The Communications Committee presents:

The International Society for Biomedical Research on Alcoholism BULLETIN

Contributing to the advancement of alcohol research globally

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **“Interview with a Scientist” - ISBRA E-Bulletin interviews Dr. Rainer Spanagel.**
- **2020 ACER Early Career Investigator Award.**
- **Several new job postings for various career level openings**
- **Research funding opportunities focused on aging and alcohol.**
- **New Directions column discusses alcohol drinking at younger age, motivation in adolescence**

### Publications You May Have Missed

**By Andrea Vásquez Ferreiro and Robert Leeman**

This month’s column is dedicated to the influence of alcohol across our lifespan. Alcohol can be present as early as in our mother’s womb, followed by a critical period in adolescence that can have long-term consequences affecting our brain and behavior. The article selection ranges from studies involving neonatal mice to human adults aged 65 or older. These studies showed innovative and relevant aspects of future steps the alcohol research field should consider moving forward.
Adolescent alcohol exposure increases orexin-A/hypocretin-1 in the anterior hypothalamus.

Previous literature suggests sleep difficulties might increase risk for AUD. In this paper, alcohol exposure among adolescent male Wistar rats had an influence on the orexin system. One of the functions of this system is wakefulness. The investigators tested two models with orexin-A + IR cells and adolescent intermittent ethanol exposure affecting sleep. Results suggested changes in the anterior hypothalamic nucleus (AHN) could have long-lasting consequences on the wake-sleep cycle.

Rate of alcohol consumption in the daily life of adolescents and emerging adults.

An Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) study was carried out among N=75 adolescents (ages 16-24 years old). Presence of peers during alcohol consumption, number of drinks, number of binge-drinking episodes, and number of AUD symptoms related to estimated blood alcohol concentration (eBAC) levels. Results showed a steeper increase in eBAC for those adolescents who reported more AUD symptoms. Participants who engaged in alcohol drinking around peers showed greater consumption.

Binge Drinking Among Older Adults in the United States, 2015 to 2017.

This was a cross-sectional analysis examining demographics and prevalence of binge drinking rates in adults aged 65 or older using data from the US National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Participants reporting binge drinking were compared with those who had not. Those reporting past-month binge drinking were more likely to be male, of lower education level and income and users of tobacco and/or cannabis. Interestingly, those reporting recent binge drinking were less likely to report suffering from 2 or more chronic diseases. These results point to the importance of screening for alcohol use among older adults.

Learning experiences comprising central ethanol exposure in rat neonates: Impact upon respiratory plasticity and the activity of brain catalase

This was a study on ethanol administration in neonatal mice to investigate the impact of fetal ethanol exposure on various breathing conditions as well as the catalase system. Investigators reported an increase in apneic episodes when ethanol inebriation was conditioned with an odor. Prior exposure to intoxication paired with the odor was associated with increased enzymatic activity.
Funding Opportunities
By Vatsalya Vatsalya

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism at the National Institutes of Health, USA. The purpose of the notice of special interest (2020 NOSI) on Alcohol and Aging Concept Clearance is to promote research to improve the understanding of the effects of alcohol consumption on aging across different levels of organization including the molecular, cellular, tissue, organ, organism, and societal levels. New concept addressing a priority area of the 2017-2021 NIAAA Strategic Plan will have three specific research goals: (1) General topics and organ diseases; (2) Neuroscience; (3) Epidemiology, Prevention and Treatment. More information click HERE.

Other regional and national funding in USA can be reviewed at the Rural Health INFO.

Brazil
FAPESP and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) collaborative research opportunity. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) USA and the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESp), Brazil have signed a MoU to encourage collaborative international research between investigators in the USA and in the State of São Paulo, Brazil. Under the referred MoU, as an action to promote such collaboration, FAPESP announces this Call for Proposals inviting researchers associated with Higher Education and Research Organizations in the State of São Paulo to submit research proposals. This includes collaboration with NIAAA. More information, click HERE. Some significant funding sources is available in the links: FAPESP-NIH Effort, Gilead and FAPESP&COVID-19!

