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## Spotlight - Faculty



**Kurt Ackerman, MD, PhD**  
Assistant Professor of Psychiatry

Throughout his career at the University of Pittsburgh and Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, Kurt Ackerman, MD, PhD has been very active as a clinician educator and program administrator. He is a board-certified psychiatrist with a sub-specialty in psychosomatic medicine, and is the Medical Director for three of WPIC's mental health service areas: Adult Mood and Anxiety Services; the Psychiatric Consultation-Liaison Service; and Behavioral Health Information Technology.

Dr. Ackerman earned his medical degree and a doctorate degree in Neurobiology and Anatomy from the University of Rochester in New York. He is a graduate of the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic Residency Training Program and completed postdoctoral training at the University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry. Under the mentorship of Drs. Charles Reynolds and Christopher Martin, his research focused on interactions between the brain and immune system. More specifically, his studies focused on how the stress may exacerbate the symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

Under his guidance, the Psychiatric Consultation and Liaison Program has grown into one of the largest and most diverse programs in the Country, providing inpatient consultations to nine UPMC Hospitals, as well as integrated services in a number of medical programs such as the Starzl Transplant Institute, University Internal Medicine, and Pittsburgh Cancer Institute. In addition to the Psychiatric Consultation Service, the WPIC Adult Service Line encompasses a number of diverse clinical areas including Traditional Inpatient and Outpatient Care, Intensive Outpatient Programs, Forensic Evaluations, ECT, and Pastoral Care Services. As the first Medical Director of Behavioral Health IT at UPMC, he is helping to coordinate the initial implementation of an inpatient Electronic Health Record System at WPIC which will go live in early 2013. A good citizen of the clinical community, Dr. Ackerman is on a number of WPIC committees for safety, ethics and health information management. He has taught numerous classes on confidentiality, consent and privacy, and has been a mentor to several residents and junior faculty. In recognition for his service in these areas, Dr. Ackerman has been the recipient of the Special Recognition Award for Services to Residency Training and an ACES award for Exemplary Service to UPMC.

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**Howard J. Aizenstein, MD, PhD**  
Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Bioengineering,

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**and Clinical and Translational Science**

Howard Aizenstein, MD, PhD serves as the Director of the Geriatric Psychiatry Neuroimaging Laboratory and Co-Director of Psychiatry Neuroimaging at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Aizenstein received his PhD in Computer Science (1993) and his MD (1995) from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. He completed a residency in general and adult psychiatry (1999), a fellowship in geriatric psychiatry (2000), and a research fellowship in functional neuroimaging (2001) at the University of Pittsburgh before joining the Department of Psychiatry faculty in 2001. Dr. Aizenstein is an internationally recognized expert on the cognitive and affective neuroscience of aging and geriatric psychiatry. His research program uses different converging methodologies, traditional computer tasks, as well as structural and functional magnetic resonance imaging, to identify key brain structures associated with affective and cognitive processing, and how these change over time with and without intervention. Dr. Aizenstein's research team has developed automated methods of morphometric and functional MRI analyses. Due in part to the wide applicability of his neuroimaging methods, Dr. Aizenstein has developed collaborations with many investigators at the University of Pittsburgh and at other academic institutions around the country.

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**Boris Birmaher, MD**  
**Endowed Chair in Early Onset Bipolar Disease**  
**and Professor of Psychiatry**

Boris Birmaher, MD, is the Endowed Chair in Early Onset Bipolar Disease and Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Medicine. He has board certifications in both general psychiatry and child psychiatry. He received his medical degree from Valle University in Cali, Colombia and completed; training in general psychiatry at the Hebrew University, Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem, Israel; training in biological psychiatry at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York; and training in child psychiatry at Columbia University, New York Psychiatric Institute in New York.

