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ACNP Member Receives Medal of Honor

Pasko Rakic

[snyder pic.jpg](#)

Solomon Snyder, Professor of Psychiatry, Neuroscience and Pharmacology and Director of the Department of Neuroscience at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and a devoted member of ACNP, has received the 2005 Medal of Science from the President of the United States for his discoveries of the molecular basis of psychotropic drug action.

Some of the most important advances that opened up the modern field of treatment of neuropsychiatric diseases have stemmed from the work of Sol Snyder. His pioneering work has led to novel generations of therapeutic drugs and potential treatments for drug abuse. He published the initial paper identifying and characterizing opiate receptors; and, subsequently, established the binding sites of the pharmacologically relevant opiate receptors that are localized on discrete brain sites. His work contributed to understanding the major actions of the drugs and differentiating agonists and antagonists, permitting the development of novel, less addicting opiates. Snyder then identified receptors for the major neurotransmitters, establishing the mechanism of the anti-psychotic and side-effect actions of neuroleptics and differentiating serotonin receptor subtypes that led to new classes of anti-psychotic, anti-migraine and anti-emetic drugs. Snyder extended receptor strategies to intracellular signal transduction, identifying and purifying the receptors and showing that they contain the calcium ion channels that mediate their actions. The development of new agents in the pharmaceutical industry has been greatly enhanced by the now universal application of Snyder's techniques for rapid screening of large numbers of candidate drugs. For example, Snyder applied receptor techniques to clarify second messenger systems, especially the inositol 1,4,5-trisphosphate (IP3) receptors of the phosphoinositide cycle that regulate intracellular calcium deposition and the immunophilins that mediate numerous signal transduction events in the brain. He and his colleagues were involved in the discovery of the dopamine receptors and their role in schizophrenia. Snyder's more recent discovery of novel neurotransmitters such as nitric oxide, carbon monoxide and D-serine portend novel therapies in mental illness, stroke and sexual dysfunction.

Snyder is a member of the U.S. National Academy and a recipient of numerous prizes including the 1978 Lasker Award. He is undoubtedly one of the most original, prolific and influential intellectuals of our time. He was number 3 on the Institute of Scientific Information list of the 25 most influential scientists of the past twenty years. In addition to his remarkable productivity in science he is also an active member of many scientific organizations including the Society for Neuroscience for which he served as the president as well as on numerous committees helping the ascent of this field as we know it.

The ACNP congratulates Dr. Solomon Snyder, 2005 Medal of Science recipient.

**ACNP Partners with ADAA and NIMH on Scientific Symposium on Children
Alies Muskin, ADAA Chief Operating Officer**

For many years, the Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA) has been a member of the ACNP Advocacy Affiliates. The ADAA is the leading national nonprofit organization focusing exclusively on anxiety disorders. In forging a closer partnership between the organizations, the ACNP agreed to cosponsor, along with the National Institute of Mental Health, the 8th Annual ADAA Scientific Research Symposium.

Held in conjunction with the ADAA's annual conference, the symposium, titled "Mechanisms of Risk and Resilience for Childhood Anxiety Disorders," will convene on March 17 at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel & Towers. The Annual Conference attracts more than 700 attendees including basic and clinical scientists and clinicians. ADAA offers additional public education programs in conjunction with its meeting.

The topic is timely, and the need for supporting programs that explore anxiety disorders in children and teens has never been greater. Anxiety disorders are among the most common psychiatric disorders affecting children with approximately 10 percent of all children experiencing these disorders at some time in their lives. Work both in humans and other species suggests that anxiety in immature organisms has profound effects on development.

The annual Symposium brings together basic and clinical scientists to discuss anxiety disorders from both perspectives and engage scientists who would not otherwise attend the ADAA Conference. The symposium also will involve young investigators to develop a cadre of future scientists interested in anxiety disorders research.

The chair of this year's program is ACNP member Daniel Pine, MD from the National Institute of Mental Health. ACNP member Myrna Weissman is speaking on depression and anxiety disorders. Past programs have been organized by ACNP members including Drs. Dennis Charney, Tom Insel, Jerry Rosenbaum, Charles Nemeroff, Tom Uhde and Jim Ballenger.

The ADAA is celebrating its 25th anniversary. As a leading advocate for improving research, education and treatment of anxiety disorders, the ADAA is supported by professional members and individuals who suffer from anxiety disorders and their families.

Report from Washington

Frankie Trull – President, Policy Directions Inc.

