

MOUNT SINAI SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
PSYCHIATRY RESIDENCY

INCOMING RESIDENTS 2011



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Tobias Halene, MD, PhD *(Physician-Scientist Research Track)*

UNDERGRADUATE & MEDICAL SCHOOL: Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität

GRADUATE SCHOOL: PhD in Neuroscience, Aachen University

PhD in Anesthesiology, University of Muenster

Tobias was trained as a physician scientist in Germany and Italy. For his German doctoral thesis, he studied the neural basis of opioid analgesia. During his first year of psychiatry residency in Germany, Tobias received a scholarship from the International Research Training Group to study the brain-behavior relationship of emotion in schizophrenia and autism—a joint project between the University of Aachen and the University of Pennsylvania. Based on this experience, Tobias sought a post-doctoral position with Steven Siegel to study the function of NMDA receptors in a mouse model of schizophrenia using event-related potentials. He also developed and led projects examining the effects of nicotine on evoked potentials, fear conditioning, and social behavior in mice. While in these roles, Tobias developed a keen interest in becoming an academic psychiatrist with a translational focus spanning clinical care, clinical research, and basic science. As a project manager at the UPenn Transdisciplinary Tobacco Use Research Center, he worked on a number of human clinical research studies to determine the effects of nicotine agonists and a COMT inhibitor on brain activity and cognitive function. He was also project manager for PET studies and for an fMRI study of brain response to anti-tobacco public service announcements. In a short 2 years, Tobias's work as a post-doc was highly productive, resulting in four first-author publications, some of which involved his comprehensive evaluation of the electrophysiological and behavioral consequences of NMDA receptor hypofunction in mouse models of schizophrenia. He also studied the potential role of phosphodiesterase inhibitors as therapeutic drug targets in schizophrenia and the effects of predator odor on sensory processing in mice. Tobias also co-authored four additional papers, bringing his total peer-reviewed publications to 11. As he soon realized that his passions lay in being a well-rounded physician-scientist able to practice and research in both the United States and Europe, he felt the calling to complete residency training while continuing to pursue his research interests. Tobias is fluent in German, English, and has some proficiency in Spanish, Italian, and French.

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Joseph Mayer, MD (*Physician-Scientist Research Track*)

UNDERGRADUATE: Stanford University, BS in Biological Sciences

MEDICAL SCHOOL: Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons

Joseph's facilities lie in many different areas, from information technology and business savvy to data analysis and translational research. At Stanford, Joseph studied under Sapolsky and Schatzberg, designing experiments investigating the effects of stress and trophic factors on the brain. Following his winning a year-long research grant in which he studied substance P antagonists and neurogenesis in the adult brain, he spent several years as a junior researcher and research consultant in the labs of Ron de Kloet and Marian Joels in the Netherlands. He successfully obtained funding for a chronic stress-depression model in animals to examine the effects of stress and HPA-axis dysfunction on the brain at cellular and genetic levels; this translational work has been submitted for publication in *Hippocampus*. He also used this model to investigate the effects of RU486 on neurogenesis, resulting in a first-author publication in the *Journal of Neuroendocrinology* and a co-authored article in the *European Journal of Neuroscience*. While in the Netherlands, Joseph co-founded Ivy Circle Netherlands, a community of Dutch alumni clubs of North American universities. From the first activity he organized—combining a talk by the head of Google Europe with a fundraiser for Hurricane Katrina victims—the organization today comprises over 1500 members from a dozen American universities. Joseph also started his own business: finding a gap in the Dutch wireless infrastructure, he proposed a novel solution and gained support to launch an Amsterdam-based wireless startup to build non-cellular wireless networks in Dutch cities, for use by government, hospitals, first responders, enterprise, and consumers. This was the first such network in the country, and its success led to contracts throughout the country's largest university and port cities. In his first year of medical school, Joseph partnered with a colleague and two professors to co-found a company focused on detecting critical anomalies in datasets. They developed a patent-pending algorithm to apply outlier detection tools to healthcare data, and collaborated on a pilot program for electronic medical record privacy protection. Joseph is fluent in Spanish, Dutch, and conversational in Italian.

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Yadira Alonso, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Miami, BS in Psychology
MEDICAL SCHOOL: Temple University School of Medicine

Born in Cuba, Yadi came to Miami at the age of nine as a political refugee. This sparked her longstanding interest in directing public services, now realized in the many organizations which she has either helped found or in which she has held leadership positions. Prior to medical school, she co-founded a free clinic for women and children victims of domestic violence. Initially funded through grants, the clinic subsequently grew, under Yadi's direction, into an affiliation with the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, where it now exists as a teaching community health center for medical student clerks. She has been president of the Community Service Organization and president of a child-mentoring program, both in Philadelphia. A mentor to minority students, she was the regional coordinator for the Latino Medical Students' Association, and she co-chaired and developed the curriculum for her school's medical Spanish course. She was also president of the psychiatry interest group for several years. She is fluent in Spanish and American Sign Language.



