

MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL
PSYCHIATRY RESIDENCY
INCOMING RESIDENTS, 2014



Physician-Scientist Research Track

Alexander Charney, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: New York University, BA, Anthropology

MEDICAL: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Alexander Charney is an up-and-coming psychiatrist and neuroscientist, currently earning his PhD in conjunction with commencing a residency in psychiatry. His interest, both in clinical practice and research, is in understanding the complex system of rules governing human brain function in both healthy and pathological states. Since 2011, he has been training under Pamela Sklar and Eric Schadt, two of the world's foremost experts on large-scale genomics and multiscale biology. His expertise lies in the genetic architecture of neuropsychiatric illness, having been the lead bioinformatician on the largest genome-wide association study of bipolar disorder to date, and played a lead role in developing a novel method that uses genetics to characterize the overlap between schizophrenia pathogenesis and antipsychotic mechanism of action. Alexander is also a primary investigator for the Living Brain Project, a multiscale, data-driven investigation of the human brain wherein a single living population is being studied using all of the tools available for human-subject neuroscience, including the powerful tools of molecular and cellular biology that to date have been applied primarily in the post-mortem setting.

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Physician-Scientist Research Track

Nigel Kennedy, MBBS, PhD, MSc

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Manchester, BS, Biochemistry

GRADUATE (MSc): University of Manchester, Neuroscience

GRADUATE (PHD): Imperial College London, Neurogenetics

MEDICAL: University of London, St. George's Hospital

Nigel has had a longstanding fascination with neuroscience and psychiatry. Currently working as a neurosurgery specialty trainee in the UK, he previously obtained his graduate degrees conducting research in schizophrenia. His association study of potential pathogenic alleles in schizophrenia highlighted that genetic changes in neurodevelopmental pathways are important both in pathogenesis and for building a genetic haplotype most strongly associated with schizophrenia. In another project, using a novel gene capture technique based on RecA and the DIRECT method, he cloned and characterized a large trinucleotide repeat found to be overrepresented in DNA from patients with schizophrenia. Working with novel techniques in an immunohistochemistry study of human brain tissue, he stained for markers of neurodegeneration and showed an over-representation of inflammatory markers in patients with schizophrenia. He also developed a model system for imaging and identifying ligands as potential targets for clinical intervention in treating autonomic disorders, using immunofluorescent antibodies to the acetylcholine receptor in cultured rat dorsal root ganglia. As an undergraduate, he researched a lipid extrusion method to create multi-lamellar vesicles with surface-grafted polyethylene glycol, with the goal to create potential drug-delivery vehicles. Studying the scientific basis of psychiatric illness inspired him to become a clinician. During his clinical training and after, he became particularly interested in the use of surgical treatments, such as deep brain stimulation, for the treatment of previously intractable conditions. Hence his current position in neurosurgery and his forward-thinking commitment to a career in the research and practice of interventional psychiatry. He plans on working with Dr. Wayne Goodman and others involved in the current state-of-the-art DBS research at Mount Sinai.

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PhD + Residency Track

Whitney McFadden, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: UC Berkeley, BA, Molecular Cell Biology and Neurobiology
MEDICAL: University of California San Diego School of Medicine

Having demonstrated a keen interest in the integration of basic science research, clinical research, clinical medical practice, and patient/public advocacy, Whitney is ideally poised to become the psychiatrist-scientist for whom our “PhD+” program was developed. Whitney was awarded a fellowship in the HHMI/Medical Research Scholars Program at NIMH between her MS2 and 3 years, where she conducted research under the mentorship of Dr. Joel Kleinman. Her first study used differential RNA expression as an intermediate phenotype and showed that a genetic variant affects coding for the alpha7-nicotinic acetylcholine receptor. The clinical manifestations of variants of this gene include cognitive deficits in episodic memory and learning, making it a possible target in high risk patients with psychiatric disease and cognitive symptoms. In another project also studying schizophrenia, she identified genetic risk variants for altered white matter neurons in the DLPFC using microarrays. The risk genes were found to have an affect on actin cell remodeling, phospholipid second messenger signaling, and zinc ion transport carriers, suggesting cellular mechanisms by which these aberrant white matter neurons may persist and contribute to altered circuitry responsible for symptoms. She has presented her findings at the cumulative MRSP symposium and at the Society for Biological Psychiatry; both projects have papers in development. Her current research interest lies in continuing to investigate genetic risk variants involving altered neuronal migration during neurodevelopment. In addition to her facility with research, Whitney has progressed through the ranks of the American Medical Student Association’s leadership, first as UCSD Co-President, then Regional Director, then National Health Policy Coordinator, then Health Policy Chair. She helped develop a motivation scale for successful aging, served as Psychiatry Manager of the UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic, travelled as a summer health intern in Peru, and she is a club triathlete. Whitney is also an exemplary colleague and compassionate physician, traits recognized by her induction into the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