NIH in the Spotlight

The start of 2005 has brought the National Institutes of Health (NIH) into the spotlight.

The scientific community is reeling from the February 3rd publication of proposed changes to the NIH conflict-of-interest policy for intramural scientists. Although not going into effect until some time after the April 4th deadline for public comments, the NIH has received much criticism from researchers.

The new rules, announced this month by NIH Director Elias A. Zerhouni, prohibit scientists from accepting any compensation from the health care industry, health-related trade or professional associations, or the biomedical industry. Concerns have been raised that even non-compensated involvement would be prohibited. Zerhouni maintains that scientists would remain free to speak, write and interact with peers in academia and industry, yet the broadness and uncertainty of the guidelines threatens to stifle even this activity.

In addition to placing limitations on collaboration and dialogue between NIH scientists and industry, further financial restrictions would be placed on all NIH employees. About 7,000 senior employees would be barred from owning stock in certain types of medical companies, and all other employees would be limited to \$15,000 in stock holdings.

While the backlash from scientists was felt immediately, it continued to gain strength at the end of February after the alleged scandal that precipitated the changes was shown to be a potentially isolated problem. According to reports, most of the NIH researchers who were under investigation for allegedly engaging in potential conflicts with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies have been cleared by NIH investigators. Many believe this new policy will result in a “brain drain” from this most distinguished institution.

The proposed intramural policy has raised concerns that future changes at NIH may also apply in some form to extramural grantees. Discussions will continue, though many doubt that Zerhouni will back down from his stance.

As the NIH continues to struggle with internal issues, Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) introduced “The Restore Scientific Integrity to Federal Research and Policy Making Act.” Citing recent “political interference with science by the Bush Administration,” his bill seeks to limit so-called litmus tests on membership in scientific advisory committees, block the tampering with or censorship of scientific analyses and reports, and extends whistleblower protection to federal employees who expose any manipulation of the science.

NIH is also facing significant belt-tightening if President Bush's budget is passed. The White House has proposed a scant 0.7 percent increase in NIH funding for fiscal year 2006. While Congress still has to approve the proposal, funding levels are unlikely to see any significant increase.

Policy Directions will continue to monitor these and other issues while working with the newly formed ACNP Clinical Research Committee. PDI is closely monitoring issues that could affect clinical research including human subjects in research; Institutional Review Boards; protection of the peer review process from Congressional intervention; and possible NIH review of the percent of time allocated to grants. The Clinical Research Committee will allow PDI to continue providing ACNP with critical information and guidance in navigating Washington policy.

Travel Award Announcement

The deadline for the ACNP Travel Awards is **April 30, 2005**. You may call the ACNP Executive Office at 615-324-2360 or email Kay White at acnp@acnp.org if you have questions. Nominate someone today!

[Call For Proposals](#)

The ACNP Program Committee is now accepting proposals for panels and study groups at the 44th ACNP Annual Meeting, December 11 – 15, 2005. Details are available at <http://acnp.abstractcentral.com>. Instructions can also be found at the annual meeting link at www.acnp.org.

[Honorific Awards](#)

The Honorific Awards Committee encourages you to nominate candidates for the following awards: a) Efron Research Award b) Elkes Research Award c) Hoch Distinguished Service Award d) Axelrod Mentorship Award and e) Media Award. Details regarding each of these awards are available online at www.acnp.org or click on the links listed below. Please send in your nomination by **May 20, 2005**.

[Daniel H. Efron Research Award](#)

[Joel Elkes Research Award](#)

[Paul Hoch Distinguished Service Award](#)

[Julius Axelrod Mentorship Award](#)

[Media Award](#)

ACNP Annual Dues

Please be reminded you can pay your annual membership dues online at <http://members.acnp.org/>

Business Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the Annual ACNP business meeting will soon be available at www.acnp.org

ACNP Conflict of Interest Policy for Journal Editor

The proposed conflict of interest policy for the ACNP Journal Editor is posted on the ACNP Member's only website. You may send your comments to coipolicy@acnp.org through March 31, 2005.

Upcoming Deadlines

Panel Proposal	April 26, 2005
Travel Award	April 30, 2005
Honorific Awards	May 20, 2005

The ACNP Office Has Moved



Please note, effective February 14, 2005 our new address and telephone number is:

ACNP Executive Office
545 Mainstream Drive Suite 110
Nashville, TN 37228
Phone: 615-324-2360
Fax: 615-324-2361
acnp@acnp.org