

McLEANNEWS

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22nd Annual OCD Conference brings experts, resources to Boston

More than 1,500 advocates and mental health experts attended the 22nd Annual OCD Conference which took place from Friday, July 31 through Sunday, August 2 at the Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel in the Seaport District, hosted by the International OCD Foundation (IOCDF), and presented by McLean Hospital's OCD Institute. McLean Hospital is the lead sponsor of this year's IOCDF conference.



International
OCD
Foundation

This is not a conference about hand sanitizer or fist-bumps or tweeting about being #soOCD.

This is a conference for the millions of Americans who deal with obsessive compulsive disorder, a severe yet oft-misunderstood disorder of the mind. OCD affects 1 in 100 adults around the world, and can result in crippling anxiety and doubt. But with the right treatment from therapists trained in cognitive behavioral therapy, exposure and response prevention and sometimes medication, it can get better.

Unlike many health conferences, this unique event offers resources for individuals with OCD and their family members to learn about the latest in research and treatment alongside the mental health professionals who treat the disorder. The Conference features more than 100 presentations, workshops and seminars, as well as more than two-dozen support groups, evening activities and other networking events.

"This Conference serves as a great opportunity for everyone affected by OCD to learn more about the disorder," said Jeff Szymanski, PhD, executive director of the IOCDF. "OCD is often misunderstood or overlooked, so this is an excellent chance for people to get connected to new and exciting resources, research and a strong community that understands and relates to your experiences."

“The IOCDF conference provides an incredible opportunity to access an abundance of resources in one place,” said Diane Davey, RN, MBA, program director of McLean Hospital’s OCD Institute. “It also provides a safe place to learn and share knowledge about OCD, and to meet other people who understand the disorder without fear of stigma.”

Some of the highlights of this year’s conference showcased new, innovative approaches to treating OCD. The “Louder than OCD Cabaret,” one of the opening events of the Conference, featured IOCDF spokesperson and Argentinian pop star, Ro Vitale, performing and leading a music therapy workshop.

“Music heals in the most amazing and unexpected ways,” said Vitale. “As a musician and teacher, I have seen the amazing outcomes of using this tool, and I can’t wait to accompany attendees in their creative process.”

This year’s keynote address, delivered by former NHL goalie Clint Malarchuk, was another conference highlight. A longtime OCD-sufferer, Malarchuk is perhaps best known for having his carotid artery slashed by a skate during a 1989 game – an injury that caused him to bleed nearly to death on the ice. Malarchuk presented his address, “I’m Not Crazy – I Just Thought I Was” with his wife, Joanie Malarchuk, on the Saturday morning of the Conference.

The IOCDF also honored individuals in the OCD and related disorders community who go above and beyond in their work. David Adam, an editor for the science journal *Nature* and author of the 2014 book, “The Man Who Couldn’t Stop” received the IOCDF Illumination Award, an accolade given annually to media personalities and other influencers whose work accurately and respectfully represents OCD and related disorders in an effort to raise awareness and understanding.

Other honorees recognized throughout the Conference weekend include James Claiborn, PhD, receiving the Outstanding Service Award, John Greist, MD, receiving the Outstanding Career Achievement Award, and Chris Trondsen and Kevin Putman, both receiving the Hero Award for their advocacy work.

For more information, including a full Conference schedule and details on how to register to attend, visit ocd2015.org.



U.S. News & World Report Names McLean Hospital Among Best in Nation for Psychiatry



McLean Hospital has been ranked fourth overall in the nation in psychiatry by U.S. News & World Report for 2015-16, making McLean the number one freestanding psychiatric hospital in the country—a distinction it has held for more than 20 years. The annual U.S. News [Best Hospitals](#) rankings, now in their 26th year, recognize hospitals that excel in treating the most challenging patients.

