

OPAL Center at Columbia Psychiatry NEWSLETTER



Optimizing and Personalizing interventions for schizophrenia Across the Lifespan—an NIMH Center

September 2019

www.columbiapsychiatry.org/opal

OPAL News

OPAL Center Director, Dr. T. Scott Stroup, OPAL Scientific Steering Committee Chair, Dr. Lisa Dixon, and OPAL project 2 lead, Dr. Tom Smith attended the ALACRITY Center Director's meeting, held on July 16 at Bethesda, Maryland. Strategies on trans-disciplinary collaborations, new research collaboration generation, center progress and impact evaluation, early career investigator training, opportunities for resource sharing and cross-Center collaboration were shared among Center investigators. The other current ALACRITY Center locations are listed below with directors in parentheses:

Cornell University (George S. Alexopoulos), **University of Pennsylvania** (Rinad Beidas, David Mandel, Kevin Volpp), **Johns Hopkins University** (Gail Daumit), **University of Washington** (Patricia A. Arean), **New York University** (Kimberly Hoagwood), **Massachusetts General Hospital** (John Hsu, Dost Ongur, Miguel Hernan), **University of Pittsburgh** (David A. Brent).

EPINET. We are collaborating with and providing support to the newly funded Early Psychosis Intervention Network (EPINET) hub, led by Dr. Lisa Dixon. EPINET will provide the opportunity to leverage the learning healthcare system (LHS) foundations previously developed in OnTrackNY to build a large, state-of-art LHS for early psychosis care.

The local site is one of five regional Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) networks. In aggregate, EPINET expect to enroll over 5,000 early psychosis patients over a 5-year period to generate an unprecedented volume of data about early intervention in psychosis, with unique opportunities for collaborative research across the regional networks.

Pilot Projects

OPAL Center continues seeking research that tests innovative ways to accelerate the development and implementation of effective, individualized treatments for schizophrenia in clinical setting. We congratulate the recipients of the OPAL Pilot Award for Fall 2019:

Ana Stefancic, PhD, Associate Research Scientist, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University. In this pilot study, Dr. Stefancic will seek to develop a practical and engaging health promotion program, tailored to the needs and preferences of young adults with first episode psychosis (FEP) that can be delivered within a Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) program for FEP.

Marie Hansen, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University. In this pilot study, Dr. Hansen will gather preliminary data on feasibility, efficacy, and therapeutic mechanisms of a new psychotherapeutic intervention, Strategies to Motivate and Execute (SME).

<https://www.columbiapsychiatry.org/opal/pilot>

Administrative Supplements

The NIMH OPAL Center is dedicated to conducting research that addresses important issues in the treatment and delivery of services for schizophrenia across the lifespan. OPAL Center has recently been funded with two administrative supplements:

1. Alzheimer's Disease and related Dementias (ADRD) are common among elderly people diagnosed with schizophrenia, and the burdens to families and society are substantial, but little is known about how clinicians and health care systems respond to the co-occurrence of these conditions. In collaboration with Tobias Gerhard, PhD, at Rutgers University, this supplemental project aims to leverage 10 years of national Medicare data to examine the incidence of new ADRD diagnoses among older persons diagnosed with schizophrenia and to investigate how this co-occurrence affects health service use, pharmacologic treatment, and outcomes in this population. Dr. Devangere Devenand, an expert on geriatric psychiatry, has joined us as a co-investigator on this project.
2. Suicide is a leading cause of premature death among individuals with schizophrenia. Again in collaboration with Dr. Gerhard at Rutgers, in this supplemental project we will establish a national cohort of adults with schizophrenia from Medicare claims linked to National Death Index data. We will conduct analyses that examine the antecedents of schizophrenia across the lifespan.

Developmental Projects

OPAL Projects 1 and 2 are underway and project 3 is under planning and phase 1 will start soon.

Project 1: Improving Accessibility and Personalization of Cognitive Remediation for Schizophrenia. Led by Dr. Alice Medalia. Project 1 is testing a way to better match cognitive remediation to the needs of clients and to make it more accessible. Recruitment is ongoing at Mapleton Clinics, Height Hill Clinic, Williamsburg Clinic, Manhattan Psychiatric Center 124th St Clinic, Inwood Clinic, and Creedmoor Psychiatric Center.

Project 2: Adapting Critical Time Intervention to Support Inpatient Medical Care Transitions. Led by Dr. Thomas Smith, an adaptation team of key stakeholders including the proposed study psychiatrist, CTI consultant, CTI care managers and hospital care coordination staff has been adapting CTI for this study and working with our community partners (HealthFirst, Montefiore Medical Center, and BronxCare Health System) on study implementation.

Project 3: Using mHealth to optimize pharmacotherapy regimens. Led by Dr. T. Scott Stroup. This project will evaluate the feasibility of using a smartphone app and environmental sampling methods to improve prescribing for OnTrackNY participants. This project is scheduled to start phase 1 in fall 2019.