US Regional
Daniels Fund Grants - The Daniels Fund makes grants to organizations located in Colorado and Wyoming working in one of the following areas of alcohol research for aging - (1) Aging: Assisting older adults to achieve independence and quality of life and to ensure access to end-of-life and palliative care; (2) Drug and alcohol addiction: Assisting youth and adults with alcohol and substance abuse challenges through prevention, treatment, and after-care services. More information click HERE.
Several studies indicate that an early onset of alcohol use is a risk factor for subsequent emergence of alcohol use disorders. Whether or not both events hold a causal relationship is still a matter of debate, yet it seems prudent to delay the age of first contact with alcohol as much as possible. Motivations underlying alcohol drinking in adolescence are varied, yet the need to reduce negative affect (i.e., “drinking to cope”) has been found in several studies, and its relevance is highlighted in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The assessment of mental health outcomes during this pandemic is still preliminary, yet several studies pinpoint a spike in psychological distress symptoms and in specific mental disorders. Particularly troubling for the topic of this column is that the stressful effects of COVID-19 seem to be greater in youth. For instance, a study conducted in China found symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder in more than one-third of the 7,236 participants sampled, whereas 2 out 10 exhibited signs of depression, with these effects being greater in those ≤ 35 years old (Huang & Zhao, 2020).

More research on these topics is taking place, yet it is important that the alcohol research community acknowledge the possibility of a spike in underage use of alcohol, and more generally in those experiencing negative effects of COVID-19.

More reading:
Lieberoth et al. COVIDiSTRESS global survey
Global Jobs

By Robert Leeman

1. Endowed Chair in Addiction Psychiatry, University of Toronto

The Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) invite applications for the Chair in Addiction Psychiatry. This position is a University of Toronto Endowed Chair. The expected start date is January 1, 2021. The Toronto Academic Health Science Network (TAHSN), composed of the University and including CAMH amongst its nine fully affiliated institutes, is one of the world’s largest, most productive academic health science centers. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (250 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1R8) is Canada’s largest mental health and addiction teaching hospital, as well as one of the world’s leading research centres in the area of addiction and mental health. CAMH combines clinical care, research, education, policy development and health promotion to transform the lives of people affected by mental health and addiction issues.

Candidates for the endowed chair position must have a distinguished record of external funding, strong evidence of research and scholarly achievement, consistent record of publication, experience in mentoring, and documentation of outstanding teaching performance. Candidates must demonstrate a proven capacity for leadership, integration and collaboration in the field of addiction psychiatry. The successful candidate must be a member of a teaching faculty of a degree-granting institution; have a research focus on some aspect of addictive disorders; and hold either a Medical Degree and be eligible for licensure in Ontario or a PhD. The successful candidate must also be eligible for an academic appointment as an Associate or Full Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto and the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Toronto.

Full application details and instructions can be found by clicking HERE.

2. Tenure-Track Faculty Position at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine

The UConn School of Medicine invites applications for a tenure-track Associate or Full Professor to join our research group in the Behavioral Health Division. This position is open to individuals with a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent degree and who have a strong record of accomplishment in the area of addictions or health behavior change as evidenced by scholarly work and external funding. Preferred areas of interest include dissemination and implementation science, opioid-related research, and neurological or biological targets related to addiction treatments (broadly defined). Other areas of interest related to addictions and behavioral health are also strongly encouraged to apply. The team includes three NIH-funded faculty and various postdoctoral fellows and research assistants. Please see Contingency management at UCONN Health for additional information.