Dr. Birmaher has been involved in clinical work and research in pediatric mood and anxiety disorders for over 25 years. His research interests include areas of phenomenology, course and outcome, etiology, and pharmacology and psychosocial treatments. He is currently involved in several NIMH studies including: 1) "Course and Outcome for Adolescents with Bipolar Illness," aimed at describing the phenomenology, course, and associated factors in children and adolescents with bipolar spectrum disorder; 2) "Children of Bipolar Parents: A High Risk Follow-up Study," aimed at studying the longitudinal psychopathology of children of parents with bipolar disorder compared with children of community controls; and 3) "Longitudinal Assessment of Manic Symptoms," aimed at evaluating the predictive value of early-onset manic symptoms in a large sample of children ages 6-12 years old. Together with Dr. David Axelson, he is the Co-Director of the Child and Adolescent Bipolar Services (CABS) program, a program for the service, teaching and research of bipolar disorder in youth.

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**Cynthia A. Conklin, PhD**  
**Associate Professor of Psychiatry**

Cynthia Conklin, PhD, has been known for her inquisitive nature and passion for her work throughout her academic career. Her interest in addiction and tobacco/nicotine research began during her graduate training at Purdue University, where she earned Master's and doctoral degrees in Clinical Psychology under the mentorship of Dr. Stephen Tiffany and was awarded the James D. Linden Award, presented to the graduate student who best exemplifies the scientist practitioner model of clinical psychology. Following a one-year Clinical Psychology internship at the Medical University of South

Carolina, Dr. Conklin relocated to Pittsburgh in 2001 to begin her appointment as a postdoctoral fellow in the University of Pittsburgh Cardiovascular Behavioral Medicine Research Program. As a postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Conklin trained with Dr. Kenneth Perkins and examined the reinforcing effects of nicotine and cigarette smoking in adult smokers. She also pursued external funding to support her development of an innovative strategy to examine personalized smoking cues by giving smokers cameras and having them take photographs of the places where they regularly do and do not smoke. Her efforts resulted in a pilot grant from the Pittsburgh Mind-Body Center to conduct an exploratory study. This pilot work demonstrated the feasibility of having smokers create their own photographic stimuli materials and launched Dr. Conklin's independent research career focusing on proximal and distal smoking cues, and the impact of personalizing those cues on subjective and physiological reactivity in adult smokers.

Dr. Conklin was appointed Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh in 2003 and was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 2012. She is the Principal Investigator for four R01 grants funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and has served as a Co-Investigator for several other federally funded projects throughout her career. This support has enabled Dr. Conklin to expand her exploration of how people, places and smoking-related objects function alone and in combination to affect both smokers' craving and actual smoking behavior when they are confronted with salient cues to smoke and to not smoke. A nationally recognized expert on nicotine dependence, smoking, cue reactivity and conditioning theory, Dr. Conklin has published her findings in *Addiction*, the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* and numerous other scientific journals. In addition, Dr. Conklin co-authored a book aimed at treating smokers, "Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Smoking Cessation." She also is invited to present and participate in scientific meetings, conferences and workshops locally and nationally. Dr. Conklin also gives generously of her time in service to the academic community. She is been an ad hoc reviewer for the National Institute of Drug Abuse in the U.S., and for the Italian Ministry of Health and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, and as a reviewer for several scientific journals. In addition, Dr. Conklin is an active participant on a number of committees and working groups in the Department of Psychiatry and for professional societies and organizations.

In addition to her extensive research activities, Dr. Conklin is an outstanding educator, teacher and mentor to students, fellows and junior faculty. She has helped to foster an early interest in scientific discovery among high school students by actively volunteering as a Category Judge for the Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Her teaching activities at the University of Pittsburgh include serving as an instructor for the Introduction to Psychiatry course as well as Behavioral Medicine and Medical Decision Making classes for first-year medical school courses, and Dr. Conklin is a member of the Master's thesis and dissertation committees for students in the U.S. and Belgium.



