

Mission Statement

The mission of the SNIP is to: promote research and serve as a reliable source of information in the pharmacology, immunology, and neuroscience of the neuroimmune axis; foster exchange of information and ideas on neuroimmune pharmacology by holding an annual SNIP Conference, maintaining a Society web site (s-nip.org), and supporting and promoting the Society journal, the Journal of Neuroimmune Pharmacology (JNIP); increase understanding of the etiology, prevention, and treatment of neuroimmune disorders; define the neuroimmunomodulatory properties of neuroimmune innervations and regeneration, and of endogenous and exogenous neuroimmunomodulatory substances, such as hormones, neuropeptides, neurotransmitters, cytokines, chemokines, and substances of abuse; promote translational research and a better understanding of the role played by infectious diseases, such as AIDS, and of inflammation and stress in disorders of the neuroimmune axis; encourage financial support from funding agencies, industry, and the SNIP membership to effect the SNIP mission.

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Report from President Sabita Roy on the Hawaii Meeting

The SNIP 18th Scientific Conference Hawaii Prince Hotel Waikiki, Honolulu, Hawaii April 25 – 28, 2012

We had a very successful meeting with record number of attendance at the 18th Annual Conference of the Society held in Hawaii Prince Hotel Waikiki, Honolulu, Hawaii. The society thanks Linda Chang and the local organizing committee, the meeting's Chair Sulie Chang and all members who worked hard on making this conference a huge success. This year's meeting focus was in line with the mission of the Society which is to foster interdisciplinary research bridging the fields of Immunology, Pharmacology, and Neuroscience with a special emphasis on how drugs of abuse and infectious diseases, such as AIDS, interact and modulate the neuroimmune axis.

With **over 210** registered participants, the meeting in Hawaii ranked as one of our best-attended conferences thus far. SNIP has always taken pride in their support of early stage investigators. We received a total of 78 applications for young investigator travel awards. Twelve full travel awards (\$1000 + meeting registration waiver) were awarded to eight pre-doctoral trainees (5 female and 3 male) and four post-doctoral trainees (3 female and 1 male). An additional six registration waivers were awarded to three pre-docs (1 female and 2 male) and three post-docs (2 female and 1 male) whose applications were found to be of scientific distinction, but were unable to be funded for a full travel award. In total, YITA awardees for the 2012 SNIP Conference were 61.1% female and 38.9% male, and represented multiple racial/ethnic groups (16.7% Black, 22.2% Hispanic, and 22.2% Asian). We thank Dr. Sylvia Kiertscher and the YITA committee for their outstanding work. This year we were very fortunate to have 20 additional Early Career Investigator awards (9 conference awards and 11 registration waivers) from the NIDA-Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) Working Group provided through the efforts of Drs. Linda Chang and Anil Kumar from SNIP, and Drs. Woody Lin and Betty Tai from NIDA. All awardees were recognized by ribbon rosettes placed by their poster, and received a personalized Award Certificate at the Banquet and Awards Dinner.

All YITA applicants who did not receive travel awards were eligible for the Young Investigator Poster Competition. The best pre-doctoral and best post-doctoral poster presenters as determined by highest ranking following the poster competition each received the Arthur Falek Young Investigator Award at the Banquet. The award included a framed Award Certificate and a \$250.00 cash prize. The 2012 recipient of the Falek Award for the best post-doctoral presenter was Dr. Loreto Carvallo (mentor: Dr. Joan Berman; Albert Einstein College of Medicine) and the Falek Award recipient for best pre-doctoral poster presenter was Ms. Raisa Loucil (mentor: Dr. Richard Noel, Jr.; Ponce School of Medicine); both promising female scientists.

The annual SNIP Meet-the-Mentors Lunch on Thursday April 26, 2012 was attended by 79 trainees and approximately 33 mentors. The lunch was supported by a generous donation from Dr. Brian Wigdahl and the Drexel University Institute for Molecular Medicine and Infectious Disease. Introductory remarks were given by Dr. Abe Bautista (NIH/NIAAA) and Dr. Howard Gendelman (representing JNIP). The lunch is designed to encourage interaction among pre-doctoral and post-doctoral trainees and scientists from academia and the NIH and was highly successful. In order to give the trainees a variety of perspectives, the mentors this year included junior, mid-career, and senior SNIP Investigators, with a particular emphasis on including female investigators.