Competitive applicants will have a strong history of success in securing extramural research funding. This is a tenure-track or tenured position with rank to be determined based on qualifications and experience. In addition to conducting research, the faculty member will be expected to contribute to our educational mission through teaching and training of psychiatry residents, medical students, graduate students, or postdoctoral fellows.
Global Jobs
By Robert Leeman

The UConn School of Medicine offers a highly competitive benefits package. A tuition waiver for dependent children is available for University of Connecticut undergraduate degree programs. For more information about faculty benefits, please see: UCONN Health employee benefits. Interested candidates should apply and upload their CVs through https://jobs.uchc.edu (search for job #2020-428). Questions can be addressed to any of our following faculty:
Sheila Alessi: Salessi@uchc.edu
Carla Rash: Rashc@uchc.edu
Kristyn Zajac: Zajac@uchc.edu

3. Psychologist Vacancy in VA San Diego Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program

The Veterans Affairs San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) Mental Health Care Line is recruiting for one full-time staff psychologist position in our Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program in La Jolla, California. Ideal applicants should be licensed psychologists by the time of hire and have expertise in delivering evidence-based psychotherapy for substance use disorders. Interest and experience in clinical research and training is also encouraged, and the selectee will be encouraged to seek a faculty appointment with our academic affiliate, the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Diego.

The Mental Health Care Line at VASDHS provides a full range of patient care services including inpatient and outpatient care, with state-of-the-art technology as well as education and research. VASDHS is a teaching hospital system whose main campus is situated adjacent to the UC San Diego campus in La Jolla with a strong academic affiliation with the Department of Psychiatry and is one of the top mental health research institutions in VA.

VASDHS is also home to one of the largest training programs in psychology in the country at the graduate, intern, and post-doctoral level and many opportunities exist for teaching and clinical supervision. Interested applicants should send a CV and cover letter to Dr. Eric Granholm, Chief, Psychology Service (eric.granholm@va.gov).

4. Clinical Research Interviewer Positions

RTI International is preparing to conduct the National Study of Mental Health (NSMH) in cooperation with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Our partner sites include: Duke University, Columbia University (New York State Psychiatric Institute), Harvard University, University of Chicago, and the University of Washington.

The purpose of the study is to estimate the prevalence of specific mental health conditions in the U.S. population aged 18-65. To complete this research, the team will be conducting research interviews with approximately 7,200 participants over a 12-month data collection period beginning in October 2020. The interviews will mostly be conducted virtually (via Zoom), and all interviews will use the Structured Clinical Interview for the DSM-5 (SCID-5).

More details about the NSMH interviewer positions, click HERE.

This is a unique research opportunity showcasing the ability to continue rigorous research during the COVID-19 pandemic. Interested individuals should submit an application and resume via the website. Please direct any questions about the positions to cjantzi@headwaywfs.com.
5. Tenure-Track Faculty Position at Rutgers University

The Center of Alcohol Studies and Department of Applied Psychology at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP) at Rutgers University, New Brunswick are seeking an outstanding candidate for a tenured/tenure track research faculty position specializing in research in the field of addictions. The successful candidate will have extensive clinical, research and teaching expertise in the areas of applied psychology and substance use disorders. Candidates must have a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology and will be expected to develop and maintain an active, extramurally funded research program, teach at the graduate level, and contribute to clinical training. Salary, start-up, and other considerations are consistent with Rutgers’ commitment to attract exceptional individuals. GSAPP places a high degree of emphasis on fostering and encouraging a diverse community of faculty and students and on supporting research and practice that benefits diverse and under-served communities; applicants who can contribute in this valued direction are particularly encouraged to apply. For more information, see [here](https://www.rutgers.edu). To apply, please submit materials (CV, representative reprints, and 3 references) at this [LINK](https://www.rutgers.edu). The Center of Alcohol Studies (CAS) is a multidisciplinary research and training institute located on the Busch Campus of Rutgers University, which performs clinical and biomedical research on alcohol and substance use disorders.

