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DETAILS

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NEWS

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AWARDS

VOLUME IV

FOCUS on Research

Hand in Hand in Research and Family

Some couples say it's not a good idea to bring the work home.

But for Judith M. Ford, PhD and Daniel H. Mathalon, MD, PhD, Co-Directors of the Brain Imaging and EEG Laboratory at the San Francisco VA Health Care System (SFVAHCS) who happen to be married to each other – talking shop at home and around the clock is often a good thing. “We are able to share ideas or consult with each other any time, day or night,” said Dan. “At its best, our research collaboration adds richness and enjoyment to our marriage.”

“After hours at home and when we travel, we have a chance to talk about papers and grants, and discuss ideas and approaches relevant to the science that we do in the lab,” said Judy. She adds, however, that they don't let their work interfere with home and family responsibilities, which includes a lot of time with their 11-year-old son, Adam.

Judy and Dan, both NCIRE Principal Investigators, are international experts on schizophrenia. Their career paths as neuroscientists converged at Stanford University School of Medicine, where Judy was a faculty member in Psychiatry, and Dan, who already had a PhD in Psychology, did research while completing his medical and psychiatric training.

Dan joined the faculty at Yale University School of Medicine in 2000 and established a clinical and cognitive neuroscience laboratory where he used electroencephalogram (EEG) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to track the biological course



*Judith M. Ford, PhD and Daniel H. Mathalon, MD, PhD
Co-Directors, Brain Imaging & EEG Laboratory, SFVAHCS*

of schizophrenia, including the prodromal period preceding the illness onset.

In 2004, Judy left Stanford for the Yale Department of Psychiatry. At the time, she was a leading expert in using EEG and MRI methods to uncover clinical neuroscience questions about symptoms experienced by people with a variety of psychiatric conditions, including schizophrenia. Their long-standing collaborations from their time at Stanford set the stage for Judy to join forces with Dan at Yale, integrating their research operations into one lab they co-directed. While at Yale, Judy also led the VA Schizophrenia Biological Research Center, providing training and resources for students, fellows, and residents.

They married in 2007 and soon thereafter moved their research to UCSF, establishing the Brain Imaging and EEG Laboratory (BIEEGL), based at the SFVAHCS, where they lead a group of neuroscientists who study the brain structures and function of patients with schizophrenia and compare them to control subjects with healthy brains. In addition to Co-Directorships at the lab, Judy is a UCSF Professor of Psychiatry and Biomedical Sciences and a Senior Career Research Scientist for the SFVAHCS Mental Health Service. She also directs the VA Schizophrenia Research Fellowship Program. Dan is a UCSF Professor of Psychiatry, Section Chief of General Psychiatric Outpatient Services at the SFVAHCS, and Deputy Vice-Chair for Research in the UCSF Psychiatry Department representing the SFVAHCS.

Their niche and research devotion are to schizophrenia, a mysterious and serious disorder notoriously difficult to diagnose and treat because it manifests so differently in people. It's a chronic condition that affects how a person thinks, feels and behaves, and people with schizophrenia often seem like they have lost touch with reality. Three-fourths of people with schizophrenia develop the condition between 16 and 25 years of age. In the US, approximately 3.5 million, or 1.2 percent of the adult population is diagnosed with schizophrenia. Among Veterans, rates are much higher. In VA medical centers nationwide, up to 4 percent of Veterans have a diagnosis of schizophrenia, according to some US estimates.

Schizophrenia, at its core, is a decline in basic brain functioning that is almost like a dementia that strikes young people, said Dan. Researchers are finding more and more that schizophrenia, like other brain disorders, is not a single disease. It's a complex constellation of neural circuit problems, he said.

Using the most advanced EEG and functional MRI (fMRI) methods, Dan analyzes the neural circuit abnormalities that precede the onset of schizophrenia in young people at clinical high risk for the disorder based on their exhibiting sub-threshold psychotic-like symptoms. A goal at BIEEGL is to identify biomarkers, or signals, that predict who among these at-risk individuals will transition to full-blown schizophrenia, track the

neurobiological changes that occur during this transition, and develop novel treatment targets for early intervention.

Judy focuses on neural signals, which if missing or misfiring, give rise to auditory verbal hallucinations, cardinal symptoms of schizophrenia. She has been collecting EEG and fMRI data from psychiatric patients who push a button to deliver a visual or auditory signal to themselves. In this way, she can identify specific elements of neural circuits contributing to the sense of "agency," and whether the lack of agency, underlie psychosis and psychosis vulnerability.

