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President's Column

A Rainy Journal Article Review

David Fogelson, M.D.



The view from my study is drenched in rain. The down pour is heavy enough to cause rain water to catapult over the rain gutter and come streaming onto the patio. As the shrubs and trees drink up the rain, they seem to immediately turn a richer green, as if I was watching time lapse photography. All this water and recent rains have me convinced that our drought must be coming to an end. I could not be more wrong. I learned a lesson in relativity when I re-searched our rain totals for this winter. Downtown Los Angeles has received 6.42 inches of rain from Oct. 1 to Feb. 22; last year's total during that same span was 1.11 inches. The historical average during that time is 10.16 inches. We have had six times as much rain this year as last year, leading me to think that the drought must be over. The truth of the matter is that we have had 40% less rain this year than in an average year. Things are not always what they seem and they are constantly in flux. In the time it has taken me to write this paragraph, the weather has gone from a rain storm to rain drops glistening in the sun!

Today, I will review a provocative article that appeared in the February issue of the American Journal of Psychiatry "Uncovering the Hidden Risk Architecture of the Schizophrenias: Confirmation in Three Independent Genome-Wide Association Studies" by Arnedo et al. The findings in this study exemplify that things are not always what they seem. I am particularly interested in this article as the bulk of my research over the years has focused on the genetics of schizophrenia. The genetic underpinnings of schizophrenia have been elusive. Genome wide association studies (GWAS) have begun to uncover genomic loci that account for 25% of the heritability of schizophrenia, but this has required sequencing the genome of over 36,000 patients and 113,000 control subjects. While these are impressive numbers of research subjects, we do not expect that even larger numbers of subjects in GWAS studies will lead to discovering the missing 75% of the heritability factors related to schizophrenia. Arnedo and his colleagues argue that we

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don't necessarily require larger GWAS studies but rather, may analyze the data that we already possess in a novel manner. By doing so, we will discover that much of the missing heritability has been right before our eyes. We just have not known how to "see" it.

Arnedo and colleagues examined the GWAS data and found that single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) cluster within individuals in SNP sets. The SNP sets were in turn found to share subjects. Independent of SNP clustering they found that phenotypic data (in their study, symptoms and signs of schizophrenia) also clustered into factors. Each factor was made up of slightly different symptom combinations of positive, negative, and disorganized symptoms. They name these factors clinical syndromes or phenotypic sets. They tested whether or not SNP sets were consistently associated with distinct phenotypic sets. Their approach is novel because it does not assume there is one clinical syndrome representing schizophrenia but rather that there are many subtypes associated with unique sets of SNPs. They found 8 phenotypes could be uniquely associated with networks of SNP sets. This makes intuitive sense. We know from our clinical work that patients diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia are a heterogeneous group, each with a slightly different clinical presentation. This study formalizes that observation and allows us to see the genetic underpinnings of this heterogeneity. The methodology requires hundreds of patients, not tens of thousands of patients, making it practical to fund replication studies. Arnedo and colleagues found that 42 SNP sets with greater than 70% schizophrenia risk were each unique; they did not share subjects with one another nor did they share SNPs. This is what we would expect to find if schizophrenia was heterogeneous, not one monolithic disorder.

The next step is to replicate this study and add endophenotypes, not just symptoms, meaning brain imaging and neurophysiology and cognitive measures. This will allow us to see even better how the subtypes represent different pathophysiology. This in turn should drive the discovery of better treatments.

Back to Southern California and our Society. At Council we are discussing many different issues: probable "right to die legislation," the proposed integration of mental health and medical departments in Los Angeles County, a well-being retreat for psychiatrists, operationalizing a residents committee, and many others. The Fellowship and Awards Committee is in the process of nominating Distinguished Fellows for 2016 and welcome suggestions for potential candidates. The Art of Psychiatric Medicine Committee has started producing its Oral Story Telling documentary and the interviews are underway.

A reminder that there will be an advocacy training meeting at my home the evening of March 18th. Please see the website for more information and for instructions for signing up for the meeting. Please plan to attend the awards and installation ceremony on Saturday, May 2nd. More details may be found on our website. The APA annual meeting in Toronto will be May 16-20, 2015.

Letter from the Editor

Agility

Colleen Copelan, M.D.



I know. It's about me and my dogs again, but I just can't help myself.

Maggie, Lacey, and I went back to New York City for the second time, for the Second Annual Westminster Kennel Club Masters Agility Championship. We didn't win, but we did make the guidebook photo page and our story ran above the fold in our local Ventura County Star. And remember, we had to be Masters just to qualify. So I'm happy.

Smart, my teacher's border collie, won first place in the 16-inch category. (Jumpers are sorted by height.) Tex, somebody else's border collie, got the overall first place ribbon. No sour grapes but border collies are so much faster than labradors.

The Westminster Masters Agility Championship was held the day before the more venerable Westminster Dog Show—the thoroughbred's beauty contest. Miss P, a cute beagle won Best of Show. You don't have to be run, jump or do weaves to win a beauty contest. But again, no sour grapes.

The second biggest story was the weather. It was so cold.

It was so cold that Maggie and Lacey had to wear boots! It was so cold that I had to buy a new coat! It was so cold they canceled our flight home!