6. Editorial Fellow Opportunity

a) *The Journal of Addiction Medicine* (JAM), the official peer-reviewed journal of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, seeks Editorial Fellows. Applicants should have at least two years of addiction research experience, have an MD or PhD degree, have completed clinical specialty training, and hold faculty positions at the instructor, or assistant professor level or other junior faculty level equivalent. Candidates who have published at least 3 peer-reviewed papers, have strong knowledge of addiction science, and a record of commitment to and achievement in academic addiction medicine are encouraged to apply. Applications are due October 11, 2020. See [here](https://www.asam.org) for the full announcement. Under the supervision of JAM editors, the Fellow will be given the following responsibilities:

- Work as Handling Editor using the electronic manuscript submission system and engage in the manuscript review process for 6-12 manuscripts a year.
- Synthesize reviewer comments, prepare, and communicate them authors with revision requests, and participate in the final manuscript decision—communicating regularly with the Editors.
- Commit to one to two hours a week.
- Participate in a weekly 30-minute conference calls with the Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editor, Co-Editors, publishers, and society representatives and attend annual ASAM conference and Editorial Board meetings.
- Write or co-write editorials for the Journal if the editors determine you have the required experience and interest.

Fellows will obtain extensive experience in manuscript review and scientific peer-reviewed publishing in addiction medicine. The two-year Editorial Fellowship offers a stipend. Please submit CV and one-page letter describing your interest and how your skills, experience and interests match the requirements to EditorSearch@asam.org.
Global Jobs
By Robert Leeman

b) The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse (AJDAA) is recruiting new members to join the editorial team. Enhancing the diversity of the board will be a priority, particularly for those underrepresented in health-related sciences. Increased representation from the international community is also being sought. Priority will be given to candidates who are early to mid-career. Publications, funding, prior peer-review experience, and area of expertise will also be considered during the selection process. The AJDAA is an international journal with a 2019 2-year IF of 2.925. The Journal is published six times per year and provides an important and stimulating venue for the exchange of ideas between the researchers working in a variety of areas, including public policy, epidemiology, neurobiology, and the treatment of addictive disorders. Each regular Board Member is expected to regularly publish in and review for the journal. Interested candidates should send a letter of interest and CV to the Editor-in-Chief, Bryon Adinoff, MD, at editor@theAJDAA.com. Applications must be received by Oct 31, 2020.

News and Events
By Fengyuan (Linda) Li

News

July 14, 2020
The “perfect storm”: a problematic environment created by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic for people with alcohol and substance use disorders (ASUD). Learn more about the unique vulnerability factors that ASUD patients are facing: The Perfect Storm

August 19, 2020
“Alcohol and COVID-19 don’t mix.” Said Dr. George Koob, Ph.D., National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) director. With the most updated and comprehensive booklet CollegeAIM - the College Alcohol Intervention Matrix developed by NIAAA, schools can do better to identify effective alcohol interventions for their students. Related resources on harmful and underage college drinking can be found at: Collegedrinking.

Professor Andrew Lawrence recently became Junior Vice President of ISBRA and will be on the ISBRA Board of Directors. Professor Lawrence will be the key link between the ISBRA board of directors and the local organizing committee for the upcoming 2024 ISBRA World Congress on Alcohol Research in Melbourne. Read more about Professor Lawrence’s roles in ISBRA at: Florey researcher to play key role in ISBRA. Learn more about Professor Lawrence’s research at Florey Institute of Neuroscience & Mental Health: ADDICTION NEUROSCIENCE LABORATORY
News and Events
By Fengyuan (Linda) Li

Research News:

Early life dietary choline supplements improve some of the cognitive and behavioral symptoms associated with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) four years after treatment ended. Read the full article here: Choline supplements improve FASD outcomes

Prenatal alcohol exposure changes mouse brain circuitry involved in decision making, and treatments targeting gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) and endocannabinoid systems might be useful in ameliorating impaired decision making associated with prenatal alcohol exposure. Read more about the study at: Nat Commun: Gestational alcohol exposure disrupts cognitive function and striatal circuits in adult offspring

An international team of scientists supported by the NIAAA has identified a novel association between the gene FAF2 (Fas Associated Factor family member 2) and a reduced risk for alcohol-associated liver cirrhosis (ALC) in heavy drinkers. Read this recently published study at Hepatology: Genome–wide association study and meta–analysis on alcohol–related liver cirrhosis identifies novel genetic risk factors

Events

155th Meeting of the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
September 10, 2020 - 1:00pm to 5:15pm
View the meeting Agenda and check for the most recent videocasts here: NIH WEBCAST.