"These signals are an 'early warning system' or a 'cc to self' that tell a person that the resulting sensations are self-generated," said Judy. "This signal is reduced in patients with schizophrenia, suggesting that they may have abnormal sensory responses to their own actions."

Between Dan and Judy's studies, there is a lot of data and research information to sort, collect and share with a global community of scientists trying to crack the mystery and inner workings of schizophrenia.

So, how do they find the time for all of that and balance research life with family life?

"We don't try to rigidly keep them (work and family) separate, and don't have any rules about this," said Dan. "We still manage to focus on our home and family without interference from our work."

And it's a sizeable family, too, for which Dan is grateful. Along with Adam, Judy has five grandchildren, ages 3 to 10, who like her and Dan, live in San Francisco. Her older daughter, from a previous marriage, Erin Mathes, is a Pediatric Dermatologist and UCSF faculty member. Her younger daughter, Emily Garvie, is Executive Director of the Performing Arts Workshop, a San Francisco non-profit organization that helps young people develop critical thinking, creative expression and essential learning skills through the arts.

It's not uncommon that work at the lab slips into dinner table talk. "But we have an 11-year-old who likes to be included in the conversation," said Judy. "If all goes well, he'll be a neuroscientist before he starts high school."

Three-fourths of people with schizophrenia develop the condition between 16 and 25 years of age.

Q and A: An Interview with Diana Truran Sacre



*Diana Truran Sacre
Chief Operating Officer and Manager of
Imaging & Administration, CIND
Executive Director, Brain Health Registry
Advisor to NCIRE Audit Committee*

Q: What are your duties at NCIRE?

A: I am the Chief Operating Officer and Manager of Imaging and Administration for the Center of Imaging of Neurodegenerative Diseases (CIND). I'm also the Executive Director of the Brain Health Registry – a web-based, observational research study that may enable researchers to more efficiently identify, assess and monitor the cognitive changes associated with the progression of neurodegenerative diseases and brain aging.

Q: You studied social welfare at UC Berkeley. How did you end up in biomedical research and administration?

A: I'd say my career path has been a combination of hard work and a love of learning science and numbers, with some luck thrown in. At UC Berkeley, I worked in the convenience store within the student union, where I started as a sales associate and ended up as senior supervisor – an early lesson in management. After graduation, I landed an entry-level job at the SFVAHCS as a Research Associate, performing recruitment and MRI processing on an early HIV study. My classwork in social welfare had prepared me

to conduct sensitive interviews with HIV+ participants; however, I had no experience in MR imaging and learned on the job. I took a brief break from research at 24-years-old to move to Idaho with friends. I was later offered the opportunity to return to the VA and hire/manage a small team of Research Associates to work on a large new HIV grant.

Within a year of my return to the VA, I was given the opportunity to work directly with Dr. Michael Weiner. Soon I was responsible for a team of 26 Research Associates and 20+ imaging grants. I prepared budgets, helped write methods sections in the grant applications and handled all HR related activities. In 2013, a new opportunity opened up for me. Dr. Weiner, who was Director of CIND at the time, agreed to give me a chance as the Head Administrator at the CIND. Around the same time, Dr. Weiner had a new vision – the Brain Health Registry (BHR). He needed assistance getting his idea off the ground and I couldn't have been more excited to help.

Q: How important is the research at CIND and Brain Health Registry?

A: CIND initially focused only on the imaging of neurodegenerative diseases, thus its name. We now focus not only on imaging — primarily MRI and PET — but also measuring cognition, understanding aging and managing large scale recruitment for multiple studies across the world. BHR has blossomed into a huge registry and online research study with more than 60,000 participants. One of the biggest challenges in research is finding the right participants for your study. BHR provides a central place for those interested in research to connect with those doing research. We collect self-reported data on our participants along with a few cognitive assessments online so that we may customize and optimize referring participants from our registry to other studies. The goal is to identify treatments for any brain-affecting disorder faster and more affordably.

Q: What is the most satisfying part of your job?

A: Feeling like my work has a greater meaning, helping others and being able to work with such an amazing group of people.

Q: What is the most challenging part of your job?

A: Honestly, it's keeping on top of all my responsibilities while helping others do their jobs. It forces me to be super organized.

