



CAN Forum and Webinar | Saturday, September 7, 2024
Arrival 9:00 am PST and Webinar 9:30 am PST

Panelists

Cecilia Bergeria, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine | CAN Award Recipient



Cecilia Bergeria, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. Bergeria earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in Human Behavioral Pharmacology from the University of Vermont and completed her postdoctoral training at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. Bergeria specializes in the measurement, mechanisms and treatment of opioid craving and withdrawal and explores the mechanisms of craving and withdrawal by conducting qualitative research, human laboratory studies and residential randomized clinical trials. Dr. Bergeria also has experience evaluating the acute effects of novel drugs, drug formulations, and drug combinations in human laboratory trials. Her work has been funded by several research grants from the NIH, FDA, public-private partnerships, and philanthropic and industry groups. Throughout her career, Dr. Bergeria has balanced her strong research commitment with extensive service contributions to scientific organizations including serving on the Board of Directors for the College on Problems of Drug Dependence and as an elected member at large for American Psychological Association's Society for Psychopharmacology and Substance Use

Sandra Comer, Ph.D., Columbia University Irving Medical Center | CAN Team



Sandra Comer, Ph.D., is Professor of Neurobiology in the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University and Research Scientist VI at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. Following Ph.D. studies at the University of Michigan and post-doctoral research at the University of Minnesota, Dr. Comer joined Columbia University in 1993, where her research focus has been on the development and clinical testing of novel approaches to the treatment of opioid use disorder. She is Director of the Opioid Laboratory in the Division on Substance Use Disorders and runs a very active research program devoted to examining various aspects of the abuse liability of opioids. Dr. Comer served on the Institutional Review Board at NYSPI for 10 years, so she is familiar with the regulatory requirements of research with human volunteers. In addition, she is an active member of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence, the longest-standing group in the United States addressing problems of drug dependence and abuse. She served as Chair of the Program Committee, was elected President in 2015-2016, and currently serves as the Public Policy Officer of CPDD. She currently is a member of the World Health Organization Expert Advisory Panel on Drug Dependence, gives presentations to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, reviews grant applications for the National Institutes of Health, and mentors both pre-and post-doctoral students. She has published over 200 papers and chapters on issues related to substance use disorders.

Nancy Davis | CAN Founder and President



Nancy Davis is an extremely dedicated philanthropist, jewelry, and clothing designer, and author. Most importantly, she is a full-time mother who is devoted to her children. Nancy was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at the age of 33 in 1991. She was determined to devote her time, relationships, and resources to finding a cure and founded Race to Erase MS in 1993 to fund MS research. Nancy's hope, courage, and strength continue to inspire her to maintain a vibrant quality of life despite this chronic disease, but most of all, she remains positive, continues to live her life to the fullest, and is tireless in her efforts to find the cure for MS. In 2018 Nancy founded Cure Addiction Now with her son Jason Davis who had struggled with substance use disorder. Jason tragically passed away in February of 2020. His brother Brandon Davis and sisters, Isabella and Mariella Rickel, have joined Nancy in the foundation's commitment to fund ground-breaking research to find therapies to help stop the vicious cycle of substance use disorder (SUD)

and help people not only detox but stay in permanent recovery. This was Jason's passion and as a family, it has become our personal mission.

Kelly E. Dunn, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins School of Medicine | CAN Team | CAN Award Recipient



Kelly E. Dunn, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit within the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences in the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. Dunn received her M.S. in Applied Biopsychology from the University of New Orleans (2005), her Ph.D. in Human Behavioral Pharmacology from the University of Vermont (2009), and her MBA from the Johns Hopkins Carey School of Business (2019). Dr. Dunn's primary interest is in opioid use disorder and she has been continuously funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse for the past decade. She is the principal investigator on clinical trials ranging from the genetics of opioid misuse risk, opioid and cannabis interactions for pain treatment, examining and identifying methods for treating opioid withdrawal, and treatment of pain in persons with opioid use disorder. She also contributes to numerous other projects examining elements of opioid use disorder, including overdose risk and treatment. Dr. Dunn has served in leadership roles in organizations that support research on substance use disorder. She managed conferences for the College on the Problems of Drug Dependence and the American Psychological Association, served as President of the Division on Psychopharmacology and Substance Abuse for the APA, and President-elect for the College on the Problems of Drug Dependence, serves as the Co-Editor of the Journal of Addiction Medicine and editor-in-chief for the journal "Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology". Finally, she is the editor of the 1st edition of the Oxford Handbook on Opioids and Opioid Use Disorder, available June 2024.

Jennifer Ellis, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins School of Medicine



Jennifer Ellis is an Assistant Professor and a licensed clinical psychologist. Her research interests include identifying strategies to optimize substance use treatment for individuals who enter treatment with psychiatric comorbidities, including major depressive disorder, sleep disorders, and multiple co-occurring substance use disorders. Her work leverages observational longitudinal and ecological momentary assessment data to test whether patients can be classified into clinically meaningful subgroups based on patterns of co-occurring symptoms and symptom trajectories, and whether these subgroups differ with regard to risk factors and treatment outcomes. She is also interested in improving OUD treatment for underserved and marginalized groups.