The Young Investigator Symposium, which showcases the research accomplishments of the best SNIP trainees, was held on the afternoon of Friday April 27, 2012. Presenters included the top ranked post-doctoral applicants and the top ranked pre-doctoral applicants in the Young Investigator Travel Award competition. The post-doctoral presenters were: Dr. Sylvia Fitting (mentor: Dr. Kurt Hauser; Virginia Commonwealth University), Dr. Jana Ninkovic (mentor: Dr. Sabita Roy; University of Minnesota School of Medicine), and Dr. Prasanta Dash (mentor: Dr. Howard Gendelman; University of Nebraska Medical Center). The graduate student presenters were: Ms. Donna Davidson (mentor: Dr. Sanjay Maggirwar; University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry), Mr. Jerel Adam Fields (mentor: Dr. Anuja Ghorpade; University of North Texas Health Sciences Center), and Ms. Divya Sagar (mentor: Dr. Pooja Jain; Drexel University College of Medicine). Dr. Crystal Bethel-Brown (mentor: Dr. Shilpa Buch; University of Nebraska Medical Center) was eligible to present in the Symposium this year, but as she had participated in last year's YI Symposium, she graciously agreed to allow another trainee to have the opportunity to present their research. Dr. Sylvia Kiertscher, the chair of the YI committee (David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA), and Dr. RV Srinivas (NIAAA/NIH) co-chaired the Young Investigator Symposium.

At the annual banquet the Wybran Award for outstanding contributions in the field of Immunopharmacology was presented to Dr. Shilpa Buch. Dr. Howard Fox received the Herman Friedman Founder's Award for his contributions to SNIP, and for his dedication to SNIP's continued development. Dr. Anuja Ghorpade was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award and the Outstanding Service and Support Award was awarded to Yvonne McCommon. A SNIP Special Recognition Award was presented to Dr. Mike Roth for distinguished extended service as SNIP conference organizer.

The Plenary Lectures were presented by Dr. Ming Li and Dr. Jeffrey Samet, respectively. The President's Symposium focused on *HIV Latency and HIV Reservoirs in the Post-HAART Era*. Other symposiums include , Alcohol and NeuroAIDS, Rodent Models of Interaction of Substances of Abuse and HIV-associated Neurocognitive Disorders, Neuroimmunity and Neurodegenerative Diseases, AIDS and Substances of Abuse - A Global Scenario, NeuroImmune Pharmacology Research in Hawaii and Spice and Bath Salts – An Emerging Health Risk in the United States. Springer, graciously published the abstracts of the 18th SNIP Conference in the Journal on NeuroImmune Pharmacology (JNIP: Dr. Howard Gendelman, Editor-in-Chief), the official journal of SNIP. In addition, details of the 18th SNIP Conference and a listing of poster presentations are available on the SNIP website www.s-nip.org.

The 18th SNIP Conference was an outstanding success!!
Sabita Roy, President of SNIP



**Welcome to the SNIP 19th Scientific Conference
Conrad San Juan Condado Plaza – San Juan, Puerto Rico
April 3-6, 2013**



Scuba diving at a wall off coast in southwestern PR (La Parguera)



Zip Lining in Toro Verde Adventure Park



La Ventana (the window) in Utuado, PR



Inside the fort (El Morro) in Old San Juan

Local Organizing Committee for 19th SNIP Conference

Top from left: Co-chair Loyda Melendez, PhD, Department of Microbiology and Medical Zoology, University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences (UPRMS); Annabell Segarra, PhD, Department of Physiology and Biophysics, UPRMS; Valerie Wojna, MD, Professor of Neurology, UPRMS
Bottom from left: Clemente Diaz, MD, Department of Pediatrics, UPRMS; Vanessa Rivera Amill, PhD, Department of Microbiology, Ponce School of Medicine & Health Sciences (PSM); Co-chair Richard Noel, PhD, Department of Biochemistry, PSM.



Highlights of Current NeuroImmune Pharmacology Research in Puerto Rico

Over 20 abstracts for talks and posters from Puerto Rico were submitted for the 19th Annual Conference of the Society on NeuroImmune Pharmacology in San Juan, PR from April 3-6, 2013. The presenters represent students, post-docs and PIs predominantly from three medical schools, the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus, the Universidad Central del Caribe, the Ponce School of Medicine and Health Sciences, as well as the University of Puerto Rico - Rio Piedras and the Institute of Neurobiology in Old San Juan which falls under the auspices of the UPR system. The works from the local hosts will bookend the conference with all posters on the opening night and five talks in the final symposium.