Q: Did you ever imagine having your name as co-author on more than 30 scientific publications?

A: It's crazy, really. My father was a Professor of Astrophysics at the University of Chicago, so I grew up in an academic environment. I watched him publish papers all his life, but never really expected to do so myself, particularly since I don't have a PhD. I'm proud of myself but certainly couldn't have done it without the support and mentorship of the faculty who've surrounded me for the past 20 years. Drs. Michael Weiner, Dieter Meyerhoff, Norbert Schuff, Gerald Matson, Susanne Mueller, Duygu Tosun, Rachel Nosheny, Scott Mackin and Pratik Mukherjee have all mentored me along the way and are responsible for my success at CIND.

Q: What outside interests do you have?

A: Playing tennis, piano and cello, reading, and watching my kids succeed.

Q: What would most people be surprised to know about you?

A: I grew up in the Midwest, had never been to California before, and I turned down a full music scholarship at Illinois Wesleyan to go to UC Berkeley when I was 18 years old.

Did You Know?

ReQlogic has favorites menus in fields such as Catalog Number, Project Number, and Vendor ID. Menus that show a star on each record allow you to add selections to your favorites list by clicking on the green star icon. The next time you use that menu, click on the star icon next to the search icon and your favorites list will show.

Example of field with both search icon and favorite menu icon:



Search menu showing the green star icon

Requisition Item ↶ ⬇ ⊗

Search criteria

Catalog # Begins with

Current filter: PV.[INVTID] Like 'new item computer%' Filter within result

Catalog #	Description	Vendor ID	Catalog
NEW ITEM COMPUTER	ADD NEW ITEM TO MASTER LIST	NEWITEM	ReQlogic ☆

Once the star is selected, the record turns green indicating it is in your favorites list now.

Have questions or need more information? Please contact the Purchasing Department, we are happy to help!

NCIRE IT completed 1,725 service tickets in 2018.

Reimbursement requests for approved NCIRE supported conferences, seminars, events, etc. cannot be processed without a copy of (1) the program, and (2) agenda or topic of discussion.

Reimbursement requests for meals should include an itemized receipt and a list of attendees.

Please see Accounting's Policy and Procedures Manual on the NCIRE Intranet

<http://vhasfcappncire2.v21.med.va.gov/accountingmanual.htm>



2019
mileage rate =
58 cents

In the Helix



Hermie Domingo
Administrative Assistant III,
NCIRE



Jennifer Hlavin
Laboratory Manager,
NCIRE



Kitty Stanley
Administrative Nurse III,
NCIRE

Q: What's the one thing surprises people about you?

A: When I was a bank teller I once chased a bank robber through the streets of San Francisco down into the Embarcadero BART station while I was wearing high heels. And nobody at the bank knew I was doing this.

Q: What are you currently binge-watching?

A: It's hard to find shows that are both entertaining and appropriate for the whole family (sons ages 13 and 18, my husband and me). But we all really loved Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse. I'm also binge-watching The West Wing with my 13-year old son, which has been a good bonding and learning experience.

Q: What's the one thing that surprises people about you?

A: That as a senior in high school I was voted "Most Mischievous." But that does not surprise me or the people who know me! What surprises me is that I have overstayed my time in the Bay Area by 36 years! My husband and I left Boston in 1979 a week after getting married and took a 3-month road trip intending to visit the Bay Area for four years and then return home to Boston. Well obviously that didn't happen.

Contracts and Grants Update

The Importance of R&D Approval (Pink Sheets) and Research Protocol Safety Survey (RPSS) Forms

The biggest misconception is that you do not have to turn in these forms until you are funded. THIS IS NOT TRUE. We require the Pink Sheet in preparation for funding and for NCIRE's own internal files. The RPSS gives us an idea of what protocols are needed for the project work. We can then gauge the timeline for when your project has been funded.

The "Pink Sheet" aka R&D Committee Approval Form, gives the Principal Investigator the permission to conduct research on the SFVAHCS Campus. It is also the first step to getting R&D Committee Approval when your project has been funded and your team is ready for work. The RPSS cover sheet gives us the information needed to register your project for research performed at the SFVAHCS whether funded or not.