Cassandra D. Gipson-Reichardt, Ph.D., University of Kentucky | CAN Award Recipient



Cassandra D. Gipson, Ph.D., is a tenured Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Nutritional Sciences within the College of Medicine at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Gipson received her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Experimental Psychology from the University of Kentucky in 2007 and 2010, respectively, and completed 5 years of post-doctoral training in the Department of Neuroscience at the Medical University of South Carolina. Dr. Gipson's primary research interest is in preclinical modeling and discovery of novel biological mechanisms of nicotine and opioid use disorders, and she has been continuously funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse since 2009. She is principal investigator on several preclinical research projects including immune mechanisms of nicotine use, translational studies of oxycodone and cocaine polysubstance use, the impacts of contraceptive hormone exposures on nicotine-related behavior specifically in females, and neurobiological mechanisms of fentanyl and xylazine co-use and withdrawal using rodent models. She is also developing a research program on preclinical evaluations of nicotine use and HIV infection, with a goal of identifying novel sex-specific mechanisms that drive the high use rates of nicotine-containing products in persons living with HIV. Dr. Gipson serves in several leadership roles in substance use-focused organizations, including incoming Chair-Elect of the Division on Psychopharmacology and Substance Abuse for the American Psychological Association as well as the incoming Chair of the Program Committee for College on Problems of Drug Dependence. She also serves on the Program Committee for the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology and on the Awards Committee for Behavior, Biology, and Chemistry. Finally, she serves in an editorial capacity on multiple journals including the Journal of Neuroimmunology, Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology, and the Journal on the Experimental Analysis of Behavior.

Christian Hendershot, Ph.D., Institute for Addiction Science, Keck School of Medicine of USC



Dr. Hendershot is Professor at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and Director of Clinical Research at the USC Institute for Addiction Science. Dr. Hendershot's research integrates behavioral, cognitive and psychopharmacology methods to study risk factors for substance use and to evaluate potential behavioral and pharmacological treatments. His projects involve evaluating new treatments for substance use disorder, with a current emphasis on studying glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists as a new class of potential treatments for addiction. Dr. Hendershot is Associate Editor at the journal *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, a standing member of the Addiction Risks and Mechanisms grant review panel at the National Institutes of Health, and a licensed clinical psychologist.

Andrew A Herring, MD, PI Bridge Center, Public Health Institute



Andrew is an Attending Emergency Physician and Associate Director of Research at Highland Hospital-Alameda Health System in Oakland, as well as Medical Director of the hospital's substance use disorder treatment program and Attending Physician at its interdisciplinary pain medicine program. His current research focuses on emergency department treatment of opioid use disorders and pain management. Andrew is an assistant clinical professor at the University of California, San Francisco. He conducted health policy research as a Fulbright Scholar in Central America. He is board-certified in emergency medicine, addiction medicine, and pain medicine. Andrew graduated from Harvard Medical School and completed residency in emergency medicine at Highland Hospital.

Adam Kaplin, M.D, Ph.D., President Mira1a Pharmaceutical and Adjunct Faculty Johns Hopkins | CAN Team



Dr. Adam Kaplin completed his undergraduate training at Yale University and his MD and PhD training at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. His research training experience includes having trained in the labs of two Nobel Laureates, and completed his PhD and postdoctoral training in the Lab of Solomon Snyder, MD, who was the 2005 recipient of the National Medal of Science (the highest science honor in the United States). Dr. Kaplin, who maintains his Adjunct Faculty appointment at Johns Hopkins, was the Chief Psychiatric Consultant to the Johns Hopkins Multiple Sclerosis and Transverse Myelitis Centers. Dr. Kaplin investigated the biological basis of the effects

of the immune system on mood regulation and cognition, and he provided neuropsychiatric care to patients afflicted with such comorbidities. His research is focused on understanding the biological basis of depression and dementia and discovering new ways to diagnose prognosticate and treat these diseases. Dr. Kaplin has transitioned to working in the pharmaceutical industry as the Chief Scientific Officer of MyMD Pharmaceuticals, which is developing first-in-class therapeutics for a range of autoimmune diseases and immune-mediated neuropsychiatric illnesses, and President of Mira Pharmaceuticals, developing novel Cannabinoid analog therapeutics with psychotropic and anti-inflammatory benefits.

James J. Mahoney, III, Ph.D., Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute, WVU Medicine



James J. Mahoney, III, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor and Clinical Neuropsychologist in the Department of Behavioral Medicine and Psychiatry and the Department of Neuroscience at the Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute (RNI) and West Virginia University (WVU) School of Medicine. Dr. Mahoney previously served as Chair of the Research Oversight Committee in his primary department and is currently Director of Addictions Research at the RNI. Prior to joining WVU, Dr. Mahoney completed his doctoral training at the University of Houston and completed specialized post-doctoral training in neuropsychology at the University of Virginia. He has accumulated over 20 years of research experience, most of which have focused on the treatment and assessment of substance use disorders.