We—my husband and I—had to extend our apartment rental and buy more theater tickets! We're pretty agile, too. cocopelan@aol.com.



SCPS held its 26th annual Psychopharmacology Update on January 31, 2015. The meeting was well-attended and well-received. Here are photos from the event.



Joseph Goldberg, M.D. gave a 2-hour keynote on Bipolar Disorder.



Gerald Maguire, M.D. spoke on Pharmacogenomics.



Itai Danovitch, M.D. spoke on pharmacologic implications of marijuana.



Joel Yager, M.D. spoke on eating disorders.



Attendees listen to Dr. Maguire.



Maria Lymberis, M.D. announces the next PER event.

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Joseph F. Goldberg, M.D.

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Council Highlights

February 12, 2015

Erick Cheung, M.D., *Secretary*



The meeting was called to order with quorum by Dr. Silverman, in Dr. Fogelson's absence, at 7:13PM.

Minutes from the January 2015 meeting were approved by Council.

President's Report (Dr. Heather Silverman):

Dr. Shaner was invited to provide an update regarding the DMH focus group and the proposed integration of major health departments (DMH, DPH, DHS). The Council discussed and array of issues including:

Potential benefits: Reduction of administrative costs, better health information sharing, integration of important physical and mental health clinical services, possible improvement in residency education.

Disadvantages may include: threatened, or real, loss of funding or services for mental health related to poor administrative structuring; administrative integration may not necessarily lead to clinical integration.

Alternative models may include: combining mental and physical health in one department, integrating mental and substance abuse treatment. Project terminology should be clarified.

Other discussion: emphasis was made on the concern that mental health services and funding might be potentially sidelined in a consolidated system, the need to maintain (or even maximize) funding streams for mental health services, fear of the loss of "recovery model" to the "medical model".

Announcements:

Advocacy training occurring 3/18/15 at Dr. Fogelson's home, contact Mindi Thelen for more details.

SCPS Installation is May 2, 2015 at Le Merigot.

Brief and initial discussion was held regarding physician assisted suicide and APA's organizational stance on this issue. The topic was deferred to the March Council meeting for further discussion.

Discussion was held regarding prescribing psychotropics to foster children and anticipated legislation. Concerns were expressed regarding the potential restriction or challenges in obtaining necessary medications for this population. Support was expressed for increasing non-pharmacologic interventions to address behavioral and psychosocial problems.

Council discussed the conceptual proposal of a "wellness workshop" or meeting. Dr. Furuta is investigating the possibility of planning such a workshop.

Council discussed a request from CPA to create a network of physicians / psychiatrists that would provide pre-diversion services to impaired physicians. A major problem relates to mandatory waivers of confidentiality to physician notes. Council recommended publishing this request in SCPS and CPA newsletters.

Council discussed a CA legislative proposal for increasing "crisis care services" for children/adolescents. General support was expressed for this proposal, and the matter is referred to CPA legislative and child committees.

Membership Report: A motion was made to accept the membership committee's recommendations, seconded, and approved.

Treasurer's Report (Dr. Duriez): A review of current financial status of the organization was presented. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the treasurer's report. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to investigate appropriate investments.

Program Committee Report (Dr. Gales): Provided a report on the recent psychopharmacology meeting, strong turnout at 163 attendees. Planning an ADD/ADHD program tentatively in April 2015.

The art of psychiatric medicine report (Dr. Furuta): Provided update on oral history-taking project, which is moving forward on schedule including training workshops on interviewing.

New Business: PER Foundation report (Dr. Lymberis): Provided report on upcoming 3/21/15 at 7pm (Mt Olive Lutheran Church, 1343 Ocean Park blvd, Santa Monica, CA 90405) event supporting research for children's mental health and PER Advocate award to former LA County Supervisor Edmund Edelman.

The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Silverman at 9:39 PM.

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Ballots will be transmitted on or around March 9, 2015. Please be sure to vote!

Advocacy Training March 18, 2015. Please contact scps2999@earthlink.net for availability.

Installation and Awards Ceremony on May 2, 2015 at Le Merigot Beach Hotel and Spa.

APA Annual Meeting in Toronto May 16-20, 2015.

APA Election Results:
Maria A. Oquendo, MD, has been elected the new President-Elect of APA. Among others elected to leadership positions are Altha J. Stewart, MD, Lama Bazzi, MD, and Gail Erlick Robinson, MD,. These results are considered public, but not official until approved by the Board of Trustees at its March meeting.

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In keeping with its tradition of providing collegiality among its members, SCPS has offered an opportunity for those interested in either being a mentor or a mentee. In the past mentors have volunteered to lend personal insight into, and answered questions from residents and early career psychiatrists about, a career in psychiatry. Mentees meet regularly with the mentor to develop an individual program to foster one's clinical, scholarly and/or research interests. Mentors may make introductions to other mentors with research and other intellectual interests similar to the mentee's. If you are a member interested in serving as a mentor or wanting to be paired with a mentor, please email Earl at:

earlandrew.deguzman@med.usc.edu

or, Mindi at scps2999@earthlink.net with your particular area of interest, availability, and contact information.

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