Tips on Filling out your Pink Sheet:

- If NCIRE is administering the grant award we are listed as "06-Northern California Institute for Research and Education (NCIRE)" in the drop-down menu; do not leave blank;
- List protocols even if you haven't started the process but you know you are going to need a protocol. "Pending" is always a good word to use and/or "Titles" are just as helpful;
- Always make sure that the Pink Sheet matches the information on your RPSS form;
- Do not compile the Pink Sheet and RPSS forms together; send them as separate PDFs;
- Make sure to get your Service Chief's signature, we will get ACOS signature later;
- Please do not save files as Read Only or add security; we understand that your signatures are important, just make sure to leave the ACOS Signature box open;
- On the RPSS form make sure to fill out where your work will be conducted, this is often overlooked because it's just before Question #1.

NCIRE's Analysts are here to help. We will make sure your Pink Sheet is up to date; work with the Safety Review Subcommittee (SRS) and obtain the ACOS signature. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to email our NCIRE Analysts at cgawards@ncire.org.

These steps will help streamline the process for the SRS. After your protocols are approved and SRS review is complete the project is then ready for the R&D Agenda. Keep in mind that SRS approval is NOT the same as FULL ACOS.

FULL ACOS occurs at the R&D Committee Review Meetings every first Thursday of the month. If you have met all SRS stipulations and all protocols have been approved you are ready for FULL ACOS. Our Analysts will then ensure that you make it on to the next R&D meeting agenda.

NCIRE's Contracts and Grants Department continues to provide resources to our PI Community.

Please find the following useful links on the NCIRE Intranet home page:

- [Pre-Award Roles and Responsibilities](#)
- [Post-Award Roles and Responsibilities](#)
- [Open Industry Trial Opportunities](#)
- [NCIRE Federal Awards Abstracts](#)

**NIH/DoD
Submissions
(Applications):**

87

**NIH/DOD
Awards:**

15

**New Cooperative
Research and
Development
Agreements (CRADA):**

6

Industry Funding Opportunities

PPD

Phase IIa, dose-ranging Proof of Concept study in patients with Short Bowel Syndrome.

This is a pre-award. This means that the study itself has not yet been awarded, and at this point PPD is collecting information on interested sites in an effort to help them get the study awarded to them. They estimate that the study, if awarded, will not begin until 2020. It should be noted that patients will be admitted on three separate occasions, at baseline, at the end of the treatment and follow-up periods (4 days 3 nights). 3/26/19

Stargates, Inc.

Phase II Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) proposal to NIH for Hand Hygiene for Patients, an intervention intended to decrease hospital acquired infections. 2/4/19

Janssen Research and Development

Phase I, Open-label, Multicenter, Phase 1b Study of JNJ-63723283, a PD-1 Inhibitor, Administered in Combination with Apalutamide in Subjects with Metastatic Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer. 1/16/19

Federal Funding Opportunities

CDMRP Pre-Announcement:

The FY19 Defense Appropriation provides \$20 million (M) to the Department of Defense Kidney Cancer Research Program (KCRP) to support research of exceptional scientific merit in the area of kidney cancer. For more information on topic areas and planned mechanisms, please visit: <https://cdmrp.army.mil/pubs/press/2019/19kcrppreann>

CDMRP Pre-Announcement:

The FY19 Defense Appropriation provides \$10 million (M) to the Department of Defense Hearing Restoration Research Program (HRRP) to support promising, necessary research for treatment of burdensome and very prevalent auditory system injury. For more information on topic areas and planned mechanisms, please visit: <https://cdmrp.army.mil/pubs/press/2019/19hrrppreann>

CDMRP Pre-Announcement:

The FY19 Defense Appropriation provides \$30 million (M) to the Department of Defense Spinal Cord Injury Research Program (SCIRP) to support innovative, high-impact spinal cord injury research. For more information on topic areas and planned mechanisms, please visit: <https://cdmrp.army.mil/pubs/press/2019/19scirppreann>

CDMRP Pre-Announcement:

The FY19 Defense Appropriation provides \$125 million (M) to the Department of Defense Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Program (PHTBIRP) to support specific Defense Health Agency (DHA) J9 Research and Development Directorate program areas, including Joint Program Committee-5/Military Operational Medicine Research Program (JPC-5/MOMRP). For more information on topic areas and planned mechanisms, please visit: <https://cdmrp.army.mil/pubs/press/2019/19phtbipreann>

The above is a small sample of the opportunities available on our Intranet. For more opportunities or information please visit the NCIRE Intranet or contact Newton Ong at x23892 or Newton.Ong@ncire.org for Industry Funding, and Azarah Wong at x23891 or Azarah.Wong@ncire.org for Federal Funding.

