

## Message From The President July 2011

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As a graduate student, I attended the 1st PsychoNeuroImmunology Research Society (PNIRS) meeting circa 1985. This small meeting included a mix of established psychologists, neuroscientists, endocrinologists and immunologists who all gathered together on a dude ranch in Arizona. Very few students or trainees were present. I was granted the opportunity to attend because I had agreed to work the registration desk and chauffeur attendees to and from the airport to the hotel. The tenor of the meeting was one of challenge, debate, disbelief and cautious optimism. The data presented were intriguing, however; the interpretation that psychological processes could be impacting immune function was met with skepticism.



I just returned from our latest meeting in Chicago (June 8-12, 2011) and the contrast between our first meeting and today reveals just how far we have come! No longer do we need to convince ourselves that psychological and emotional states can influence immunological processes or vice-versa. Instead, exploration of the powerful and bidirectional neural-endocrine-immune mechanisms that contribute to such interactions are underway. We are investigating prevention strategies, treatment interventions, and potential genetic and neural plastic changes that produce long-lived consequences for health and disease. We have a successful and respected society journal (*Brain, Behavior and Immunity*, Keith Kelley, Editor-in-Chief), whose impact in the scientific community continues to rise. Our national and international membership has grown 10-fold, and we now have a large trainee representation at every meeting (~50%), many of whom receive travel support.

I am honored to serve as President of the PNIRS for 2011-2012 and will work hard to maintain the integrity and scientific excellence of our society. In my capacity as President, I have organized a Satellite Symposia entitled "Cross-Talk Between Inflammatory Responses and the Brain: A PNI Research Symposia" to be featured at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Society for Leukocyte Biology held in Kansas City, MO USA on September 22-24. We will showcase PNIRS member presentations from Michael Bailey (The Ohio State University, "Microbiota influences on mucosal and systemic inflammatory responses: Implications for stressor-induced immunomodulation"), John Johnson (Kent State University, "Adrenergic Mediation of Brain IL1beta"), Monika Fleshner (University of Colorado, "Stress, DAMPs and Immunomodulation") and Hugh Perry (University of Southampton, "The contrasting effects of systemic bacterial endotoxin and bacterial infection on the CNS").

Our 2011 meeting in Chicago was a success due to the exemplary efforts of the local organizing committee led by Jeff Woods, the hard work of the Program Committee led by our outstanding out-going president, Raz Yirmiya, the exhaustive efforts of our Secretary/Treasurer Gayle Page assisted by Maggie Denny, and the careful guidance of our executive director Susan K. Solomon. I offer my heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation for your selfless service to the PNIRS.

**The planning for our 19th annual meeting is underway.**

The meeting will be held at the Manchester Grand Hyatt on the Marina in San Diego, CA June 7-9, 2012. Suzi Hong will lead the local organizing committee. The meeting theme will be "**Brain, Behavior and Immunity in Health and Disease.**" The educational short course will kick off the meeting and is entitled, "**A Tutorial on 21st Century Molecular Biology: A Role in PNI Research?**"

The following esteemed colleagues will teach us:

- 1) Ginny Sanders, "A Primer on Molecular Biology";
- 2) Mark Hutchinson, "miRNA from Neuron to Immune Cell";
- 3) Steve Cole, "Assessment Tools: DNA Genotyping, Affymetrix Gene Chip, Targeted Arrays, RNAseq and rtPCR";
- 4) Matt McQueen, "Strengths and Limitations of Current Molecular Analyses Approaches".

We also look forward to presentations from Michael Bailey, the winner of the 2012 Robert Ader New Investigator Award and Annemieke Kavelaars, the recipient of the 2012 Norman Cousins Award. We hope to continue to support

our trainees with plans to provide trainee travel awards, the senior faculty/trainee colloquium, the trainee reception and numerous presentation opportunities.

I hope to see everyone next year in California!

Monika Fleshner, PhD

PNIRS President

2011-2012