**Tina R. Goldstein, PhD**  
**Associate Professor of Psychiatry**

Tina R. Goldstein, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry is passionate about her work. An accomplished researcher, educator and clinician, Dr. Goldstein's work focuses on the assessment and psychosocial treatment of youth with and at risk for bipolar disorder, with a particular interest in suicide prevention in this population.

A graduate of the University of Colorado at Boulder, Dr. Goldstein earned her PhD in Clinical Psychology in 2003 and relocated to Pittsburgh, where she completed the Clinical Psychology Internship Program at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic of UPMC (WPIC) and a federally-funded postdoctoral fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry. She was recruited to the Department of Psychiatry faculty in 2006 where she has established a well-deserved reputation as a thoughtful clinician, a highly engaged mentor and teacher, and a highly collaborative academic scientist.

Dr. Goldstein's clinical work closely parallels her research interests. She provides and supervises psychosocial treatment services for youth with bipolar spectrum disorders

and their families in the Child and Adolescent Bipolar Services (CABS) Clinic. She was appointed Director of Psychotherapy for Pediatric Mood Disorders in January 2014, and has played an important role in the training of residents, postdoctoral fellows and medical students in that area. Dr. Goldstein is a superb teacher and mentor committed to the training and career development of students and early-career clinicians and researchers. Her educational activities include leading didactic courses for PGY1 and PGY2 residents on Dialectic Behavioral Therapy, and serving as a member of the faculty for the WPIC Clinical Psychology Internship Program. She also gives generously of her time as a member of the training faculty for the federally funded Clinical Research Training in Child and adolescent Psychiatry T32 and for the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Career Development Institute for Bipolar Disorders.

As an academic scientist, Dr. Goldstein is highly collaborative and has made valuable contributions to the field of child and adolescent psychiatry throughout her career. As a postdoctoral fellow, she adapted Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) for the treatment of bipolar disorder in adolescents. She later tested the initial efficacy and feasibility of this intervention by conducting a randomized clinical trial with support from a K23 career development award from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). She was recently awarded a R01 from NIMH to conduct a larger clinical trial of DBT for adolescents with bipolar disorder. As an independent scientist, Dr. Goldstein has served as the Principal Investigator for two NIMH R34 grants - one to study early the assessment and intervention for adolescents at-risk for bipolar disorder, and another aimed at improving medication adherence among adolescents with bipolar disorder – and a grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse on mood, substance use and suicidality in bipolar youth. She also serves as the Co-Principal Investigator for two grants funded by the Pittsburgh Foundation investigating risk factors for youth suicide, and as a Co-Investigator for several other federally-funded studies focused on the assessment and treatment of mood-disordered and at-risk youth. In recognition of her scientific contributions, Dr. Goldstein has awarded the New Clinical Drug Evaluation Unit (NCDEU) New Investigator Award (2008) and the Klerman Young Investigator Award from the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (2012).

Dr. Goldstein has widely disseminated her work, collaborating on 45 peer-review publications in high-impact journals such as American Journal of Psychiatry, Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and Archives of General Psychiatry, as well as numerous book chapters. She is also a popular lecturer who has presented her work at conferences and meetings in the United States, Turkey, Italy and Canada. She also gives generously of her time to service to the academic community, serving as a reviewer for numerous journals and as a member of the International Society for Bipolar Disorders Task Force on Suicide and an adviser to the Ryan Licht Sang Foundation.

We are delighted to have Dr. Goldstein as a member of our faculty and look forward to her ongoing contributions not only to the Department of Psychiatry, but to the field of scientific research.



**Anne Germain, PhD**  
**Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology**

Dr. Anne Germain is Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. She received her PhD in Clinical Psychology from the Université de Montréal in 2001 and completed her post-doctoral training in clinical sleep research at the University of Pittsburgh in 2005.