From the Universidad Central del Caribe (UCC), which is in Bayamon, PR much of the research that will be presented provides global analysis of clade effects on cells in the brain. S. Lopez and co-authors will present work of the proteomics fingerprint in primary human astrocytes exposed to either clade B or clade C HIV-1 strains. Findings show clade B induces a fingerprint indicative of greater oxidative and endoplasmic reticulum stress. In other work from UCC, J. Alves will present data on the protein response in neurons indicating that while clade B virus induces an apoptotic response, clade C exposure upregulates ankyrin repeat and SOCS that inhibit Jak/Stat and apoptosis. A final poster from Bayamon is focused on similar findings in microglia.

The Ponce School of Medicine and Health Sciences (PSM), located in the southern city of Ponce, will feature presenters in the opening poster session and a speaker in Symposium 8 on Saturday. R. Loucil will present work showing that expression of the HIV-1 Nef neurotoxin in the brain induces tissue changes in the gut that appear to be mediated by inflammation. L. Torres has a poster of the neurotoxic effects of Vpr in a rat learning model complemented by in vitro studies of neuronal apoptosis. F. Vazquez will show his work on how gp120 expression disrupts glutamate regulation in human astrocytes which may contribute to neurotransmitter imbalances during HIV neuropathology. A final poster from Ponce presented by Y. Rivera is a clinical study examining the link between depression, inflammation and oxidative stress in HIV-1-infected Puerto Ricans.

Rounding out the local poster presentations will be a number of basic and clinical works derived from the University of Puerto Rico system. Two posters from the Rio Piedras campus focus on the alpha-7 nicotinic acetylcholine receptor ($\alpha 7nAChR$) in HIV neuropathology. C. Baez-Pagan and colleagues will show how polymorphisms change the function and antagonist response of the $\alpha 7$ receptor, including therapeutic implications. Meanwhile, C. Capo-Velez presents work in a gp120 transgenic mouse showing upregulation of the $\alpha 7nAChR$ in a variety of tissues including lung, spleen, macrophages and brain, specifically striatum. From the Medical Sciences Campus, two studies will demonstrate the role of gp120 in disrupting macrophage function: M. Delgado-Velez will show gp120 disrupts the cholinergic antiinflammatory pathway producing an inflammatory phenotype while the work of K. Colon elucidates how env tropism affects the production of oxidative stress. Y. Gerena has a poster detailing the effects of angiotensin II on lowering glucose uptake and augmenting oxidative stress in SH-SY5Y neurons. Finally, two posters will highlight clinical findings from the Hispanic-Latino Longitudinal Cohort of HIV-seropositive Women. F. Zenon's work uses a promising oxygen-isotope labeling technique to compare plasma protein and metabolic differences in HIV+ women with and without exposure to cocaine. A final poster on opening night from R. Menendez-Delmestre follows this cohort to detail the relationship between insomnia and immune dysregulation, finding a disruption in the hypocretin-orexin system and CSF levels of several cytokines correlate with insomnia as measured by the ATHENA scale. Dr. Valerie Wojna will share further research on this cohort in a talk on Saturday morning in Symposium 6: Neuropathology of HIV-1 in an Aging Population.

At the other end of the 2013 conference, Symposium 8: HIV, Drug Abuse, and NeuroImmune Pharmacology Research in Puerto Rico highlights the local research in five talks. This session will be chaired by local organizers and long-time SNIP members Richard Noel from PSM and Loyda Melendez from UPR. Dr. Vanessa Rivera will open the session by presenting a clinical study in collaboration with the Psychology Program at PSM that examines how integrated clinical care both reduces depression and improves inflammation markers. This work complements the poster presented by her student on opening night. Following the first talk will be Dr. Annabell Segarra from UPR-Medical Sciences.

Her presentation is focused on how sex steroids affect the behavioral response to cocaine, particularly how estradiol modulates cocaine sensitization and conditioned place preference behaviors. Dr. Steve Treistman from the Institute of Neurobiology will pivot from cocaine to alcohol presenting his studies of the role of the voltage- and calcium-activated potassium channel (BK channel) in alcohol tolerance. His work provides a window on addictive disorders to other drugs as well. Session co-chair Loyda Melendez will follow by providing an overview of the work in her lab studying how cathepsin B and cystatin B contribute to HIV-associated neurocognitive disorders. Dr. Melendez will show that cathepsin B is upregulated in both post-mortem HAND brain tissue as well as in plasma and monocytes of women from the Hispanic-Latino Longitudinal Cohort of Women. Dr. Jose Lasalde from UPR-Rio Piedras will end the symposium with a presentation of his ongoing work to study the mechanism by which the $\alpha 7nAChR$ contributes to HIV associated neuropathology. As with the opening talk in this session, the final two talks encompass work shown on opening night by several students from these laboratories.

