



Quarterly Newsletter | January 2021



Presidential Vision Statement Jordan Smoller, MD, ScD

The field of psychiatric genetics has seen transformative progress over the past decade. It has emerged as a leading frontier in human genetics, with a robust tradition of genetic epidemiology, the successful identification of hundreds of genomic loci associated with a broad spectrum of psychiatric disorders, and a growing understanding of the genetic architecture of some of the most challenging and impactful phenotypes in all of biomedicine. This progress has been due in large part to the extraordinarily collaborative efforts of scientists and trainees across the world. As the pre-eminent society devoted to advancing science, collaboration, education, and career development in psychiatric genetics, the ISPG has been a hub of this collaborative enterprise. For more than two decades, our annual conference, the World Congress of Psychiatric Genetics, has been the leading venue for convening and showcasing the best work that our field has produced. As President of the ISPG, I will be honored to lead this extraordinary society into a new decade of discovery and collaboration, while maintaining its financial health and scientific vibrancy.

To capitalize on the opportunities and meet the challenges that lie ahead of us, we must begin with a planning effort that will engage the ISPG's diverse stakeholders and deep expertise to set strategic priorities for the coming years and develop a roadmap for achieving our strategic goals. Among these, I believe we must prioritize the following four areas in order to keep our society growing and thriving: **First**, we must create a more compelling value proposition to attract and retain members. This could include providing additional educational and training opportunities for young investigators and providing new services for members such as webinars and other offerings throughout the year. **Second**, at a time when diversity, inclusion and equity have become urgent priorities for the scientific community and our world, ISPG must be intentional about strengthening our commitment to these priorities and taking action to address them. We must create a more welcoming environment to attract members from diverse backgrounds; we must expand our investments in engaging more scientists from BIPOC communities and those in resource-limited countries; we must increase efforts to support and showcase the work of under-represented communities at our annual meeting; and we must be a leading voice for increasing the diversity of genetic studies. **Third**, we need to generate and implement creative solutions to balance our financial needs with the need to make conference and membership fees more affordable. **Fourth**, and not least, we need to take every opportunity to enhance the excellence and relevance of our science. This means a renewed commitment to elevating the scientific rigor of our annual meeting and our field. We can also advance the science of psychiatric genetics in areas that will be increasingly impactful in the coming years--including functional genomics, genome-guided therapeutic development, and clinical applications of precision and genomic medicine.

The ISPG has become an indispensable resource for the field of psychiatric genetics, and I am confident that we can strengthen our efforts to support collaboration, education, training, and discovery in the years ahead.



Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity in Action (IDEA) Committee Survey



To further identify and address racism wherever it occurs the IDEA Committee has identified thematic areas from the IDEA Committee Plenary Session at WCPG for specific actions ISPG and we ourselves can take:

- Representation in studies
- Methods for including all individuals
- Language use
- Outreach and engagement
- Community building

The committee is seeking input on these themes and proposals for specific actions via the [survey link](#) below. We look forward to your feedback and continuing this important conversation!



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THE VIRTUAL WCPG 2020!



Thank you all who attended the World Congress of Psychiatric Genetics on October 16, 19-22, 2020! The virtual congress drew record attendance with close to 1400 attendees from 59 countries. It was a wonderful and robust conference with scientists from all over the world coming together to share their expertise, research findings and personal experiences with the goal of improving the quality of life for those living with psychiatric disorders.



[CLICK HERE](#) TO VIEW THE ISPG BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES. PLEASE NOTE, YOU MUST LOG-IN TO YOUR MEMBER ACCOUNT TO VIEW.

Congratulations 2020 Award Winners

HONORIFIC AWARDS

Ming Tsuang Lifetime Achievement

Lynn DeLisi
Michael O'Donovan

Theodore Reich Young Investigator Award

Michael Gandal

Richard Todd Award – Genetics of Child Psychiatry

LeAnna Hernandez

Gershon Paper of the Year

Niamh Mullins

PGC Pamela Sklar Award

Enda Byrne

Hugh Gurling Memorial Award

Salil Sukumaran

POSTER AWARDEES

Chiara Fabbri
Michael Lafferty
Douglas Wightman

ORAL PRESENTATION AWARDEES

Alexandre Lussier
Wouter Peyrot
Josefin Werme

ISPG Committee Updates



AWARDS COMMITTEE

Chair: Sibylle Schwab
Co-Chair: Tadafumi Kato

2021 Committee Charges:

- Review ISPG honorific award applications and select the recipients



EARLY CAREER INVESTIGATOR PROGRAM (ECIP) COMMITTEE

Chair: Sarah Bergen
Co-Chair: Gwyneth Zai

2021 Committee Charges:

- Review and select 2021 ECIP Awardees.
- Evaluate feedback from 2020 ECIP Awardees and determine if any program changes are needed.
- Increase the number and promotional efforts of early career investigator activities during the WCPG.



ETHICS COMMITTEE

Chair: Lea K. Davis
Co-Chair: Maya Sabatello

2021 Committee Charges:

- Finalize the Committee Paper, “Use of Genetic Risk Scores in Pre-implantation Screening”.
- Coordinate with the Executive Office to provide content for a Public Policy section of the ISPG Quarterly Newsletter and social media platforms to help keep the ISPG membership abreast of research and developments in psychiatric genetics which have important ethical, legal, social and public policy implications.
- Continue collaboration with other ISPG committees addressing issues that have important ethical, legal, social, and public policy implications.
- Address anti-stigma and ethics in psychiatric research.
- Address anti-racism and ethics in psychiatric research.



GENETIC TESTING COMMITTEE

Chair: Franziska Degenhardt

2021 Committee Charges:

- Update the current genetic testing statement.
- Develop joint priorities with ISPG Committees.
- Develop a session (e.g. educational or “town hall style” meeting) for WCPG 2021.
- Complete White Paper



GLOBAL DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Chair: Soraya Seedat
Co-Chair: Marina Mihaljevic

2021 Committee Charges:

- Finalize the paper of “Needs, Opportunities and Challenges for Global Studies of Psychiatric Genetics”.
- Continue the Global Diversity Invitation Bank. Continue to provide

waived registration for attendees from LMIC or charge a nominal fee if the 2021 meeting is going to be virtual.

- Continue to communicate with scientists and trainees from the underrepresented countries, and promote local meeting, collaboration.
- Start to develop bioinformatics/data analysis education program.



IDEA COMMITTEE

Co-Chair: Ben Neale

Co-Chair: Lucia Colodro-Conde

Co-Chair Trainee: Victoria Marshe

2021 Committee Charges:

- Plan the Inclusivity and Diversity in Action (IDEA) Plenary at the 2021 WCPG
- Examine additional ways to expand diversity within ISPG membership and within the research in the field.
- To further identify and address racism wherever it occurs and take specific actions on the themes represented below.
- Representation in studies
- Methods for including all individuals
- Language use
- Outreach and engagement
- Community building



RESIDENCY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chair: Gwyneth Zai

Co-Chair: Aaron Besterman

2021 Committee Charges:

- Changing the committee name to include practitioners and clinicians in disseminating knowledge about psychiatric genetics
- Continuing international outreach and collaboration with other committees to disseminate knowledge on psychiatric genetics
- Continuing to update the statement by publishing another peer-reviewed manuscript
- Creating a 1-page summary sheet with references for trainees and clinicians on basic knowledge of psychiatric genetics
- Translating existing materials into other languages to reach international population