Dr. Germain's research program has two main areas of interest. The first focuses on the mechanisms underlying sleep disturbances occurring in the context of stress-related psychiatric disorders, with a special emphasis on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Her work in this area utilizes multimodal sleep measurement methods including self-report measures, actigraphy and polysomnography, quantitative EEG, pharmacological probes, sleep neuroimaging techniques, as well as novel animal models. The second area of interest concentrates on the development, adaptation, and testing of treatments targeting stress-related sleep disturbances as a means to enhance psychological

resilience and to hasten recovery from trauma exposure.

Dr. Germain has published over 45 peer-reviewed articles and 15 chapters and invited papers on sleep in the context of PTSD and other stress-related disorders. She has served on various committees of the Sleep Research Society (SRS) and American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM). Dr. Germain currently serves on the Editorial Board of the journal *Behavioral Sleep Medicine*, and is a regular peer reviewer for specialized journals on sleep, trauma, and psychiatry. She also serves on various study sections for the United States Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Institutes of Health, as well as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.



**Jordan F. Karp, MD**  
**Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Anesthesiology,**  
**and Clinical and Translational Science**

Jordan F. Karp, MD is Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Anesthesiology, and Clinical and Translational Science. Dr. Karp earned a Bachelor's degree from Emory University and his medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He completed his residency in Psychiatry at the Columbia University in New York. A native Pittsburgher, Dr. Karp wanted to return home for fellowships in geriatric psychiatry and clinical research and then to join the psychiatry faculty in 2006. His research interests include improving care for older adults living with comorbid low back pain and depression, for which he has been awarded a R01 grant from the NIA. Dr. Karp recently received a prestigious NARSAD award to study buprenorphine, an opioid analgesic, for use in treatment resistant depression. He is a frequent lecturer both locally and nationally on the topics of pain and aging, and the treatment of depression in late-life. A sought-after mentor, Dr. Karp helps advise several medical students' scholarly projects. In addition to research, Dr. Karp is a skilled clinician with a busy private practice and is Medical Director for Geriatric Psychiatry at UPMC Pain Medicine at Centre Commons. In his spare time he enjoys running, playing with his two miniature pinschers, and sailing at Chautauqua Lake with family.



**William E. Klunk, MD, PhD**  
**Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology**

Dr. William E. Klunk is a Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology and Co-Director of the Alzheimer Disease Research Center at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Klunk completed an MD/PhD degree at Washington University in St. Louis focusing on neuropharmacology and medicinal chemistry. Dr. Klunk then completed a general psychiatry residency followed by a Fellowship in Geriatric Neuropsychopharmacology at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic (WPIC)/University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He is a member of the Medical and Scientific Advisory Council of the National Alzheimer's Association. He has published well over 150 journal articles and book chapters and is Principal Investigator of several NIH and Foundation grants and has received a MERIT Award from the NIA. Dr. Klunk is a pioneer in the field of in vivo amyloid imaging in humans. His work spans from basic synthetic chemistry and neuropharmacological evaluation of amyloid imaging tracers to human PET studies of these tracers. His group's 2004 paper was cited by Nature Medicine the most highly cited research paper on Alzheimer's disease published since 2004. He shared the 2004 MetLife Foundation Award, the 2008 Potamkin Prize and the 2009 Ronald and Nancy Reagan Research Institute Awards for research in Alzheimer's disease with his colleague, Dr. Chet Mathis. Among his current research projects, Dr. Klunk is particularly excited about the prospect of determining how early amyloid deposition begins before clinical symptoms appear and what other mediators determine whether the presence of brain amyloid results in clinical symptoms.





**David Kolko, PhD, ABPP**

**Professor of Psychiatry, Pediatrics, and Psychology**

David Kolko, PhD, ABPP, is a Professor of Psychiatry, Pediatrics, and Psychology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and Director of the Special Services Unit at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic. He directs the SAFE Program (Services for Adolescent and Family Enrichment) at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, an outpatient treatment research program for sexually abusive youth that is operated in collaboration with probation officers from the Juvenile Court. He is board certified in Child and Adolescent Psychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology and a fellow of the American Psychological Association.