**Richard J. Noel Jr.
PhD**



Ocean side walk (called Paseo la Princesa) in Old San Juan



Fort in Old San Juan overlooking Old San Juan cemetery

Early Career Investigator Travel Award Winners 2013

In order to promote interest in the field of Neuroimmune Pharmacology and to recognize the excellent work being done by Early Career investigators in this field, the Society provides Early Career Investigator Travel Awards (ECITA) to graduate students and post-doctorate trainees (within 5 years of Ph.D.) working with a SNIP Member and seeking funds to attend the annual conference of the Society on NeuroImmune Pharmacology. For the 2013 SNIP Scientific Conference, a total of 66 abstracts were submitted. Of which 22 graduate students and 13 post-doctorate fellows were awarded. Of these 35 awardees, 9 awards were conferred to students and post-doctorate fellows working in alcohol-related research and these awards were sponsored by NIAAA. The ECITA awards were made in 3 categories: \$750+registration waiver, \$500+registration waiver, and \$500. In addition, 6 students who were among the top candidates were awarded with "Certificate for Excellence". However, they were not given travel awards because they were the 3rd candidates from the same mentor. Finally, the top 3 from each graduate student and post-doctorate fellow categories were selected for symposium presentation.

Pre-Doctoral

ECITA Awardees	Mentor	University
Amma, AB	Dash, CV	Meharry Medical College
Bertrand, SJ	Booze, RM	University of South Carolina
Cao, L	Kumar, A	University of Missouri- Kansas City
Chen, Q	Zheng, JC	University of Nebraska Medical Center
Cisneros, I	Ghorpade, A	University of North Texas Health Science Center
Coley, JS	Berman, JW	Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Festa, L	Meucci, O	Drexel University College of Medicine
Gangwani, MR	Kumar, A	University of Missouri- Kansas City
Liu, X	Kumar, A	University of Missouri- Kansas City
Loucil, R	Noel, Jr, RJ	Ponce School of Medicine and Health Sciences
Mamik, MK	Ghorpade, A	University of North Texas Health Science Center
Meng, J	Roy, S	Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Moran, LM	Mactutus, CF	University of South Carolina
Sen, S	Amini, S	Temple University School of Medicine
Shah, A	Kumar, A	University of Missouri- Kansas City
Sindberg, GM	Roy, S	University of Minnesota
Strazza, M	Nonnemacher, M	Drexel University College of Medicine
Vartak, N	Ghorpade, A	University of North Texas Health Science Center
Wang, Y	Zheng, JC	University of Nebraska Medical Center
Williams, DW	Berman, JW	Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Yang, L	Buch, S	University of Nebraska Medical Center
Zhou, Y	Ho, WZ	Temple University School of Medicine

ECITA-Alcohol Awardees	Mentor	University
Ande, A	Kumar, S	University of Missouri- Kansas City
Ferguson, LB	Harris, RA	University of Texas, Austin
Franklin, T	Sarkar, DK	Rutgers University
Gofman, L	Potula, R	Temple University School of Medicine
Parikh, N	Wigdahl, B	Drexel University College of Medicine
Teng, S	Molina, P	Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center

Post-Doctoral

ECITA Awardees	Mentor	University
Ashutosh, F	Ghorpade, A	UNT Health Science Center
Castro, V	Toborek, M	University of Miami
Kiebala, M	Maggirwar, SB	University of Rochester
Lan, X	Singhal, PC	Feinstein Institute for Medical Research
Ma, J	Roy, S	University of Minnesota
Mantri, SK	Dash, CV	Meharry Medical College
Pilakka-Kanthikeel, S	Nair, M	Florida International University
Wang, YZ	Ho, WZ	Temple University School of Medicine
Zhao, L	Zheng, JC	University of Nebraska Medical Center

ECITA-Alcohol Awardees	Mentor	University
Agudelo, M	Nair, M	Florida International University
Bethel-Brown, C	Buch, S	University of Nebraska Medical Center
Vetreno, RP	Crew, FT	University of North Carolina, Chaper Hill

The SNIP recognizes the service of ECITA committee members (Drs. Kumar (Chair), Booze, Datta, Ghorpade, Haorah, Ho, Kiertscher, Meléndez, Molitor, Nonnemacher, Royal, Tang, Thangavel, and Rivera), and thank them for their wonderful job in reviewing the ECITA applications.

