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INTERNATIONAL OCD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2021 RESEARCH GRANT AWARDS
More than \$800k of Funding Awarded for OCD and Related Disorders Research

BOSTON, MA — The International OCD Foundation (IOCDF) announced that it will award more than \$800k in grant funding to researchers across the United States and around the world studying obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and related disorders. The 2021 Research Grant Awards will fund seven research projects, including efforts to use brain imaging to help us better understand OCD, to use device technology to enhance the effectiveness of current treatments, and to adapt OCD treatment to meet the needs of low-income youth and youth of color.

“We’re thrilled to continue to support this vital research through our Research Grant Program,” said IOCDF Executive Director Jeff Szymanski, PhD. “Thanks to our generous donors, we are able to support an outstanding group of investigators who can bring us closer to new treatments.”

“The average time for someone with OCD to receive an accurate diagnosis and effective treatment is 14–17 years,” said Susan Boaz, President of the IOCDF Board of Directors. “For people who are struggling with OCD, as well as their families, friends, and communities, research represents hope — hope for freedom from a mental health disorder that has often taken far too much from them, and hope that the next generation will have access to earlier diagnosis and better treatment. I am incredibly thankful to our donors for their support of the IOCDF Research Grant Program.”

Two \$300,000 grants — dubbed Innovator Awards — will support research investigating the big questions in OCD research using cutting-edge technology and ideas. Their research has the potential for a deep and lasting impact on treatment and scientific understanding of OCD. These awards are made possible by the generosity of an anonymous donor.

Five \$50,000 grants — the Michael Jenike Young Investigator Awards — will support promising early career researchers who are working to establish themselves in the field of OCD and related disorders, and who have strong research projects. Funding is made possible by the thousands of individual donors who contribute to the IOCDF Research Grant Fund each year. A grant from OCD Jacksonville established a fund for research on the role of race, ethnicity, and culture in OCD, and supports the Jenike Award made to Dr. Amanda Sanchez at the University of Pennsylvania.

“The 2021 IOCDF Research Grant Awards support science that has the potential to change the way we understand and treat OCD,” said Jennifer Freeman, Vice Chair of the Grant Review Committee. The awards include investments in early career researchers that will make an impact in understudied areas

with critical needs, as well as larger investments in high-risk, high-reward science from leaders in the field."

"Our current treatments for OCD can be of immense benefit to many, but unfortunately there are a lot of people who are still suffering," said Chris Pittenger, MD, PhD, Chair of the Grant Review Committee.

"New research into all aspects of OCD is key to moving forward. The IOCDF Grant Program is an absolutely critical spur to new research, both by supporting junior investigators to build their careers in OCD research and by funding innovative new ideas by the field's leaders. We can take a lot of pride in the impact of this grant program over the decades — and for many more years to come."

2021 IOCDF Research Grant Awards

Innovator Awards:

Odile van den Heuvel, MD, PhD

Amsterdam UMC, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

How Disease and Medication Shape the Brain, and How the Brain Predicts Individual Treatment

Response; Learning from Global Collaboration

\$300,000

John Williamson, PhD and Carol Mathews, MD

University of Florida

Pairing tVNS and Exposure and Response Prevention to Improve Symptoms of OCD

\$300,000

Michael Jenike Young Investigator Awards:

Erin O'Connor, PhD

Pediatric Anxiety Research Center at Bradley Hospital

Optimization of Parent-Led Exposure Delivery in Pediatric OCD

\$50,000

Amanda Sanchez, PhD

University of Pennsylvania

Developing a Cultural Adaptation Toolkit to Increase Equity for Underserved Youth with

Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders

\$50,000

Sarah O'Dor, PhD

Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School

Correlates of Treatment Outcome Using Multimodal Neuroimaging in Children with PANDAS

\$50,000

Amy Rapp, PhD

Columbia University

Beyond the Goal versus Habit Binary: A Computational EEG Study of the Neurocognitive Mechanisms of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

\$50,000

Hadar Naftalovich, MA

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Waxing and Waning: Using Ecological Momentary Assessment to Assess Chronotype as a Potential Mechanism of Within-Day Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Symptom Fluctuations

\$44,500

About the IOCDF Research Grant Program

The IOCDF Research Grant Program awards funding to scientists whose research focuses on treatment and the underlying causes and mechanisms of OCD and related disorders. Projects are reviewed by expert Grant Review Committee members and are selected through a competitive process. Each proposal is evaluated based on its potential impact, the strength of its research design, and the institutional environment where the proposed study would be carried out. The program is in its 27th year and has awarded \$8 million to researchers investigating OCD, body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), hoarding disorder, tic disorders, and trichotillomania. Applications are accepted January through February, annually.

About the International OCD Foundation (IOCDF)

The mission of the International OCD Foundation is to help those affected by obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and related disorders to live full and productive lives. Our aim is to increase access to effective treatment through research and training, foster a hopeful and supportive community for those affected by OCD and the professionals who treat them, and fight stigma surrounding mental health issues.

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