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Kenechi Ejebe, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Carleton College, BA in Biology

MEDICAL: George Washington University School of Medicine

PhD + Residency Track – PGY-2 entry

Born in Nigeria to a professor and a judge, Kenechi Gabriel Ejebe immigrated to Plymouth, Minnesota when he was 8 years old. He learned English in grade school ESL classes and eventually went on to compete in speech and debate tournaments in high school, and he has continued to excel in academic pursuits and leadership. Kenechi's academic interests center on psychiatric genetics, innovative medicines, and diagnostics. In college, he worked alongside Dr. Susan Singer, on research funded by the National Science Foundation, investigating the genetic regulation of inflorescence in plant-based systems. He was elected to the *Sigma Xi* chapter for his research contributions and was honored as the Student Commencement Speaker for the graduating Class of 2002. For 2 years after college, Kenechi conducted research under an Intramural Research Training Award at NIH with Dr. Henry Levin, studying yeast genetics and using yeast as a model system to characterize HIV reverse transcription; this work was published in the *Journal of Virology*. During medical school, Kenechi broadened his research interests to include social activism. He interned at the World Health Organization in Geneva and was co-Leader of Physicians for Human Rights at GW. He directed the GW Chapter of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) and served on SNMA's National Board of Directors. These and other accomplishments lead to Kenechi's 2006 selection as 1 of 10 American Medical Association Minority Scholars in the country. In 2008 during his third year of medical school, Kenechi received a Sarnoff Foundation Research Fellowship and joined the lab of Dr. Sekar Kathiresan at MGH/Harvard and the Broad Institute of Harvard/MIT. Kenechi's focus was on statistical analysis of SNPs in common disease, and he led a GWAS study of approximately 8,000 African-American patients. Upon graduation from medical school, Kenechi joined the Kathiresan lab as a Research Scientist and in 2011 was recruited as a Senior Scientist to join Moderna Therapeutics, an RNA-based personalized medicine start-up company based out of Harvard and founded by Flagship Ventures. Moderna is pioneering an entirely new drug modality using mRNA therapeutics to produce, in vivo, human proteins or antibodies inside patient cells that are in turn active intracellularly or secreted into the serum. As a member of the founding scientific team, he was involved in due-diligence activities, IP strategy/execution, and conducted medical needs assessments of potential IND candidates. In 2013, Moderna entered into an exclusive research agreement with AztraZeneca and Alexion Pharmaceuticals. Kenechi has co-authored over 9 peer-reviewed journal articles including in *Nature* (x2), *Nature Genetics*, *PLoS Genetics* (x2), and *Human Genetics*. He is also named as an Inventor on 12 patent pending applications. For part of the past year, Kenechi worked in Mount Sinai's Division of Psychiatric Genomics where, under Pamela Sklar and Kristen Brennand, he worked to establish disease models for schizophrenia using human induced pluripotent cells and investigated candidate genes of interest for biological follow-up using TALEN-based approaches. Currently a PGY-1 resident in psychiatry at Mount Sinai, Kenechi will be among the inaugural class for our NIH-funded PhD + Residency program.

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Tiffany Christian, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Michigan, BS, Psychology

MEDICAL: Northwestern University The Feinberg School of Medicine

As a child in the first Hispanic family on the block, Tiffany was driven toward cultural reconnaissance. Always curious, she ambitiously sought out new experiences, like driving forty miles three times a week for her first job as a box office attendant at a historic film theater in Detroit. Listening, learning, and imagining became favorite pastimes, which she cultivated into a full scholarship for academic excellence at the University of Michigan. Curiosity continued to motivate her, and psychiatry was not long behind. Much of her non-curricular work in medical school, and before, has involved studying the differential experiences of varied groups of patients in varied settings. She travelled to prisons across Michigan, inspiring creative projects and helping curate a gallery opening showcasing prisoner's artwork. As the treasurer of AMWA, she helped high school girls develop an interest in the health sciences. She's studied the obstacles faced by low-income families, especially in their interactions with Chicago's healthcare system. She studied therapeutic interventions for women with perinatal depression. Also curious about the approaches and experiences of different professionals working with similar patients, she collected and analyzed data comparing the assessments of children's mental health made by child psychiatrists to those of school psychologists; this project broadened to a study of discrepancies between help-needed and help-received in public school settings.