SNIP Members at “Work”

Howard S. Fox, M.D., Ph.D. who studies neuroAIDS and serves as a Senior Associate Dean of Research and Development, and Professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska, would like to share his culinary talents with SNIP members.

Three things combined drive my desire to cook. One, for better or worse, is my love of food, in all its varieties. I go on international themes – for example I’ve cooked Spanish for a while (and I have a paella pan and good saffron), then onto Malayasian (ever smell blanchan/shrimp paste when its cooking? Best to wrap it in foil when you are heating otherwise your guests will leave), Indian (and I grind my own spices) and now I’m in a Mid-East vegetarian kick (check out the cookbook *Plenty* by Yotam Ottolenghi).



Second is that it mimics science – each recipe is in itself an experiment, to be examined, modified, and the results evaluated. Third, importantly, is the social aspect. There is nothing like creating something wonderful for family and friends. So in asking my family for their favorite recipes brought a different response from each one, from homemade meatball subs to smoked pork to chicken with oranges to a celery root and hazelnut salad. So to avoid playing favorites, here’s my best friend’s favorite, adapted from a Mexican cookbook by Diana Kennedy.

Pork in Green Peanut Sauce

Materials

The Meat:

- 2 ¼ lbs pork, cut into 1" cubes
- 2/3 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 t salt
- 3 T peanut or safflower oil
- 1/3 onion, sliced

The Sauce:

- 1/3 C dry roasted peanuts (try to find the lightly salted)
- 1 ½ C tomatillos, freshly cooked
- 6 sprigs coriander
- 4 peppercorns
- 3-4 chiles serranos (or other hot chili)
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled

Method

Put the pork, chopped onion, garlic, and salt into a saucepan, cover with water, bring to a simmer, and cook until almost tender – about 40 minutes. Drain the meat, reserving the broth.

Add the peanuts, tomatillos, coriander, peppercorns, chilies, garlic, and 3/4 C of the meat broth to a blender and blend until smooth.

Heat the 3 T of oil and fry the pork and sliced onion together until golden, turning the pieces constantly. Add the blended sauce and cook for a few minutes longer, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pan all the time. Add approximately 2 ½ C of the broth, then adjust the seasoning and simmer the stew for about 15 minutes, or until well seasoned. (You may need to dilute the sauce further – it should be of a medium consistency, like thin cream – and it will thicken as it cooks). Serve with the sauce and hot tortillas.

Results

Hope you like it!

Notes: Tomatillos (tomatillos) are the green tomatoes with husks. To cook, remove husks and simmer covered with water for 5-10 minutes. You can substitute canned tomatillos, available in Mexican markets.



Yuanan (Ron) Lu, Ph.D. Professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa is known for his work on developing novel gene therapy approaches for HIV-1 infection in the central nervous system. He lives in Honolulu, Hawaii with his wife May Wu, M.D. (pediatrics), and son Justin (7 years young). In this picture, Ron and May are seen practicing brush pen writing during the Chinese New Year time. Brush writing is a very traditional and historic way of writing New Year couplets in which one needs to hold brush pen in absolutely vertical (90°) angle. This type of writing starts from right to left and goes from top to bottom. This practice is particularly important for Chinese Spring Festival time, and every family celebrates the New Year by writing such couplets using brush pen and red paper and post them at the main entrance on both sides of the door frame and on its top. Ron and May wish SNIP members a fantastic Snake Year!

Funding Opportunities

NIDA

Please see the following link for NIDA funding opportunities:

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/funding/funding-opportunities>

NIAAA

Please see the following link for NIAAA funding opportunities:

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/grant-funding/funding-opportunities>

NINDS

High Impact Neuroscience Research Resource Grants (R24)

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-NS-13-009.html>

Due date: May 16, 2013 (Letter of Intent: April 16)

Supports newly developed, cutting edge reagents or techniques, or efforts to broaden the impact of important existing resources

EUREKA for Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System (R01)

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-NS-13-007.html>

Due date: March 21, 2013

Supports high-risk, high-reward research in neuroscience

NIAID

RFA-MH-14-140: Revision Applications for Research on Assessing the Role of Stigma in HIV Prevention and Care

RFA-AI-13-009: Genomic Centers for Infectious Diseases

PA-11-110: Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSA) for Individual Predoctoral MD/PhD and Other Dual Doctoral Degree Fellows (Parent F30)

RFA-HD-14-026: Evaluation of the Latent Reservoir in HIV-Infected Infants and Children With Early Antiretroviral Treatment and Virologic Control

Sanjay Maggirwar, SNIP Communications Committee Chair, and Michelle Kiebal, Research Assistant Professor, University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, NY