Jesse Costales, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Pomona College, BA in Neuroscience
MEDICAL SCHOOL: Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California

From serving as mentorship chair of a committee assisting medical students financially, academically and professionally, to tutoring abused children and working in mobile clinics in rural Ecuador, Jesse has balanced leadership, academics, and service to his community. Over the past two years, Jesse has been involved in multiple research projects, including studying the effects of pre-operative MDD on post-transplant prognosis, the over-prescription of antipsychotics for non-psychotic but depressed men in a public sector clinic, and how the conditioned preferences of amphetamine-injected rats respond to ceftriaxone administration. He also spent a scholarship-funded research year studying Barrett's Esophagus, the quality of life post-esophagectomy, the self-dilatation of strictures after esophagectomy, and the impact of Nissen fundoplication on aneuploidy, resulting in a publication in the *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*. A double black belt, Jesse has studied various forms of martial arts since the age of 6. Jesse also has extensive experience and training in the management of hazardous waste. Most recently, he trained employees for a project inspecting all storm drains in the Los Angeles and Orange counties, and he was contracted to produce a 500-page analysis of the solid waste accumulation in street and freeway storm drains. He is fluent in Spanish.

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Thomas DePrima, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Harvard University, BA in Biology, *Cum Laude*

MEDICAL SCHOOL: University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

Thomas has been a classical percussionist since the age of nine, and at 12 he twice performed for Sesame Street. He has also performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, and in 35 countries; his audience has included royalty and heads of state. Thomas has focused on the healthcare of underserved communities. As cofounder and manager of the student-run outreach of the UM Miller of Medicine, he brought free healthcare to communities in need, and as the government liaison for medical students, he worked with local government agencies to foster medical students' involvement in health policy. Thomas is also interested in professional development, and he cofounded the Ethics and Humanities Pathway at University of Miami. He is currently performing a prospective study assessing the degree of "empathy erosion" over the course of third-year clerkships, and whether the structure of medical school during the first two years plays an important role. He is also working on a study examining the frequency of comorbid ODD, CD, anxiety, and depression in children with ADHD and assessing whether pediatric guidelines adequately screen for these conditions.



Simon Desjardins, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, BA in Music Performance, *Cum Laude*

MEDICAL SCHOOL: Albert Einstein College of Medicine

After his college concentration in African American Music and West African Drumming, Simon spent time on an award scholarship studying traditional drumming and dancing in Ghana. Stemming from these experiences, he was driven to international medicine and providing care to impoverished populations. Prior to starting medical school, Simon was an ER technician before studying at the Center for AIDS Research in Providence, RI, focusing on HIV infection in refugees and in jail populations, resulting in co-authored papers in the *International Journal of Infectious Disease* and the *Journal of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*. In medical school, Simon studied tropical medicine in rural clinics in Mexico, co-organized the social medicine course at Einstein, and was co-chair of the student group Physicians for a National Health Program. His experiences with traumatized chronic patients led him to realize that his greatest impact might come from providing psychiatric care, and for the past year, Simon has been working in Herbert Lachman's molecular research lab developing in vitro models for schizophrenia using induced pluripotent stem cells, growing neurons from patients with schizophrenia. Simon has won several awards for his music and has performed at large hip-hop and jazz events focused on community development. He was selected by his peers for induction into the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

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Brandon Johnson, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Texas Austin, BS in Biomedical Engineering
MEDICAL SCHOOL: University of Texas Southwestern Medical School

Brandon has a dedicated focus on facilitating care for underserved communities. He chaired the mental health screening component of the UT Southwestern medical student-run free clinic, and he was heavily involved in the American Medical Student Association since the start of medical school. In his first year, he served as the LGBT advocate for his school's chapter of AMSA. As a second year student, he served as AMSA's chapter secretary, successfully organizing a regional conference focused on healthcare for underserved communities and attracting attendees from nearly two dozen other medical schools. He also organized community health fairs geared toward lower socioeconomic families. He was awarded a scholarship recognizing outstanding engineering students.



Marc Lener, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Pennsylvania, BA in Biological Basis of Behavior
MEDICAL SCHOOL: George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences

For 5 years before medical school, Marc was an award-winning full-time high school science teacher in Georgetown, D.C. Shortly after he began his teaching career, a stint at the NIH studying Pain and Neurosensory Mechanisms led to his growing interest in psychiatric research, and while continuing to teach full-time, he joined Thomas Hyde's team working under Daniel Weinberger at NIMH. Since 2003, he has been involved in ongoing research studying the clinical signs and symptoms and neurobiological basis of schizophrenia. He has co-authored articles in *Brain* on handedness, heritability, neurocognition, and brain asymmetry in schizophrenia as well as in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* on the relationship of frontal release signs in schizophrenic patients. He has a first-authored work in the process of submission. He has also received research grants to study medical education, and he has published on Canadian medical students' perspectives on the value of basic science lectures as well as presented on the impact of multiple choice questions on learning. Marc is a former collegiate swimmer and water polo player and is nearly fluent in Spanish.