Samantha Cumper, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Nebraska, BSE, Mechanical and International Engineering

MEDICAL: Albert Einstein College of Medicine

The recipient of multiple collegiate awards and scholarships, including from NASA, Sam was slated to enter a career in international engineering. She coordinated committees on engineering applications for water sanitation, water obtainment, solar panels, and clean burning stoves, worked as an oilfield service intern, supported production in a precision machining facility, and helped to characterize and model plasma properties to increase the efficiency of High Power Impulse Magnetron Sputtering to more efficiently deposit thin layers of metal onto surfaces. As the president of Engineers Without Borders, she led work leading to a project in rural Madagascar. She was the chapter president of the International Association for Exchange of Students for Technical Experiences. However, as Sam was deeply moved by the burdens of illness and poverty she encountered in international settings, she decided to enter medical school, with a focus on technological innovation. She initially matriculated into the MD/PhD program where she sought to develop artificial aptamers for diagnosing and treating Plasmodium falciparum malaria. However, reflecting on the monumental psychological impact of the global lack of basic needs, as well as local homelessness and rampant drug use in the South Bronx, she redirected her attention toward psychiatry, with a focus on global health and addiction. Sam won a Global Health Fellowship award to work in Uganda and recently worked with Mount Sinai's global mental health program in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

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Linda Drozdowicz, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Connecticut, BS, Molecular & Cell Biology
MEDICAL: Mayo Medical School

The top liberal arts and sciences scholar in her university graduating class, Linda studied dopaminergic innervation of the subventricular zone in the murine brain and published in the *Journal of Neuroscience*. Linda is also a musician who started singing with professional choirs at age 10. She has performed in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Shubert Theater, as well as gone on tours in South Africa, Germany, Sweden, and England, including a performance with Diana Ross. During medical school, she taught herself to play the ukulele and guitar and was hired as the opening act for multiple concerts at the Rochester Civic Theater. Linda's work was published by and honored with an award from AOA for her essay detailing her encounters playing ukulele for a patient. Linda has engaged in many research projects during medical school, including in Psychiatry, Ob/Gyn, Palliative Medicine, and Medical Education. Her work has been published in *Contraception*, *The Journal of Reproductive Medicine*, *The Journal of Heart and Lung Transplantation*, and *Medical Science Educator*, and she has presented at national and international conferences. She studied suicide scripts as a predictor of eventual lethality and recently published a synthetic review on psychiatric adverse effects of pediatric corticosteroid use. She led a workshop for adolescent girls at the South Sudanese Youth Conference focusing on self-care, sexuality, and education, as well as an unrelated men's domestic violence rehabilitation group. Linda is a mentor, a teacher, a "Clown Doc (in training)," and was a Spanish interpreter in Honduras and at the UConn Migrant Farm Worker Clinic.



Irene Epshteyn, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Tufts University, BA, English
MEDICAL: SUNY Downstate College of Medicine

Irene was born in Babruysk, Belarus. Now at Downstate, she has been awarded AOA and is a member of the Honors Track Advanced Neuroscience Pathway program. Prior to beginning medical school, Irene worked for 2 years as a medical assistant, phlebotomist, and patient care coordinator at a medical practice in Brooklyn, taking histories, managing the front desk, and coordinating patients' continuity of care. During this time, she also worked in hospice care for team-management of terminally ill patients. In medical school, she conducted research with Dr. Jeremy Coplan, studying the effects of early life stress on cardiovascular parameters in nonhuman primates. In NYU's InSPIRES program, she interned under the mentorship of Dr. Dolores Malaspina, initiating a research project on the role of learned helplessness in schizophrenia. With no direct measure of learned helplessness in the battery of psychological tests for schizophrenia, she analyzed components of a cognitive assessment to identify a test which best approximates the phenomenon; she later adapted a learned helplessness scale for use in the schizophrenic population that Dr. Malaspina's team continues to apply. Irene is fluent in Russian. She raised money for and helped build a home for a family in rural Mexico. She practices yoga daily.