NIAAA Jack Mendelson Honorary Lecture: "Discerning Risks and Effects of Alcohol in the Midst of Adolescent Development" - Dr. Sandra A. Brown
September 22, 2020 – 1:30pm
Still online. Read more about Dr. Sandra Brown’s research: UCSD
View the virtual presentation online on the day of the event at: NIAAA Mendelson Lecture 2020.

Webinar: Substance Abuse Prevention for Youth in Indigenous Communities
October 8, 2020 – 1:00pm
Check for updates of the webinar at HERE and HERE.

2020 ACER Early Career Investigator Award
A call for nominations will be issued in November for the 2020 ACER Early Career Investigator Award by the Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research Journal. Read about the 2019 awardees HERE. Please contact the journal for more details.

2020 LASBRA Congress will take place online on December 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 2020 in a variety of online conferences, symposia and elevator pitch. You can find the program clicking HERE.
Interview with a Scientist
By Rosana Camarini

How did your interest grow in the research area, particularly of alcohol research?

Like many teenagers, I was interested in the world of drugs and very early on. I realized that I would like to use drugs as tools to understand how our brain works. As a very young student I had great luck during an internship at the Max-Planck-Institute of Neurochemistry - I met researchers who did addiction research, especially with opioids. Professor Albert Herz and Toni Shippenberg became my mentors very early on and I was in the right place at the right time – this was one of the three hot-spots worldwide in opioid research at that time. I did my diploma work and my PhD in the group of Albert Herz within the research area of opioids. During my PhD, I did a seminal discovery, namely the modulation of the reward pathway by opposing acting endogenous opioid systems. The model derived from this also explains why naltrexone reduces alcohol consumption to a certain extent. The work was published in PNAS and is still a classic citation. (note of editors: Dr. Spanagel is referring to the following paper: Opposing tonically active endogenous opioid systems modulate the mesolimbic dopaminergic pathway).

How did I move from opioids into alcohol research? There were several reasons: First, I had to develop my own “line of research”. Toni Shippenberg, at that time my advisor, was much more interested in psychostimulants and I thought I should do something else. However, my mentor, Albert Herz, warned me, alcohol is a dirty drug - it affects too many neurochemical systems. He was right: studying opioids you have only three receptors and alcohol has numerous primary and secondary molecular targets – it is a mess! Nevertheless, I moved towards alcohol research. Heavy alcohol consumption is a real big problem in Germany and German funding agencies support alcohol research.

In addition, the biggest motivation came from my personal experience; my former partner had an alcohol problem and I could not help her. What a disaster - I really wanted to develop new therapies.

What challenges did you find during the early stage of your career, and how did you overcome them?

My challenge was that I had to jump into cold water without big help. My supervisor, Toni Shippenberg, told me to establish the in vivo microdialysis technique in the lab. At that time, only two groups in the world were running the microdialysis technique - the lab from Urban Ungerstedt at the Karolinska Institute and the one from Gaetano DiChiara in Sardinia. Toni visited the lab from “Ninni” in Sardinia to make a method transfer. On the day she arrived back home in Munich she had a very bad accident and could not come to the lab for more than one year. I was on my own! Without any help, I set up the technique, built a highly sensitive neurochemical detection system and was finally able to measure monoamines and even endogenous opioids. "Doing yourself" was my motto throughout my career, even Professor Albert Herz with whom I had a wonderful relationship - he died two years ago – did not do anything in terms for my further career development.
When I compare it to today’s situation where young students get great help at all levels, where supervisors help them take the next step on their career ladder, I had no one to tell me, “Hey, Rainer, come on I’m helping you now”. Perhaps that’s why I’m helping every promising young researcher to take the next step.

What are the challenges and future directions do you foresee for alcohol research in the coming decades?