His primary interests involve the study and treatment of disruptive behavior disorders and children's antisocial behavior, including childhood firesetting, adolescent sexual offending behavior, and child physical abuse and related forms of maltreatment. He is the developer of an evidence-based treatment for physical aggression/abuse, child behavior problems, and family coercion/conflict, called "Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy" (AF-CBT; [www.afcbt.org](http://www.afcbt.org)). Much of his current treatment research is devoted to the dissemination and implementation of AF-CBT to community practitioners working in various systems that serve children, youth, and families, including pediatric primary care, juvenile justice, child welfare, public health/safety, and mental health.

His prior books include, *Assessing and treating physically abused children and their families: A cognitive-behavioral approach* (2002, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA), and the *Handbook on Firesetting in Children and Youth* (2002, Academic Press). A sample of Dr. Kolko's clinical-research activities and articles may be found online at <http://www.pitt.edu/~kolko>.



**Karen Matthews, PhD**

**Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry, Epidemiology, Psychology, and Clinical and Translational Science**

Dr. Karen Matthews joined the faculty in 1979 and is now Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Professor of Epidemiology and Psychology. After receiving her B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, she traveled extensively (and very cheaply) in Europe, northern Africa, and Mexico – an invaluable life experience. She earned her PhD in psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, where her dissertation research was on Type A behavior, a potential risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD). Her subsequent research has been guided by several assumptions. First, epidemiological constructs associated with CVD provide opportunities to identify the psychobiological mechanisms underlie the associations. Her interests in Type A, negative emotions, race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and most recently poor sleep arose from that assumption. Second, it is most informative to investigate epidemiological constructs at times of transition, because change often can provide a unique window on underlying psychobiological processes. Her interests in adolescence, menopause, and mid-life aging stem from that view. She is fortunate to have joined efforts with a remarkable group of investigators at the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University in establishing the Cardiovascular Behavioral Medicine Research Training Program, academic health psychology doctoral programs, and the Pittsburgh Mind-Body Center. She has received the American Psychological Association Award for Distinguished Scientific Applications of Psychology; Cardiovascular Research Award from the North American Menopause Society; Distinguished Scientist Award from the Society of Behavioral Medicine; and President's Award from the American Psychosomatic Society. She was elected to membership in the Institute of Medicine in 2002. She enjoys gardening and playing racquet sports, and is an avid Steelers fan.

**Kenneth C. Nash, MD, MMM**

**Associate Professor of Psychiatry**

Kenneth C. Nash, MD, MMM is an Associate Professor in the



Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He is the Chief of Clinical Services at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic and Vice Chair of Clinical Affairs for the

Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Nash is a board certified child and adolescent and adult psychiatrist who is active in the clinical, academic and administrative arenas. He completed his Psychiatric Residency and Fellowship in Pittsburgh and has been affiliated with UPP since its inception. He served as the Director of Residency Training in the Department of Psychiatry for several years before assuming his current role as the Chief of Clinical Services at WPIC in 2005. As the Chief of Clinical Services, Dr. Nash oversees more than two hundred psychiatric members of the UPMC Presbyterian Medical Staff. In this position, he has worked to further the integration of research and clinical services and has implemented numerous quality projects related to physician performance. Dr. Nash has been a strong advocate for the importance of physician leadership.

Dr. Nash has been instrumental in the development and implementation of innovative psychiatric services throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He is the PI on the five-year Youth and Family Training Institute grant and is the Co-PI on the six-year Pennsylvania System of Care Grant. Dr. Nash has had a national presence on committees such as the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Committee of Business Relations and the APA Quality Committee.



