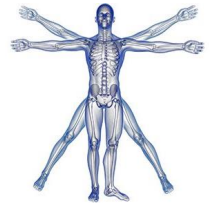


Physiology News

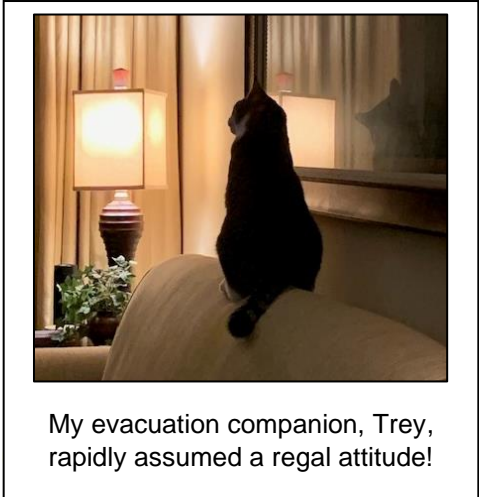


July – September 2021 · Volume 4 · Issue 3

A Message from the Chair

Patricia Molina, MD, PhD

The transition from summer to fall took us all for a spin, literally! These past few weeks have been tough on all of us. Just as we thought we had a system in place and we were dealing with the latest COVID wave, Hurricane Ida disrupted our personal and professional lives. The power outage was an additional hassle we all had to deal with after the storm. However, I feel there is always something to learn from our experiences and we must find a positive no matter how bad things are. I realize that at times that sounds hard to do and recognize that with pandemic fatigue our tolerance for stress and disruption is eroded, and our ability to see the good in things is worn out. Reflecting on this recent period, I find that we as a department stayed connected and aware of our whereabouts. Within 48 hours of the storm, I had news or information of each and everyone's status (in stark contrast with our post-Katrina experience). During the power outage, heroes amongst us rose to the challenge and saved precious samples from our malfunctioning freezers (Dr. Simon), alerted us those freezers were beeping (Mohammed, Jessi & Dr. Salling), volunteered to shuffle ice so that animal rooms could be kept cool (Dr. Basha), led a Go fund me campaign to support those that incurred expenses with the evacuation (Dr. Gilpin), sent supplies and a generator for one of our faculty (Jessi & Dr. Siggins), and powered through to keep the NHSN conference going as scheduled (Melissa). I could continue, but I think I have made my point. We are a tight knit community of scientists with a shared mission. We support each other. We thrive because of our interconnectedness!



The elephant in the room is the negative press focused on our institution's administration that hit the newspapers last week. That was an added stressor to all of us. Like the storm, those are events that we cannot control and that are outside of our ability to shape or mold. This time, rather than trying to find a positive in the situation, I ask that you follow the mantra from yoga: stay with the breath.... you are strong....this too shall pass....focus on what YOU can control....be there for your colleagues and peers....stay the course....we will be OK!

In closing, I hope for fall weather, calm, peace, and yes, I hope for joy in the coming few weeks. Know that I am committed to your wellbeing and will continue to support, encourage, and recognize your achievements. Thank you for your strength and resilience! You all inspire me in ways you cannot even begin to imagine.

Sincerely,

Patricia

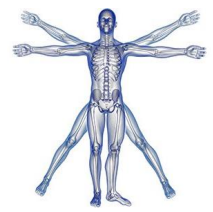
Inside this edition:

Message from the Chair.....	1	Grants.....	4
Featured story.....	2	Publications.....	4
Recognition.....	3	Presentations.....	5
New Faces.....	3	Professional Service.....	6
Graduate Student Milestones.....	4	Notable Events.....	6

Editor: Danielle Levitt, PhD



Physiology News



Featured story:

The Hot-Cold Empathy Gap and What it Means for Allyship

By: Scott Edwards, PhD & Bobby Siggins, PhD

On a recent rebroadcast of a “Hidden Brain” episode (In the Heat of the Moment: How Intense Emotions Transform Us)¹, the host delved into an intriguing discussion on a type of cognitive bias known as the hot-cold empathy gap. The central premise of this concept is that we humans exist in a variety of states that can be broadly organized into hot (visceral and emotional) states and cold (rational and calm) states, and that our understanding is dependent on the state which we are currently experiencing. **The empathy gap, therefore, describes a phenomenon in which we lack a full appraisal and understanding of our “being” in opposing states.** To illustrate with a simple example: there is this folk wisdom that you should never go grocery shopping while hungry, because you end up buying more food than you need, and often your food choices are less nutritious. So in a cold state (satiety), a shopper will buy the necessary items to adhere to their preferred diet, but that same shopper in the hot state (hungry) will be prone to deviating from their preferred diet, perhaps buying more highly caloric and processed foods. The rational and intentional choice the shopper previously made to adhere to a specific diet is undermined in a hot state.