Let us start by discussing this in the context of the corona crisis. Scientists - virologists and epidemiologists - are indeed the leading figures in the corona crisis, and most politicians do what they say, which works for most countries. If we now return to normality step by step - at least here in Germany - we will slowly understand what the crisis has done to us, how much damage it has done to society in terms of unemployment and social instability. We as scientists also know how difficult it is to develop a vaccine or an antiviral drug - maybe we will never get there. All of this can lead to great frustration, increased nationalism, populism and right-wing thinking. When people suffer, they look for someone to blame, and it could be the scientists who maneuvered us through the first part of the corona crisis that they point out to. If so, we will go through a long, long crisis in science. People will no longer trust what scientists tell them.

This is a scenario that would also affect the area of alcohol research. However, it is only one possible future scenario out of many other possible scenarios. Let's hope for the best and let's hope that we take the right steps! So what are the challenges for future alcohol research? More than 2 billion people drink regularly, and this will remain so for many, many decades, since alcohol is deeply rooted in most cultures.

Why should we also give up some of our best taste experiences? I want a glass of champagne when I’m celebrating something important, I want a sip of wine with a good meal, I want a big ice-cold sip of beer when I’m thirsty. But we as alcohol researchers know that even small amounts of alcohol are not good for us. However, when we go to the reception of an ISBRA meeting, everyone asks for a second, if not a third, glass of wine. Alcohol-related damage and health consequences will continue to accompany our societies for many years to come. As a result, society needs us alcohol researchers and will support our science. This is important to understand, as science is often based on the rules of fashion - topics come and go - the alcohol problem persists. Still, the society that funds our research will ask for results, and what I mean by results are clinically meaningful results. The biggest challenge is that alcohol addiction has a very high degree of heterogeneity. It is also not just a brain disease, but is based on multi-stage disturbances in many somatic systems. For example, we have only recently learned how much the microbiota contributes to the course of the disease and recovery from alcohol addiction. In addition, alcohol-related liver damage and other organ damage remain high on the list. However, what is likely to affect our future drinking habits the most is that alcohol can be a major driver of many cancers. The biggest challenge is to bring brain researchers together with researchers who study somatic systems. Here in Heidelberg area we have often tried different initiatives, but we have always failed. We could learn so much from each other if brain researchers, internists, cancer researchers finally would work hand in hand, we would get a much better understanding of the harm alcohol does to our body.
Interview with a Scientist
By Rosana Camarini

What is the take-home message you want to convey to the young investigators?

If you really want to pursue an academic career in alcohol research, just do it! Don't listen to all the people and researchers telling you how difficult, if not impossible, it is to make an academic career today. Contrary to the general belief, science offers good job safety and good employment opportunities. In comparison, much is promised in industry and little is kept; how many times have I seen whole branches of the pharmaceutical industry disappear and so do thousands of jobs. The skills you need for a successful academic career are mainly curiosity, persistence and a high degree of mobility. And you need some luck, like always in life - go for it, we need young and fresh minds!

Looking for Leadership Opportunities?

Be part of an organization that is dedicated to building community amongst ISBRA’s diverse population; that is committed to bringing news about career building resources and events to ISBRA members; to being a voice regarding issues that are of importance to ISBRA members. Contact any of the committee officers to find out about being a part of the Communications Committee.

DR. RAINER SPANAGEL

How do you get involved with ISBRA, and how do you think global academic organizations can fuel the development of research?

For me, ISBRA is home to international alcohol research. ISBRA should work hand in hand with other national societies such as RSA or the European company ESBRA to influence public awareness of the problems and harm associated with alcohol consumption, but also to have an impact on political decision-making. I think as a society we should make white papers to make clear statements about our research, we should inform decision-makers, we should inform the public a lot more than we are currently doing. If all alcohol research societies were to work under one roof, we would have a real impact on society - as a former president of ISBRA, I tried to unite, especially with ESBRA with little success - the real hurdles were not the ambitious visions rather the fact that some people think that things should stay the way they are.
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