Figure 1: Faculty Domains in the Developmental Neuroscience and Child Psychopathology Postdoctoral Training Program

Figure 2: Administrative Structure of the Developmental Neuroscience and Child Psychopathology Postdoctoral Training Program

Figure 3: Developmental Neuroscience and Child Psychopathology Postdoctoral Training Program Core Components

Fellowship Program Leaders
Deanna Barch, PhD, (dbarch@artsci.wustl.edu) Gregory B. Couch Professor of Psychiatry, Departments of Psychology, Psychiatry, and Radiology, Chair of Department of Psychology
Joer Luby, MD, (lubyj@psychiatry.wustl.edu) Professor of Psychiatry (Child), Director, Early Emotional Development Program

Contact
Lori Ingram: 314-747-2160, ingraml@psychiatry.wustl.edu

Mentors
Andrey Anokhin, PhD
Andrew Belden, PhD
Laura Bienert, MD
Kelly Buttersen, MD
Kathleen Bucholz, PhD
John Constantinidis, MD
Michael Gaffrey, PhD
Anne Glowinski, MD, MPE
Andrew Heath, DPhil
Tamara Hershey, PhD
Melissa Jonson-Reid, PhD
Shannon Lenz, MD
Christiana Lessov-Schlaggar, PhD
Daniel Marsh, MD, MPE
Robert McKinstry, MD, PhD
Ginger Nicot, MD
Steve Petersen, PhD
John Pruett, MD, PhD
Angela Reiersen, MD, MPE
Cynthia Rogers, DO
Bradley Schlaggar, MD, PhD
Joshua Shimony, MD, PhD
Christopher Simper, MD
Mini Tandon, DO
David Van Essen, PhD

Washington University in St. Louis
NIMH T32 Postdoctoral Fellowship in Developmental Neuroscience and Child Psychopathology
Our Training Mission

The mission of our training program is to train the next generation of scientists with PhDs or MDs to have the intellectual and research skills necessary to lead investigations of the developmental origins of the neurobiological basis of psychiatric disorders. Such a focus on early efforts to target early prevention and intervention of psychiatric disorders that often become lifelong and chronic illnesses in adulthood. Specifically, our goal is to train individuals who can understand and identify neurobiological and psychological abnormalities in core components of human behavior and affective functioning that contribute to both early and late-onset psychopathology. Such a perspective aims to address core processes at multiple levels of analysis that cut across traditional diagnostic boundaries. There are three underlying principles to our training mission. The first is a focus on ensuring that trainees understand the neural mechanisms of brain development and brain-behavior relationships. This knowledge of basic development is deemed critical to understand how and when developments in such matters may lead to the development of psychopathology. The second is a focus on ensuring that trainees recognize that the risk, onset and course of psychiatric disorders arises through a complex interplay of brain developmental processes influenced by psychosocial, genetic and biological factors that interact beginning in utero and continuing into early childhood and throughout later development. The third is a focus on helping trainees learn how to use well-characterized risk factors available to trainees.

Training and research in developmental psychopathology have become unique strengths of the Division of Child Psychiatry at Washington University: our internationally-recognized areas of expertise in psychiatric genetics and in developmental/neuroimaging research, along with our training in both basic and clinical domains, with trainees gaining expertise in the use of both structural and functional neuroimaging methods for MD and PhD research scholars. As such, we have faculty members from multiple departments who provide expertise and mentorship in each of these core areas (see Figures 1 and 2 on reverse). Figure 1 illustrates three major domains of expertise, although these categories are clearly not mutually exclusive as emphasized by overlap. Several faculty bring expertise across multiple domains of expertise to this training program and this graphical heuristic illustrates both the breadth and depth of training opportunities that will be available to trainees.

Domain 1: Developmental Psychopathology

Training and research in developmental psychopathology have become unique strengths of the Division of Child Psychiatry at Washington University. Our training mission is highly consistent with the NIH’s Research Domain Criteria Initiative, which seeks to "define basic biological mechanisms (such as fear circuits or activity that has an arousing or aversive effect on us) to be studied across multiple units of analysis, from genes to neurons to circuits to behavior, cutting across disorders as traditionally defined." Our training mission will capitalize on two major strengths of Washington University: our internationally-recognized areas of expertise in psychiatric and molecular genetics and in developmental/neuroimaging research, as well as our training in both basic and clinical domains, with trainees gaining expertise in both basic and clinical domains, with trainees gaining expertise.

Experience and Curriculum

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