

About the Basic Biobehavioral and Psychological Sciences Branch (BBPSB)

Mission: BBPSB advances research in biobehavioral mechanisms and psychological processes to reduce cancer risk and improve outcomes.

Scientific Priorities: The BBPSB research agenda includes:

- Basic mechanisms of cognition, emotion, judgment, and decision making
- Biological mechanisms of psychosocial influences on cancer biology and outcomes
- Methodology and measurement of basic psychological, cognitive, and affective processes
- Biobehavioral mechanisms of comorbidities associated with cancer and cancer treatment
- Basic mechanisms of sensation, attention, and perception

Organizational Structure



Meet the BBPSB Staff!



Paige McDonald
PhD, MPH
Program Director
Branch Chief
mcdonalp@mail.nih.gov



Wendy Nelson
PhD, MPH
Program Director
nelsonw@mail.nih.gov



Giovanna Zappala
PhD
Medical Affairs Scientist
Contractor
SAIC-Frederick
zappalag@mail.nih.gov



Rebecca Ferrer
PhD
Program Director
ferrerre@mail.nih.gov



Donna Hopkins
Extramural Program
Specialist
hopkinsd@od.nih.gov

View the complete staff list with research areas and contact information; learn more about our network of mentorship and collaboration; and browse career and training announcements at staffprofiles.cancer.gov/brp

Key Initiatives

- Basic and Applied Decision Making in Cancer Control
- National Cancer Institute Network on Biobehavioral Pathways in Cancer
- Basic Behavioral and Social Science Opportunity Network (OppNet)
- Bridging Basic Affective Science and Cancer Control

To learn more about BBPSB, please visit: <http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/bbpsb/index.html>

Meet the BBPSB Grantees!



"My personal experience as a cancer survivor, and my clinical work with cancer patients has not only stimulated my research hypotheses and passions, but also highlighted the importance of translational work."

ERIN COSTANZO

Health Psychologist and Behavioral Scientist
University of Wisconsin - Madison



"My family's cultural beliefs about the mind and the body shaped how I thought about health and illness. I have always been fascinated by questions concerning the complex interrelations that exist among psychosocial, behavioral, and biological systems."

CAROLYN FANG

Behavioral Scientist
Fox Chase Cancer Center



"Light isn't just for vision. Light touches every aspect of our lives and can have a profound impact on our health and well-being. My research tool is a gift that nature gives us daily: the sunrise and the sunset."

MARIANA FIGUEIRO

Lighting Scientist
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute



"I think our recent work finding biological support for the subjective complaints that cancer survivors experience has been most important in persuading skeptics who doubt the validity of patient-reported psychological and behavioral complaints."

PATRICIA GANZ

Clinician
University of California Los Angeles



"I discovered that sleep disturbance induced inflammation, and such inflammation can cause depressive symptoms, which together provide a compelling rationale for targeting sleep disturbance and/or inflammation to prevent depression."

MICHAEL IRWIN

Psychiatric Clinical Translational Scientist
University of California Los Angeles



"Stress is a fascinating variable. In our very first study, we found that the relatively mild stress of academic exams could dysregulate aspects of medical students' immune response — and lonelier students were more vulnerable to that stress."

JANICE KIECOLT-GLASER

Behavioral Scientist
Ohio State University



"I saw firsthand that translation of genetic discoveries into effective clinical interventions would be optimized if behavioral and social implications, along with cultural issues, were considered early in the process of scientific discovery."

ANITA KINNEY

Behavioral Epidemiologist
University of Utah



"My motivation and the scientific impetus toward development of interventions for caregivers came from my personal experience of caring for my mother as her primary caregiver during the last 5 years of her life."

MARK LAUDENSLAGER

Psychoneuroimmunology and Endocrinology Researcher
University of Colorado Denver



"Two important discoveries with colleagues have helped shape my career: the realization that we could directly test relationships between biobehavioral factors and tumor growth factors and the recognition that a recent HIV experiment utilized the in vitro model we were searching for in our cancer cell work."

SUSAN LUTGENDORF

Behavioral Scientist
University of Iowa



"An understanding of psychological, neuroendocrine, and immunological variables is essential to improvements in the overall health and quality of life of cancer patients."

HERBERT MATHEWS

Cellular and Molecular Scientist
Loyola University Chicago



"My graduate mentors, Robert Zajonc and Hazel Markus, taught me how to effectively bridge traditional disciplinary boundaries to arrive at elegant solutions to psychological puzzles."

PAULA PIETROMONACO

Social Psychologist and Behavioral Scientist
University of Massachusetts Amherst



"As we have an increasingly complex older population, we have to find ways to maintain cognitive health in the same way we work to maintain physical health."

SUSAN SCHULTZ

Clinician and Clinical Researcher
University of Iowa

View featured researchers profiles and see what grantees are saying about BBPSB research at staffprofiles.cancer.gov/brp/granteeList.do

To learn more about BBPSB, please visit:

<http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/bbpsb/>

NIH...Turning Discovery into Health



"For me, the opportunity to collaborate with renowned colleagues has provided many exciting research moments."

ANIL SOOD

Physician Scientist
MD Anderson Cancer Center