many interviews in which sober siblings related their stories to Pat Olsen; Petros Levounis has added his insight from the medical and psychiatric perspective. It resembles a step-by-step advise guide to those sober siblings on what to do, say, or not to say when confronted with the illness of alcoholism, at the same time of keeping with

the message of the book of not “not losing yourself” as quoted by Dr. Levounis.

Sober Siblings: How to Help Your Alcoholic Brother or Sister—And Not Lose Yourself by Patricia Olsen and Petros Levounis, MD, MA, Director – The Addiction Institute of New York (Da Capo Books/Perseus, 2008, www.SoberSiblings.com)

Richard N. Rosenthal, MD, Wins AAAP Founders Award

Richard N. Rosenthal, MD, Chairman, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health, St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals, and Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, recently was selected for an American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP) Founders' Award. The AAAP presents the award to outstanding members of the community whose work has contributed significantly to the science, teaching, treatment and public policy concerning addiction.

Dr. Rosenthal is past president and head of the public policy section of the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry. Dr. Rosenthal also is a distinguished fellow of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), a member of the APA Council on Addiction Psychiatry and a fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine.

He received the award at the AAAP's annual meeting and symposium in December in Boca Raton, Florida, and as the Founders Award winner, he delivered the meetings keynote address.

In addition Dr. Rosenthal discusses realistic expectations on how to effectively deal with stress and positive coping mechanisms at a seminar entitled, “All Life Has to Offer: What You Expect and What You Don't.” The video of this lecture is available on the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Health's web site: www.slrpsych.org

The Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies, honored Dr. Petros Levounis with the 2008 Coalition Leadership Award. As an administrator, psychiatric healer, teacher, researcher and author, his ground breaking contributions to public policy in addiction psychiatry is widely known and greatly valued.

The Addiction Institute of New York congratulates Mr. John Bellamy Taylor, MFA, CASAC, Director of Admitting & Evaluation Unit, for his latest achievement. Mr. Taylor one of the recipient of the “Caron Unsung Hero Award” during the Greater New York Community Service Award Breakfast 2008.

St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals have announced their President's Awards for Excellence winners for 2008. Nominated by colleagues, these employees were recognized for their outstanding leadership and contributions to the SLR team at a special reception.

Among the winners were John Mascio, RN, Roosevelt Addiction Services; and Dr. Susan Palmgren, Clinical Director Outpatient Psychiatry.

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St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals

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The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health at St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals is the largest not-for-profit provider of mental health and addiction services in New York City. Since 1954, we have dedicated ourselves to providing comprehensive services that enable individuals to improve their overall quality of life.

Please help us further our mission by making a contribution today. Your gift will enhance our continued efforts to provide the highest quality, compassionate care to all of our patients.

Yes, I/we want to support the important work of St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals' Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health by making a contribution of:

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Dr. Richard N. Rosenthal Chairman, SLR Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health, cuts the tape to kick off NAMI WALK.



The St. Luke's Roosevelt Team walks with pride across the Brooklyn Bridge.

St. Luke's Roosevelt Was The Largest Team in the New York City

On Saturday, May 10th at the scenic South Street Seaport, the St. Luke's Roosevelt Team proudly marched towards and across the Brooklyn Bridge to destigmatize mental illness and promote hope for the Second Annual NAMI WALKS for the Mind of America - NYC Metro. The St. Luke's-Roosevelt team comprised of nearly 200 employees, consumers, and friends that fund-raised much needed dollars for NAMI NYC Metro which is an affiliate of The National Alliance on Mental Illness. This year the hospital was a Major Business sponsor for the event, it provided a Wellness Tent for free medical screening, and our own Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Chairman, Dr. Richard N. Rosenthal was the Business Co-Chair. Dr. Rosenthal delivered a motivational kickoff speech which addressed awareness about our country's need for a world-class treatment and recovery system for people with mental illness. Many of those who participated in the walk on behalf of the St. Luke's-Roosevelt Team left the event with a sense of pride and accomplishment with the mantra of the walk which was "the Larger the Crowd.. the Larger the Voice."

SLR as always is *"Investing In The Mental Health of NYC"*.

Treating Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People



The Addiction Institute of New York announces its 4th annual conference on March 6, 2009. This day-long conference will feature sessions by national experts in Addiction Treatment and workshops that will

address the many facets of addiction in the LGBT community, including advances in the treatment of dependence on Crystal Methamphetamine and other drugs of abuse; pros and cons of specialized LGBT programs; and the unique needs of the transgender community. Six Continuing Education Credit Hours will be given to CASAC's and social workers. For additional information, please visit us at: www.AddictionInstituteNY.org or contact EBurch@chpnet.org

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Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Health



The Garden at Morningside 411 W. 114th

New York, NY (October 7, 2008) Over the Memorial Day holiday in 2007, a serious fire caused major damage to 411 West 114th Street, a building that houses hundreds of hospital staff members who provide important mental and behavioral health services to more than 350 patients every day.

Just over a year later, not only has the building been outfitted with new windows, wiring, carpeting, furniture, and other basic amenities, but with the help of generous donors, the bleak alleyway between the fire-damaged building and the main hospital building was transformed into a beautiful garden that now serves as a conference and respite space for the more than 250 psychiatrists, psychologists, residents and fellows who work there.

“The fire caused a major upheaval for our clinicians and our patients, since all programs were forced to move out of the building and disperse to other sites at either St. Luke’s or Roosevelt Hospitals,” says Susan Fenton, Director of Special Projects. “At around the same time, I met a patient sculptor who wanted to give back for the great care he received at SLR. When he visited the destroyed building and saw the alleyway alongside it, he suggested creating a garden that would feature his piece.” Unfortunately, this patient is quite ill and was unable to create the sculpture, but his vision to create

a garden out of the dowdy space between the fire-ravaged building and the main hospital at St. Luke’s is alive and well.

Made possible through contributions from generous donors including The Butler Foundation; our dear friend Kate Wickham, who provides ongoing support for the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health; and other contributions from an anonymous grateful patient who’s being treated by one of our attending psychiatrists, The Garden at Morningside officially opened its “doors” on September 24, 2008.

In addition to decorative painting that adorns the walls of the space, manicured plantings outfitted with automatic sprinklers, decorative lighting and a pebble/pavestone floor, a 75-foot mural that depicts a beautiful garden under a blue sky hangs on the main hospital building that faces into the courtyard. The mural is visible from all offices and stairwells within the building, so patients and staff will have a view of big, white, puffy clouds in a blue sky and the new garden rather than the stark alleyway that previously existed.

The rehabilitation of 411 West 114th Street is ongoing and programs continue to move in daily. The building houses: The Child and Family Institute; Integrated Treatment and Recovery; The Crime Victims Treatment Center;

The Women’s Health Project; our Outpatient Clinics and the Case Management Clinic. In his remarks at the opening of the space, Richard N. Rosenthal, MD, Chairman of Psychiatry & Behavioral Health at SLR, said, “This is our way of saying a big thank you to the hundreds of staff members who provide mental and behavioral health services to the community. We are so grateful to our donors who helped make this act of appreciation possible.”

For more information about the services offered by the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health at SLR, please visit: <http://www.slropsych.org> or call: (212) 523-7342.



Opening night reception



David Wyman AVP Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Health, Dennis Martinez, Contractor, Loida Ramos, AVP Real Estate Services, Sue Fenton, Director of Special Projects, Eileen Lovett, VP of Administration, Dr. Richard N. Rosenthal, Chairman of Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health



Dr. Petros Levounis, Director, Addiction Institute of NY; Susan Dietz, V.P. Nursing; Barbara Linder Administrator Psychiatric Services