“I am deeply proud of the continued dedication of the McLean community—your drive to improve the lives of people with psychiatric illness and their families has made us the premier psychiatric hospital for treatment, research and education in the country,” said McLean President and Psychiatrist in Chief Scott L. Rauch, MD. “Thank you for all that you do each day in the service of our precious mission”

McLean Hospital also ranked fourth overall in the Boston metro area and fifth in the state of Massachusetts in the U.S. News rankings.

For 2015-16, U.S. News evaluated hospitals in 16 adult specialties and ranked the top 50 in most of the specialties. Just 3 percent of the nearly 5,000 hospitals that were analyzed for Best Hospitals 2015-16 earned national ranking in even one specialty.

U.S. News also recognizes hospitals that perform nearly at the level of their nationally ranked peers and represent valuable regional sources of quality care.

“The data tell the story – a hospital that emerged from our analysis as one of the best has much to be proud of,” says U.S. News Health Rankings Editor Avery Comarow. “A Best Hospital has demonstrated its expertise in treating the most challenging patients.”

U.S. News publishes Best Hospitals to help guide patients who need a high level of care because they face particularly difficult surgery, a challenging condition or extra risk because of age or multiple health problems. Objective measures such as patient survival and safety data, adequacy of nurse staffing levels and other data largely determined the rankings in most specialties.

The specialty rankings and data were produced for U.S. News by RTI International, a leading research organization based in Research Triangle Park, N.C. Using the same data, U.S. News produced the state and metro rankings.

The rankings are freely available at <http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals> and will appear in the U.S. News “Best Hospitals 2016” guidebook, available in August.



Team led by McLean's Kwang-Soo Kim uncovers potential Parkinson's treatment

Kwang-Soo Kim, PhD, director of McLean's Molecular Neurobiology Laboratory and professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, along with collaborative teams from Brandeis University and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore, recently announced the findings of a multi-year research project that shows that existing anti-malaria drugs may have the ability to treat Parkinson's disease. This study was published in a recent issue of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* (PNAS) online.



Parkinson's disease (PD) is the most prevalent movement disorder, affecting more than five million people worldwide. At present there are no available treatments that can stop or slow down the progress of the disease, and while currently available treatments can help relieve symptoms, there is no cure.

After screening more than 1,000 drugs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the researchers discovered that two common anti-malaria treatments – chloroquine and amodiaquine – could bind and activate a protein in the brain vital to fight Parkinson's. This protein, called Nurr1, is essential for development and maintenance of dopamine neurons, which are essential to the body's ability to move muscles. Parkinson's disease disrupts the production of dopamine neurons and progressively causes the loss of motor control.

"Backed by various lines of scientific evidence, Nurr1 is known to be a potential drug target to treat Parkinson's. Despite great efforts from pharmaceutical companies and academia, no one has managed to find a molecule which can directly bind to it and activate it, except for us," said Kim, senior author of the study.

In laboratory tests, the researchers found that by activating Nurr1, rats with Parkinson's disease appeared to improve and showed no signs of side effects.

According to Kim, current treatment for PD is aimed at replenishing dopamine levels via pharmacological or surgical treatment, but while these methods can improve mobility functions and treat symptoms in the early stages, they are unable to slow or halt the disease.

And Kim has seen firsthand how desperate Parkinson's sufferers, and those who love them, are for a cure. "I never imagined that I would receive so many calls and emails from patients, family members and reporters," he said. "I fully understand the excitement around this finding, but we need to be cautious and conduct more research to determine the efficacy of these medications."

Both chloroquine and amodiaquine are approved by the FDA and have been used to treat malaria infections. Amodiaquine was used in the late 1940s to early 1950s, until the malaria parasite grew resistant and its significant liver toxicity was known while chloroquine is still being used in Africa today.

The research team still plans to look into additional drug combinations that might halt or slow the progression of PD and noted their intent to modify the existing formulations of chloroquine and amodiaquine for human clinical trials, which they hope to begin soon.