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Jessie Hanna, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Rutgers University, BS, Exercise Science

MEDICAL: Rutgers, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Jessie is the first member of his family to enter college. In 2007, he founded the non-profit Sean Hanna Foundation in honor of his brother who passed away from cancer; he remains the Executive Director and is responsible for day-to-day operations, including developing business plans and overseeing staff, membership, budget, taxes, marketing, revenue generating activities, company assets, and all other company resources. Jessie has led numerous blood and bone marrow drives/initiatives, and received multiple commendations. In 2007 he received the US Senate's National Jefferson Award for Public Service, and in 2010 the US Presidential Call to Service Award. He is currently a consultant working with the Rwandan Ambassador to the UN, as part of a team tasked with creating a pediatric cancer hospital in Kigali, Rwanda. He has been invited to the White House's Arab American Leader Summit. His commitment to service has continued to garner praise and distinction, leading to nearly a dozen additional awards and scholarships, including a tuition scholarship to medical school, where Jessie continued to flourish. He developed tools that teach psychiatry through plot and character analysis, and he developed and analyzed interactive modules to teach medical students fundamental concepts of disease progression through radiology; for this he received the Cum Laude Ribbon by The Society of Thoracic Radiology, and his work was published in *Medical Education*. He has given numerous presentations and written peer-reviewed publications in varied fields. Jessie has continuously maintained employment during his academic pursuits to provide support to his family, and he has been inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society.



Lisa Linde, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Cornell University, BA, Biology

MEDICAL: SUNY Buffalo School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

Lisa will graduate AOA from SUNY Buffalo. One of her primary interests includes the clinical, educational, and administrative approaches to the LGBT population, with a goal to ameliorate the higher rates of depression, substance abuse, and suicide. In college, she was co-President of the Gay-Straight-Alliance, and her commitment to service continued in medical school as Vice President of Community Service for the SUNY Buffalo AMA chapter, to which she brought a heightened focus on LGBT health in addition to community work. Most recently she began working with the Office of Medical Education to better incorporate unique LGBT health issues into medical education. Prior to medical school, she conducted research at Weill Cornell studying the role of oxidative stress in the development of preeclampsia. At Georgetown she investigated the role of specific genes involved in vasopressin-induced antidiuresis, and she helped develop a model to study cerebral salt-wasting in subarachnoid hemorrhage and cultured bone marrow cells to compare osteoclast levels in hyponatremic and normonatremic rats. She was an EMT in college, and lived with families in Guatemala and Guadeloupe. She played trumpet in the Cornell band throughout undergrad, performing at football, basketball, hockey, and lacrosse games.

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Lea Marin, MD, MPH

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Pennsylvania, BA, Fine Arts
GRADUATE: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, MPH
MEDICAL: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Lea entered Mount Sinai through the Humanities and Medicine Program and the dual MD/MPH program. She has been described as the “ideal blend of humanities and science, of medicine and art,” having been a leader in these areas throughout her medical school career. She founded, produced, and acted in Mount Sinai’s production of *The Vagina Monologues*, raising more than \$30,000 for charities working to end violence against women. She founded V-Day at Mount Sinai. She founded the Sinai History of Medicine Society. She designed community health fairs, mentored students, taught children, curated the student art exhibition, and was Editor-in-Chief of *Mount Sinai Mosaic: Art and Literary Magazine*. For her MPH, she interned at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, where she studied psychological and physical exposures from 9/11. She also evaluated health care educational needs of 10,674 community leaders from 56 East Harlem organizations; her results informed the curriculum of *The Mount Sinai Community Roundtable*: a 12-month course aimed at improving public health in East Harlem. Lea won the Humanities and Medicine Program Design Award, the Dean's Office Medical Student "Renaissance" Award, and the Student Council Award of Excellence. She is experienced in American Sign Language.



Brenda Ratemo, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Xavier University, BS, Natural Science
MEDICAL: Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth

Brenda grew up in Nairobi, Kenya where she witnessed first-hand the global stigma against mental illness. Over the course of her academic career, these experiences have led her to become increasingly involved in community outreach activities. As an undergraduate, she was awarded a Brueggeman Fellowship, which awarded her time to conduct independent research on the Kenyan health care system. This and other public health and humanity-focused projects led her to be the recipient of multiple awards, many for leadership. In medical school, she was on the board of the Student National Medical Association, which involved her in further outreach activities, both in the community as well as among minority medical students. One of only a few students awarded an Albert Schweitzer Fellowship, she developed a program for elementary school students struggling to learn English. Brenda has published work—*Beyond race and place: Distal sociological determinants of HIV disparities*—in *PLoS One*, and she has conducted research on baby flamingoes in the Cincinnati zoo to identify respective parents. She is interested in developing a project to investigate ECT in Kenya.