Dr. Mahoney has co-authored 78 peer-reviewed manuscripts (30 first/senior authored), has published several book chapters and a textbook focusing on substance use and has presented original research findings at several international conferences. Since beginning his position at WVU, Dr. Mahoney has served as co-investigator on several externally funded proposals including a NIDA-funded UG3/UH3 award investigating Deep Brain Stimulation for opioid use disorder. Dr. Mahoney also received a Research Scholars Award through the WV Clinical and Translational Science Institute, which protected 50% of his time for the development of his own clinical research program. Dr. Mahoney's specific areas of research focus include cognitive sequelae related to substance use as well as the investigation of various forms of neuromodulation, including deep brain stimulation, focused ultrasound, and transcranial magnetic stimulation for the treatment of substance use disorders.

Kurt Rasmussen, Ph.D., CSO, Delix Therapeutics | CAN Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board



Kurt Rasmussen, Ph.D., is the Chief Scientific Officer at Delix Therapeutics, a new company focused on developing neuroplasticity-promoting therapeutics for multiple indications, including substance use disorders. Previous to Delix, he was the Director of the Division of Therapeutics and Medical Consequences at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), leading their efforts to promote the development of safe and effective pharmacotherapies, behavioral therapies, and devices to treat substance use disorders. Previous to NIDA, he worked as a senior research scientist in the Neuroscience Division of Eli Lilly & Co., leading efforts to discover novel treatments for psychiatric disorders such as depression and schizophrenia. Dr. Rasmussen's career spans over 30 years of highly innovative scientific research in neuroscience pharmaceutical discovery, from hypothesis generation to clinical candidate

evaluation. He received his B.A. with honors and distinction from Cornell University, his Ph.D. in neuroscience and psychology from Princeton University, and was a postdoctoral associate in the Department of Psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine.

Christopher Toombs, Phd, DABT, Co-Founder and Chief Scientific Officer for Proniras Corporation



Dr. Toombs serves as co-Founder and Chief Scientific Officer for Proniras Corporation. At Proniras, Dr. Toombs is responsible for overseeing the tezampanel development program. Prior to his role at Proniras, Dr. Toombs was also a co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer of Faraday Pharmaceuticals beginning in 2014. Prior to Faraday, Dr. Toombs served as Senior Director Preclinical Development at Ikaria from 2006-2011 where he was responsible for the IND enabling studies and the commencement of the first in human study of IK-1001. Before Ikaria, Dr. Toombs served in increasing roles and responsibilities in research and product development at Amgen from 1994-2006 and arrived in the Seattle area following the Amgen acquisition of Immunex in 2002.

Dr. Toombs graduated from Wheaton College with a BS in Biology and continued on to earn a PhD in Physiology-Pharmacology from the Bowman Gray School of Medicine at Wake Forest University. He completed a postdoctoral tenure at Upjohn Laboratories and is a current Diplomate of the American Board of Toxicology.

Lisa Vidal, Actress and Advocate



Award winning actress Lisa Vidal is most recognizable for the multi-dimensional roles she's played on television and in film for the past forty years, portraying characters that have reflected the diversity of the Latino community while also building it up. She recently starred in ABC romantic comedy-drama "The Baker and the Beauty." Based on the highly successful Israeli scripted show, Vidal portrayed Mari Garcia, the hilarious and heartwarming matriarch of the family. She will next be seen in a wonderful arc on the hilarious and Emmy nominated series "Ms. Pat" on BET as well as the second season of the Gloria Calderón Kellett series "With Love" for Amazon.

Of Puerto Rican descent, the New York City native began acting in Repertory Theater at age 14. She was cast the following year in the PBS series "Oye Willie," jump-starting a long and varied acting career, which early on included appearances on the popular television series "The Cosby Show" and "Miami Vice." She also starred in two "ABC After School Special" educational presentations - "Class Act: A Teacher's Story" and "In the Shadow of Love: A Teen AIDS Story." Vidal starred opposite Gabrielle Union on the critically acclaimed BET series "Being Mary Jane," which wrapped in 2019 after its fifth season. For her performance as Kara Lynch, Vidal received an Imagen Foundation Award for 'Best Supporting Actress.' She has also recurred on the Fox Series "Rosewood" and appeared on the Emmy-nominated Showtime series "Shameless," FX's "American Horror Story" and NBC's "Grimm." Her other notable television credits include "Boston Legal," "CSI Miami," "The Division," "ER," "Third Watch," "Southland," "The Event," "Chicago PD," "New York Undercover," "High Incident" and "The Brian Benben Show."

On the silver screen, Vidal has also starred in various feature films such as J.J. Abrams' acclaimed blockbuster "Star Trek" as well as the television movie "Odd Girl Out," for which she received an Imagen Foundation Award for 'Best Actress.' Her additional film credits include "Night and the City," "I Like It Like That," "Dark Mirror" and "Victor."

In addition to acting, Vidal has a passion for music and enjoys singing and dancing. She currently lives in Los Angeles with her husband and three kids. A breast cancer survivor, Vidal is a vocal proponent of early detection and has worked alongside the American Cancer Society to help raise awareness.