A letter from McLean's President and Psychiatrist in Chief: Announcing McLean's New Chief Scientific Officer

It is my pleasure to welcome Kerry J. Ressler, MD, PhD, to the McLean community. Dr. Ressler will assume the roles of Chief Scientific Officer and Chief of the Depression and Anxiety Disorders Division, effective August 1, 2015. He will also

hold the [Patricia and James Poitras Endowed Chair in Psychiatry at McLean Hospital](#), thanks to a generous gift from longtime hospital supporters Patricia and James Poitras.

As McLean's Chief Scientific Officer, Dr. Ressler will oversee the hospital's comprehensive research enterprise, enhancing the breadth and depth of the scientific portfolio, promoting research collaborations, and advancing a vision for improved lab facilities. As McLean's inaugural Chief of the Depression and Anxiety

Disorders Division, he will work to improve communication across clinical operations, while working with researchers with an interest in depression and anxiety to identify greater opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues throughout the hospital and across translational and clinical research programs. A formal Division launch event will be planned for the fall.

Dr. Ressler, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator, comes to Belmont from the Emory University School of Medicine and Yerkes Research Center in Atlanta where, since 2001, he has been investigating the molecular and cellular mechanisms of fear learning and the process of extinction of fear. The primary objective of his work is to use the power of molecular genetics to understand the molecular biology, neural circuitry and behavioral biology of fear and recovery from fear in animal models and human patients.



Also a practicing psychiatrist, Dr. Ressler's primary interest is in translational and clinical research on fear-related psychiatric disorders, with a focus on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). His hope is that understanding how fear works in the mammalian brain in a laboratory setting will someday translate into improved treatment and prevention for disorders such as PTSD, phobias, panic and other anxiety disorders.

In addition to Dr. Ressler's clinical and research work, his academic qualifications are broad, numerous and well recognized. He has more than 200 peer-reviewed publications, including a number of articles in high-profile journals including *Nature*, *Cell*, *Nature Neuroscience*, *Neuron*, and the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Dr. Ressler is President-Elect of the Society for Biological Psychiatry and Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America. He is also a member of the Institute of Medicine, a Fellow of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, and a member of the Board of Scientific Counselors for the National Institute of Mental Health. He has served on numerous NIH study sections and serves on the editorial boards of several journals, including *Biological Psychiatry* and *Neuropsychopharmacology*, and *Depression and Anxiety*.

Dr. Ressler holds a degree in molecular biology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and earned his PhD in neuroscience from Harvard University and his medical degree from Harvard Medical School. He completed his residency training at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia. As a faculty member at Emory, he was previously Interim Director of the Emory Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP), a member of the Executive Committee of the Emory Neuroscience Graduate Program, and Director of the Emory Psychiatry Residency Research Program.

As we welcome Dr. Ressler, I would also like to take a moment to thank Joseph Coyle, MD, for serving as our first CSO. His leadership has provided critical support and mentorship for young researchers and has helped us to recruit and retain future generations of leaders in the field. Although he is stepping down as CSO, Dr. Coyle will continue to be an active member of our research community, leading the Molecular Psychiatry Research Laboratory and holding the Eben S. Draper Chair in Psychiatry and Neuroscience at Harvard Medical School.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Ressler to McLean and thanking Dr. Coyle for his leadership within our research community. A welcome reception for Dr. Ressler will be planned for this fall.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott L. Rauch MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the "MD" clearly visible at the end.

Scott L. Rauch, MD



EAP Supports Parents

News from the EAP

Parenting is a lifelong process and no one (experts included) has all the answers. Finding the right solution or parenting strategy is a matter of trial and error. Even when you do all the “right” things, your child may not respond the way you think he or she should. It often seems that by the time you figure out a good way to handle something, you’re on to yet another challenge. Partners

EAP is available to provide support and resources to make your days as a parent less stressful. Go to the EAP website for more [parenting information](#).

To speak confidentially with an EAP counselor, call the EAP at 1-866-724-4EAP (4327).
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Work&Life Resources
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