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Casey Smith, MD, JD

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Pennsylvania, BA, Psychology
LAW: New York University School of Law, JD
MEDICAL: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Growing up in Pittsburgh, Casey received a Presidential Scholarship to UPenn, where he joined Martin Seligman in studying the effect of diathesis and stress in interpersonal and achievement domains. Since that time, he has been continuously successful, initially as a corporate developer during a computer company's period of greatest expansion and IPO. Next came law school at NYU where he was Dean's Scholar. As a Litigation Associate at Latham & Watkins LLP, he focused on securities fraud, insider trading, money laundering, and drug trafficking. At Heller Ehrman LLP in San Francisco, Casey focused on commercial class actions, consumer fraud, and false advertising, while supervising and mentoring junior attorneys. Casey has given much of his time in *pro bono* work: successfully representing Tibetan Buddhists in asylum proceedings, petitioning for orders of protection for battered women, obtaining asylum for torture survivors, securing visas for trafficked children, protecting voters' rights, and founding his firm's relationship with Immigration Equality to represent applicants in sexual-orientation and HIV-status based asylum proceedings. With a longstanding commitment to providing service for individuals in crisis and finding his *pro bono* work the most satisfying, he made the difficult decision to change careers. In medical school Casey has continued to be a leader guided by compassion and was honored with the Gold Humanism Award. Recently, his academic interest has centered on medical students' exposure to patient suicide, hypothesizing individual students' differing levels of investment, maturity, and sensitivity, and whether and how to involve these students in post-suicide reviews and discussions. Casey serves on Mount Sinai's admission and promotions committees, and he runs marathons.



Che-Yu Jeffrey Tai, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Yale university, BA, Psychology
MEDICAL: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Jeffrey is a man of exceptionally broad talents and experiences. He is not only academically outstanding and a speaker of four languages, he also embodies a generosity of service as well as strong leadership and mentorship. Prior to medical school, Jeffrey explored a career in business as a hedge fund market researcher, analyzing the trucking, water, and bedding industries. He also spent time as a sales and trading analyst at Morgan Stanley Hong Kong, researching companies in Asia ex-Japan for investment opportunities, monitoring merger arbitrage opportunities, and analyzing the renewable energy industry. He brought his business acumen to the Business in Medicine Group at Mount Sinai, and his ability to spot patterns to his research work in the Aging and Metabolism Lab at Mount Sinai, where he identified mediators of the protective effects of dietary restriction in a *C. elegans* model of Huntington's disease, providing novel targets for treatment. He has researched the effect of masked semantic relatedness on memory and cognition, and has synthesized 10,000 medical records looking for demographic predictors of adherence to medical treatment of TB in Asian-Americans. He founded the Huns Classical Arms Group, instructing students in classical weapons training, including sword, shield, spear, and bow, and he led team members in national and regional tournaments. He spent a summer in the US Marine Corps Officer Candidates School in Quantico, VA, as a Platoon Leaders Class Officer Candidate; he led a squad as fire team leader, worked to coordinate company actions, and trained in military leadership, military history, and strategy. He has a 2nd degree black belt.

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Sara Wildstein, MD

UNDERGRADUATE: Macaulay Honors College at Queens College, BA, Art History and Honors in Math and Natural Science

MEDICAL: Albert Einstein College of Medicine

As a 4-year Howard Hughes Research Fellow, Sara investigated the contribution of neural activity to neuronal lifespan. Studying deaf and normal-hearing zebra finch songbirds, she found that neurogenesis in the song motor pathway correlated with the rate and extent of recovery from Botox-induced paralysis of the vocal muscles, and that deafening decreases neuronal incorporation in the caudomedial nidopallium. Her work was published in the Journal of Neuroscience and Behavioral Brain Research. She has investigated corneal collagen crosslinking for progressive keratoconus and ectasia using riboflavin/dextran and hypotonic riboflavin. At Mount Sinai, before medical school, she studied how mutations in myocyte channel gating contribute to catecholaminergic polymorphic ventricular tachycardia. For her contributions to research as well as her overall academic success, Sara received many high honors, including the Chancellor's Awards for Academic Excellence & for Outstanding Leadership & Community Service, the University Scholar Award, the Jonas Salk Award for Scientific Research, and was honored with presenting the Baccalaureate Address at her college graduation. Most recently, she has been studying quality of life before and after bariatric surgery, specifically related to patient coping mechanisms, including analysis of "phantom fat," body image, and perception of self and relationships after weight loss. Sara is founder and president of the Albert Einstein division of Students 4 Growing Interest For Transplantation, and she has studied abroad in the Galapagos and in Paris.