**Jason Rosenstock, MD**  
**Associate Professor of Psychiatry**

Passionate about improving patient care and inspiring learners, Jason Rosenstock, MD has provided an indispensable service to both Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic (WPIC) and the Department of Psychiatry as a clinician-educator for nearly two decades. As a physician, he delivers direct clinical care for individuals with schizophrenia, and has helped to develop and administer services on behalf of patients and families affected by this illness. In addition, his endeavors as an educator have inspired medical students, residents, fellows, and physicians to explore careers in both academic psychiatry and neuroscience. Through his teaching methods, he instills in his students and trainees the same commitment he has to providing patient care of the highest quality.

A graduate of Brown University, Dr. Rosenstock completed his residency in general psychiatry at WPIC of UPMC. He was appointed to the Department of Psychiatry faculty in 1996 and served as the Chief of WPIC's Comprehensive Care Services prior to his appointment as the Director of the Office of Medical Student Education in 2005.

He is the recipient of numerous awards in recognition of his dedication to education and training, including the Golden Apple Teaching Award for excellence in psychiatry teaching, the Sheldon Adler Award for innovation in medical education, and the Kenneth E. Shuit Award for education-related contributions to the medical education curriculum. His teaching efforts have helped to foster an interest in psychiatry among medical students, and have undoubtedly contributed to the increase in the proportion of University of Pittsburgh Medical students who choose to pursue careers in psychiatry, which is currently 50% higher than the national average.

In addition to his many clinical and teaching activities, Dr. Rosenstock is actively engaged in service to the University and WPIC community. He gives generously of his time as a member of numerous committees and advisory groups at the UPSOM, including the Curriculum Committee Executive Subcommittee, the Department's Academic Promotions Committee, the Standing Committee for Non-Tenured Faculty Promotions and Appointments (NTFPA), and the WPIC Department of Education Leadership Group. Dr. Rosenstock also serves as the Director of the Neuroscience Area of Concentration (AOC) for the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM), the largest AOC at the University.



**Christopher M. Ryan, PhD**  
**Professor of Psychiatry**

Christopher M. Ryan, PhD has dedicated his academic career not only to exploring the effects of various medical disorders and medical therapies on cognitive functioning in both children and adults, but also to promoting patient safety and ethical practices in scientific research.

A Professor of Psychiatry, Psychology, Health and Community Systems (Nursing), and Clinical and Translational Science at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Ryan is not only an accomplished scientist, but a highly engaged teacher and mentor to mental health practitioners and researchers in various stages of their careers, and has given generously of his time as a leader and/or member of various committees and task forces at the University of Pittsburgh and for federal agencies and professional societies.

After earning his doctorate degree in Psychology from the University of California at Berkeley, Dr. Ryan obtained extensive postdoctoral training through fellowships at the VA Medicine Center in Boston (sponsored by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism), and the Department of Neurology at the Boston University School of Medicine (sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism). He held academic appointments at the University of California, Holy Names College in California, and Regis College in Colorado prior to his appointment to the Department of Psychiatry faculty at the University of Pittsburgh in 1979.

Dr. Ryan has earned a well-deserved reputation internationally for his research on neuropsychological functioning in medical patients. He led the first study of diabetic patients to delineate changes in cognitive functioning from late childhood into middle-adulthood, and was a pioneer in research linking changes in brain functioning to diabetes-related biomedical variables. In addition to serving as the Principal Investigator for eight federally-sponsored projects, Dr. Ryan has also collaborated as a Co-Investigator for numerous other externally sponsored projects at the University of Pittsburgh and other institutions, and has written or co-authored over 124 peer-reviewed articles in such prestigious publications as the *Archives of General Psychiatry*, *Pediatrics*, *Journal of Pediatrics*, *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Lancet* and diabetes-related journals including *Diabetes*, *Diabetes Care*, and *Diabetologia*. He has also contributed to more than 150 book chapters, reviews, editorials, presentations, and other publications. He has served as a member of the Editorial Board of *Diabetes Care* and *Pediatric Diabetes*, is the Associate Editor of *Diabetic Hypoglycemia*, and is a regular reviewer for more than 30 medical and scientific journals.

