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OPAL Highlights

Dr. Lisa Dixon, the chair of OPAL Scientific Steering Committee, was Elected to the 2020 - 2021 National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Board of Directors for a three-year term. Read more at <https://www.columbiapsychiatry.org/news/dr-lisa-dixon-elected-nami-national-board-directors>

Dr. Marie Hansen, one of OPAL pilot awardees, received the American Psychological Association’s Division 18 Serious Mental Illness / Serious Emotional Disturbance (SMI/SED) Trainee Recognition Award via a virtual ceremony held during the 2020 Annual APA Convention. This award recognizes a current trainee who has demonstrated a strong commitment to working in the area of serious mental illness, through innovative research, program development, training and consultation, clinical work, advocacy, and/or a combination of the above. A prime criterion of the award is that the trainee’s work should reflect recovery and wellness principles.

Congratulations to Dr. Dixon and Dr. Hansen!

OPAL Research

OPAL investigator **Dr. Alice Medalia** recently began a new R01 project entitled “Efficacy of Personalizing Cognitive Remediation for Schizophrenia by Targeting Impairments in Early Auditory Processing”. The study intends to enhance CR outcomes in schizophrenia spectrum disorders by identifying a scalable approach to optimizing and personalizing treatment. By facilitating a better understanding of EAP as a neurobehavioral marker, sensory processing as mechanism of change, and the essential CR treatment targets for EAP impaired CR participants, the 4 year study will inform improved clinical decision-making and guide clinical judgment about how to best provide cognitive training.

Dr. Deidre Anglin, Associate Professor of City University of New York, was awarded an OPAL pilot project for 2021. The goal of this pilot project is to identify how anti-Black racism shapes social determinants (social, economic, and environmental conditions) for Black individuals with a first episode of psychosis (FEP) in ways that hinder recovery. The use of photovoice, a qualitative method that uses photos and accompanying narratives to reflect personal and community strengths and challenges, will enhance the ability to learn something new about optimizing early intervention from the perspective of Black young people in the community.

Voice from Stakeholders Advisory Board Committee

In addition to our national Stakeholder Advisory Board committee (**Ann Marie T. Sullivan, Ruth S. Shim, Brian M. Hepburn, Debra Joy Perez, Sherry Glied, Patricia E. Deegan**), we have added new local provider (**Mansour (Max) Banilivy, Michael Blady, Katariina Hoaa, Virna Little, Nadjete Natchaba, Jeanie Tse**) and local consumer (**Wendy Burch, Cory Muraglio, Garrett Smith, Tony Trahan, Carlton Whitemore**) stakeholder advisory groups to better understand issues facing providers and consumers. Meetings were held quarterly to get input on what directions we should take and on how to make sure our interventions have real-world feasibility and applicability. Discussions especially on how COVID-19 is changing the delivery of health care and what is not going so well for services were highly focused in recent meetings to help OPAL Center best respond to the pandemic and to the additional evidence of injustice and disparities in our country.

Recent Publications

Center research publication:

1. Stroup TS, Olsson M, Huang C, Wall M, Goldberg T, Devanand DP, Gerhard T. Age-specific Prevalence and Incidence of Dementia Diagnoses in Older U.S. Adults with Schizophrenia. *JAMA Psychiatry*, in press
2. Smith TE, Marino LA, Olsson M: An unmet opportunity: intensive care transition interventions for individuals with “Serious Medical-Psychiatric Illnesses” (SMPI). *Psychiatric Services*, in press

Center supported publication:

3. van der Ven, E., Scodes, J., Basaraba, C., Pauselli, L., Mascayano, F., Nossel, I., Bello, I., Humensky, J., Susser, E., Wall, M., Dixon, L. Trajectories of Occupational and Social Functioning in People with Recent-Onset Non-Affective Psychosis enrolled in Specialized Early Intervention Services across New York State. *Schizophrenia Research*, 222, 218-226. 2020 (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0920996420303315>).
4. Mascayano F, van der Ven E, Martinez-Ales G, Jones N, Basaraba C, Jones N, Lee R, Bello I, Nossel I, Smith S, Smith T, Wall M, Susser E, Dixon L. Predictors of early discharge from early intervention services (EIS) for psychosis in New York State. *Psychiatric Services* 2020; 71: 1151–1157. (<https://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.202000025>)
5. Jeanie Tse, MD, Drew LaStella, PhD, Elisa Chow, PhD, Emily Kingman, LCSW, Shoshannah Pearlman, DNP, Linda Valeri, PhD, Hao Wang, PhD, Lisa Dixon MD, Telehealth acceptability and feasibility among people served in a community behavioral health system during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychiatric Services* 2020. In press