HR Spotlight

Important Employee Termination Friendly Reminders

- Notify NCIRE HR at least TWO weeks before termination date. HR will then contact the employee to schedule an exit interview. Please contact Amanda Grijalva at Amanda.Grijalva@ncire.org.
- Login to the RDIS system to notify the R&D office of the termination OR if the employee will remain on campus as a UCSF WOC, VA volunteer or VA employee you must email Michelle.Gunther@va.gov or Emily.Hixson2@va.gov to retain your employee's access. If we do not have an email approving this request from the R&D office, the employee will be required to do all mandatory check out procedures. Please do this as early as possible.
- Have employee complete a final timesheet in UltiPro. The employee should complete the biweekly timesheet through their last day of employment with NCIRE at least 72 hours in advance of their termination date. This will ensure their final paycheck is accurate.
- Principal Investigators or Lab Managers should collect electronic equipment that has been issued to the employee before their last day of employment with NCIRE.
- If the employee is an authorized signatory for subject checking accounts and/or is authorized to conduct purchasing materials against your grant, please send the Accounting and/or Purchasing Department an email requesting removal of the authorization.
- Principal Investigators and Lab Managers may **NOT** accept keys or badges from the terminating employee. Keys must be turned in directly to Engineering and the appropriate badge office per NCIRE's instructions to the employee. These instructions are mandated and follow proper offboarding procedures as required by the VA.



We are looking for a total of 6 Wellness Champions to lead at least 1 weekly wellness walk. Two wellness leaders are needed for each of the three walking groups: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced.

- **Advanced** - Walking to push the pace (2 needed)
- **Intermediate** - Somewhere in the middle (2 needed)
- **Beginning** - Walking to move (2 needed)

Join the Walk for Wellness Champion team today! Wellness Champions will receive champion captain t-shirts.

There are numerous benefits to walking:

- Meet your daily physical activity.
- Stress relief.
- Take a short break.
- Connect with co-workers.
- Enjoy the outdoors.
- Have fun!

For more information contact: Jennifer.yee@ncire.org

We're Hiring!

We're a team of bright, dedicated, collaborative individuals who care deeply about making the world a better place. We know our individual strengths but believe that we're strongest together. At NCIRE, you will work with an amazing team of high caliber individuals, and thrive in an environment where you can develop professionally and make significant contributions towards the greater goal of advancing Veterans health.

If you know anyone passionate about making a difference and wants to partner with world-class researchers from UCSF and the VA, please refer them to our Careers Page at <https://rew21.ultipro.com/NOR1032/jobboard/ListJobs.aspx>

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

We are excited to bring you the first 2019 issue of our NCIRE newsletter, filled with interesting interviews, surprising revelations from your colleagues, and information that is useful and timely for our research community. Enjoy!

A brief highlight from fiscal year ending September 30, 2018:

- NCIRE's team facilitated 117 grant applications, a 29% increase from the year ending September 30, 2017.
- There were 20 new CRADAs which represent agreements with Industry; in the previous year there were six

These highlights reflect the rich research of the SFVAHCS and we are poised to have another stellar year of growth.

In January, NCIRE hosted a meeting with several West Coast Non-Profit Corporations. The Executive Directors and several ACOS-R were in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to build collaboration and improve participation in Industry Trials.

I thank you for your ongoing dedication and partnership with NCIRE. As always, you have remained focused on our important mission to Advance Veterans Health.



West Coast ACOS-Rs and Executive Directors

Rebecca Rosales

Rebecca Rosales, MBA, CRA
Chief Executive Officer
Share your thoughts (rebecca.rosales@ncire.org)

About NCIRE

NCIRE has One Mission, One Goal: Veterans Health. We sustain a scientific community of clinicians and researchers and support over 200 researchers who have joint faculty appointments at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and the San Francisco VA Health Care System (SFVAHCS) and are working to foster innovation through leadership in the field of Veterans health research. Our broad portfolio of projects receives generous support from the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, and individual donors, making us the largest nonprofit research institute devoted to Veterans health in the US. NCIRE is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. (Tax ID #94-3084159). Visit NCIRE at www.ncire.org



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We welcome your input. Please send comments to dna@ncire.org