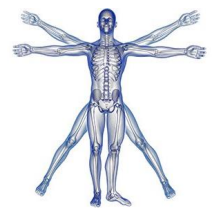
Image credit Deepu Asok

While this simple example is fairly innocuous, this empathy gap affects every decision we make. During a segment in the middle of this show, the host interviewed Julia Woodzicka, PhD, the Abigail Grigsby Urquhart Professor of Cognitive and Behavioral Science at Washington and Lee University². Dr. Woodzicka specializes in how targets of prejudice (e.g., women, African-Americans) are affected by everyday instances of unfair treatment. In the show, she described a study that asked female participants to read a scenario about a job interview where the interviewer, a man, asked the applicant standard questions interspersed with obviously sexist questions, such as “Do you have a boyfriend?” and “Do you find yourself desirable?” Ninety percent of the participants said they would confront the interviewer in an assertive way and 30% said they would leave the interview. These responses in the cold state are what one might expect. In the second part of the study, she subjected another group of female participants to the sexist interview in real life, without their prior knowledge that they were part of a study. In this arm of the study, not a single participant left, and all participants answered every question. Thus, **in the hot state created by a stressful environment, such as a job interview, the responses were diametrically opposed to the expected responses that participants developed in the cold state** (reading a script). The surprising aspect of this study was not that the responses were different; it was that they were 180 degrees apart. Naturally, this evokes questions on how we, as individuals, think we will react versus how we actually will react in a challenging environment.

Thus, one must wonder how the empathy gap impacts the concept of allyship. On the community blog of the NIH Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, allyship is described as an act “when a person of privilege works in solidarity and partnership with a marginalized group of people to help take down the systems that challenge that group’s basic rights, equal access, and ability to thrive in our society³.” For most people in our niche in the Department of Physiology at LSUHSC, being an effective ally is a personal value and a goal. Nevertheless, opportunities to practice allyship can often be missed due to the hot-cold empathy gap. The majority of us, while watching a seminar on racism or inclusivity whole-heartedly agree with the presenters, and even when scenarios are discussed in these seminars, we often think that we would assert ourselves and act as



Physiology News



an ally. Nevertheless, actions where allyship is most needed rarely occur in an environment that evokes a hot state in us (e.g., interactions with more conservative friends and family members). Arguably, many situations where an opportunity arises to practice allyship will be stressful and could represent a risk of social capital. **So, what can be done?**

That is a loaded question, as surely there are many answers. In *Nice Racism*⁴, Robin DiAngelo, PhD offers advice for well-intentioned progressives on how they can more effectively counter racism. Much of the advice is helpful in becoming less passive and performative, and in turn becoming a stronger, effectual ally. Obviously, reflection and self-education is an initial key step. Being aware that how our rational self perceives and interacts with the world does not indicate how our emotional self would respond to a given situation is fundamental to being able to assert oneself, regardless of their emotional state. Additionally, DiAngelo discusses the role of affinity groups in which candid discussions can occur amongst people of similar race identity, which might involve role playing stressful situations ahead of time in order to become comfortable translating a rational plan into habitual action when in a hot state. Perhaps also, we can help each other by recognizing that we are subject to this empathy gap, and perhaps point out when a colleague misses an opportunity to practice effective allyship. These are only a few ideas, but **the most important thing is that we transform these crucial concepts into more proactive strategies within all of the spaces we occupy.**



Image credit: Masso Sport DC

References

1. <https://www.npr.org/2019/11/27/783495595/in-the-heat-of-the-moment-how-intense-emotions-transform-us>
2. <https://my.wlu.edu/directory/profile?ID=x4007>
3. <https://www.edi.nih.gov/blog/communities/what-allyship>
4. *Nice Racism: How Progressive White People Perpetuate Racial Harm*. Robin DiAngelo, Ph.D. Penguin Random House, 2021.

Recognition



Taylor Templeton (left) received the AWIS Outstanding Scientist Travel Award 2021 to present at Winter Conference on Brain Research 2022.