Dr. Ryan spends much time mentoring students and junior faculty, and has served as a member of more than 20 dissertation committees. His advice to young investigators is to keep an open mind, and let the data speak. He notes that in his own work, his original hypotheses often did not turn out the way that he had expected and that closer analyses of the data yielded some surprising and interesting results. Dr. Ryan also advises investigators at all stages of their careers to interact directly with research subjects (and their Institutional Review Board) and maintain that hands-on experience, at least for a period of time, as it not only adds to their experience working with participants, but yields practical, valuable data as well.

In addition to his extensive scientific investigations, Dr. Ryan has served as the Director of the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board since 2002 and is certified by the Council for Certification of IRB Professionals. He also has shared his scientific expertise and advocated for patient safety and the ethical conduct of research through participation on several national committees and agencies. These positions serving as a member of numerous National Institutes of Health Ethics of Health Research review panels, federal study sections, and consulting to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Dutch Diabetes Research Foundation, and other organizations in the United States and abroad.

Throughout his career, Dr. Ryan has taught numerous classes, seminars, and workshops on a wide range of topics, and has presented his research findings at conferences and meetings sponsored by a host of professional organizations, government agencies, and medical societies. He continues to demonstrate his passion for training the next generation of mental health practitioners and scientists through his service on several thesis and dissertation committees, and his thoughtful mentorship of



young investigators.

We look forward to Dr. Ryan's future contributions to the field of psychiatry and scientific research, and are honored to have him as a member of the faculty.



**Etienne Sibille, PhD**  
**Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Clinical  
and Translational Science**

What molecular changes in the brain occur in major depression? And what alterations can be seen as the brain ages? These are the two major research foci of Dr. Etienne Sibille, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, who has developed a highly innovative translational research program that bridges animal models with the human condition. Dr. Sibille's research involves post-mortem human brain tissue and in-rodent studies to examine the cellular mechanisms of major depression, and the effects of brain aging in the development of neuropsychiatric disorders and late life function decline. By employing this multidisciplinary approach, the work undertaken in the [Sibille Laboratory](#) has consistently generated new lines of research into disease mechanisms. These studies have recently extended to genetic studies in human epidemiological cohorts and may ultimately lead to better diagnostic and treatment methods.

After earning a PhD in Pharmacology from Cornell University Medical College in 1999, Dr. Sibille completed a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at Columbia University in the laboratory of Dr. René Hen at the Center for Neurobiology and Behavior. He held academic appointments in both the Department of Neuroscience at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and Columbia University's Department of Psychiatry prior to being recruited by the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh in 2004 where he also joined the [Translational Neuroscience Program](#). In 2008 he was granted an appointment with the University's Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI). He was subsequently promoted to Associate Professor of Psychiatry in 2009 and received tenure in 2011.

Dr. Sibille is currently the Principal Investigator of several federally sponsored grants including a career development award to study molecular characterization of a corticolimbic network in depression, two R01 grants (one focusing on the corticolimbic somatostatin related inhibitory dysfunction in major depression and the other examining the molecular aging of the human brain), as well as an R21 grant to explore peripheral biomarkers in major depression. He is also a Co-investigator for several other federally-funded projects. He has widely disseminated his work, serving as a lead author or co-author for 60 published peer-reviewed journal articles, three book chapters and numerous published abstracts. He has received several awards and honors in recognition of his outstanding work, including the *NIMH Independent Scientist Award (2009)*. An exceptional citizen of the academic community, he was elected member of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP) in 2009, and serves as a reviewer for several National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) study sections and for numerous scientific journals including *Molecular Psychiatry*, the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *Biological Psychiatry*, and *Neuropsychopharmacology*.