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Daniella Loh, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Columbia University, BA in Psychology
MEDICAL SCHOOL: New York University School of Medicine

Early on in her academic career, Daniella pursued basic science research in endocrinology, focusing on adipocytes and food intake regulatory mechanisms involving gene regulation and early cellular differentiation. She also worked on projects involving the effects of leucine on obesity and metabolism in mice as well as the role of leptin signaling in peripheral tissues. Her work culminated in publications in *Endocrinology* and in *Diabetes*. Simultaneously, she began work to increase mental health resources for the Asian community in New York, including work on city-wide mental health conferences. Furthering her interest in the cultural aspects of psychiatry, she is currently completing work on a study examining the psychosocial predictors of depression in coronary artery disease patients in Bangkok, Thailand. Similarly, she is interested in cultural stigma against mental health care, including examining the role shame plays in contemplating and attempting suicide.



Sara Lozyniak, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Cornell University, BA Biology, *Magna Cum Laude*
MEDICAL SCHOOL: State University of New York Upstate Medical University

Sara has a long history of caring for people burdened by serious and chronic illnesses. She has worked in hospice care, and she has been a patient care technician in dialysis clinics. That she sings in 5 languages and that her idea of a refreshing vacation is a two-week glacier hike in Alaska reflects her attitude toward challenges. Such personal attributes garnered the attention of the President of her medical university who appointed her as one of three student ambassadors to the community. She was also tasked with interviewing applicants to the medical school. Recently, she was elected as one of only a handful of National Education Coordinators for the American Medical Student Association, charged with developing AMSA's educational programming. Stemming from her interest in the care of patients with chronic diseases, she was the president of the Healthcare in Transition group, tasked with educating students about coming financial changes to medical care. An avid ballroom and swing dancer, Sara is also a certified SCUBA divemaster and has studied the distribution of common crabs in the waters off Maine and their implications for intertidal food webs.

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Nathaniel Mendelsohn, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Harvard College, BA in Classics-Latin, *Magna Cum Laude*
MEDICAL SCHOOL: Albert Einstein College of Medicine

The son of a psychiatrist, Nathaniel has had a longstanding interest in understanding human nature, which he has pursued from a variety of vantage points. He was awarded four years of scholarships at Harvard and received the award for best Latin thesis, "Book 2 of the Aeneid: The Influence and Function of Tragedy." While in college, he worked as an associate editor of the popular Let's Go travel series, covering the northeastern US and eastern Canada. He has held jobs at MTV in which he worked on a documentary about aspiring politicians, at a production company working on the documentary film, "Heir to an Execution," and at a company specializing in documentaries. Prior to medical school, he researched the role of neurogenesis in the treatment of depression, using animal models. He also examined obesity-related health problems of patients treated in a community-based mental health clinic, highlighting the need for developing culturally-sensitive interventions in urban settings, culminating in a peer-reviewed journal article. He has been awarded numerous fellowships to attend conferences around the world focusing on international health care, and he has been the session coordinator for Einstein's student-run free clinic.



Andrew Mitton, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Fordham University, BA in Philosophy, *Summa Cum Laude*
MEDICAL SCHOOL: School of Medicine at Stony Brook University

Andrew received the prize for the top student majoring in philosophy as well as a four-year Dean's Scholarship for academic excellence. He was the founder and executive program director of the Youth Peacebuilders Network, engaged in local community-building initiatives and collaborative international peace projects. His membership includes youth in 5 countries. He has represented YPN at the United Nations, has developed extensive training modules in conflict resolution, leadership, and peacebuilding taught in workshops in the United States, the Canadian Arctic, and Europe, and has presented his work to the US Embassy in Sarajevo and the Bosnian War Crimes Tribunal. His work has led to additional NGO consultant positions in which he was tasked with developing peacebuilding curricula focused on narrative exploration and negotiation/leadership skills and such for youth exposed to terrorism. He organized youth-led training interventions for schools in Bermuda facing challenges of racial and socio-economic integration. For the past 15 years, Andrew has been a sailor with extensive race experience on the East Coast, including having crewed on an open ocean race between Bermuda and Nova Scotia. He is fluent in jazz trumpet.

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Alison Welch, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Northwestern University, BA in Psychology, *Cum Laude*

MEDICAL SCHOOL: State University of New York – Upstate Medical University

A classical ballerina, Alison was one of only a few dancers chosen to study professionally at the School of American Ballet in Lincoln Center. In addition, she has multiple scholastic accomplishments, in the form of scholarships, honors, and fellowships, including being nominated by her peers for the Gold Humanism in Medicine Award. In college, she was one of only two students honored for combined achievements in academic, artistic, philanthropic, and extracurricular pursuits. Having left the world of ballet for medicine, Alison has consistently found import in furthering women's academic and professional achievements. She helped orchestrate conferences publicizing and honoring the first woman to receive a medical degree (in 1849), and she functioned as a representative charged with securing funding for the American Medical Women's Association. She was also awarded multiple fellowships including studies in forensic psychiatry, after which she was accepted to present her findings at the World Psychiatric Association conference in Florence, Italy. Interested in using her experiences to usher in academic growth, she is currently working on a project looking into the effects of feedback on medical student evaluations of psychiatry resident teaching.