In addition to his significant research activities, Dr. Sibille's teaching and mentoring activities have received high praise from his students and peers. He co-directs the T32 training program "Training for Transformative Discovery in Psychiatry", has served on the Center for Neuroscience at the University of Pittsburgh's (CNUP) Student Evaluation Committee, and was recently a co-organizer of the CNUP Graduate Program Pro-Seminar Series and annual retreat. He lectures on a variety of topics, including neuropharmacology, gene microarray use in genetic research, and the neurobiology of brain disorders. In recognition of these generous administrative, mentoring and teaching contributions, he was awarded the Department of Psychiatry *Outstanding Mentorship Award* in 2011.

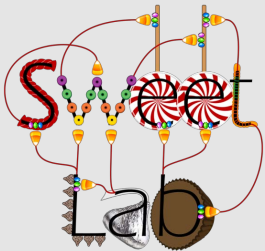
**Robert A. Sweet, MD**



**Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology**

Dr. Robert Sweet and his research team are interested in what causes psychotic symptoms (delusions and hallucinations). These symptoms are core features of the most common psychotic disorder, schizophrenia, but also occur in about 50% of individuals with Alzheimer Disease. Work conducted in his lab has determined that the risk of developing psychotic symptoms during Alzheimer Disease, like the risk of developing schizophrenia, is strongly influenced by genetic variation. He and his colleagues have been asking whether some of the same genes may contribute to both disorders. They have found some evidence suggesting this may be true and are actively pursuing a definitive answer.

Investigators in the Sweet Laboratory are also interested in whether there are shared alterations within the brain that result in psychotic symptoms. This group, and others, have found that the density of dendritic spines, the site of excitatory input, is reduced in the cerebral cortex of subjects with schizophrenia. Dendritic spine loss is also an essential feature of Alzheimer Disease. Indirect evidence indicates that individuals with psychosis during Alzheimer Disease have even greater spine loss. Dr.



Sweet and his team are currently testing this hypothesis directly. Their working model is that alterations in the proteins which regulate the structural plasticity of spines render them vulnerable to excessive removal. This may occur during periods in which spine elimination occurs normally (adolescence) or occurs due to an independent pathologic process (early Alzheimer Disease). This model provides a basis for translation into novel interventions to prevent or reverse spine loss by targeting any identified pathologic proteins. Check out the [SweetLab](#) to learn more about his research, including training opportunities.



**Eva M. Szigethy, MD, PhD**  
**Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Pediatrics, and Medicine**

Eva M. Szigethy, MD, PhD is Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Medicine, and Pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. She is the clinical director of the Medical Coping Clinic, an integrated clinical behavioral health program nested in the Division of Gastroenterology at Children's Hospital of UPMC as well as director of the Visceral Inflammation & Pain (VIP) Center in the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at UPMC Presbyterian, a similar program for adults. Dr. Szigethy's major research interest is examining the detrimental effect of depression on disease course in physically ill youth and adults with emphasis on the neurodevelopmental trajectory of mental and physical illness as adolescents transition to adulthood. She is conducting a NIMH funded R01 study to investigate the effects of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) on the emotional state of youths, 9-17 years with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and clinically significant depression. In 2007, Dr. Szigethy was chosen by the director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to receive the prestigious New Innovator Award. Dr. Szigethy's NIH award, established to stimulate highly innovative research and support promising new investigators, allows her to utilize a translational approach to combine brain imaging as well as physiological, neuroimmunological and genetic tools to understand emotional and cognitive processing in patients with IBD with and without depression. She currently serves as President of the Association of Women Psychiatrists, an American Psychiatric Association-affiliated group of 3,200 women psychiatrists worldwide devoted to fostering excellence in women's health and professional development. More recently, Dr. Szigethy was awarded to receive Distinguished Fellow status by the American Psychiatric Association.

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**Resources**

- [Cool Pittsburgh](#)
- [Center for the Neural Basis of Cognition](#)
- [Center for Neuroscience](#)
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- [Psy Hub](#)

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