Jessi Cucinello-Ragland received a travel award to attend the upcoming Alcohol and Immunology Research

Interest Group meeting in Chicago, where they were also selected to give an oral presentation titled "Alcohol Amplifies Neuroinflammatory IL-6 Pathway Signaling in the Prefrontal Cortex".

Dr. Patricia Molina was featured in "Scientist Spotlight" of NIH's Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) publication, [Women's Health in Focus](#).

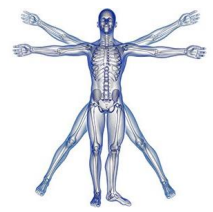
New Faces



Welcome to our new business manager, **Arnold Kwanbunbumpen**, who comes to us from the Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center.



Physiology News



Sophia Marathonitis received her bachelor of science degree in neuroscience and sociology from Tulane University. She joined the department as a predoctoral fellow on the NIAAA T32 Biomedical Alcohol Research Training Program under the mentorship of **Dr. Scott Edwards**. Her research will center around the neurobiological interactions between HIV disease and alcohol use disorder risk.



electrophysiological changes underlying morphine-induced expression of preference and context-tolerance. At LSUHSC, she is a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Rajani Maiya's Lab where she researches the molecular mechanisms that underlie social defeat stress-induced escalation of alcohol consumption.

Graduate Student Milestones

Jonquil Poret completed her written prelims!

Caitlyn McAdams received her Bachelor's in Biology from Ramapo College of New Jersey in 2020. She has experience in different medical specialties including



Obstetrics and Gynecology,

Ophthalmology, and Physical Therapy. She served as a research associate at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey in Tobacco Cessation studies, and conducted brief research in microbiology while obtaining her Bachelor's degree. In her free time, she enjoys going for walks, trying new coffee shops, and competing in Sporting Clays, Trap and Skeet shooting. She is excited to be on board as a research coordinator at the Comprehensive Alcohol HIV/AIDS Center.

Dr. Franciely Paliarin received her bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences and Ph.D. in Psychobiology, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she researched psychobiological aspects of drug abuse, dependence, and withdrawal in the Psychopharmacology Laboratory. Her research focus was to understand behavioral and



Grants

Alcohol-induced Skeletal Muscle Insulin Insensitivity in SIV/HIV: Myotube-derived Extracellular Vesicle-mediated Mechanisms. NIH/NIAAA F30AA029358. PI: **Brianna Bourgeois**. Mentor: **Dr. Liz Simon**.

E-cigarette Inhalation and Cardiopulmonary Dysfunction. NIH/NHLBI F30HL160071. PI: **Anna Whitehead**. Mentor: **Dr. Xiping Yue**.

Publications

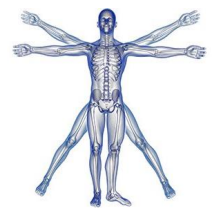
Albrechet-Souza, L, Nastase, AS, Hill, MN, and Gilpin, NW. (2021). Amygdalar endocannabinoids are affected by predator odor stress in a sex-specific manner and modulate acoustic startle reactivity in female rats. *Neurobiology of Stress*, 15:100387. PMID: 34522703.

Cucinello-Ragland, JA, Mitchell-Cleveland, R, Trimble, WB, Urbina, AP, Yeh, AY, Edwards, KN, Molina, PE, Simon Peter, L, and Edwards, S. (2021). Alcohol amplifies cingulate cortex signaling and facilitates immobilization-induced hyperalgesia in female rats. *Neuroscience Letters*. 2021 Sep 14; 761:136119. DOI: 10.1016/j.neulet.2021.136119. PMID: 34280506. PMCID: PMC8387454.

Levitt, DE, Ferguson, TF, Primeaux, SD, Zavala, JA, Ahmed, J, Marshall, RH, Simon, L, and Molina, PE. (2021). Skeletal muscle bioenergetic health and function in people living with HIV: Association with glucose tolerance and alcohol use. *American Journal of Physiology-Regulatory, Integrative and*



Physiology News



Comparative Physiology. Ahead-of-print. PMID: 34585616. DOI: 10.1152/ajpregu.00197.2021.

Moitra, E, Chan, PA, **Molina, PE**, Ernst, F, **Ferguson, TF**, Mimiaga, MJ, Herman, DS, and Stein, MD. (2021) HIV Engage—a randomized controlled efficacy trial of an acceptance-based behavioral therapy intervention to improve retention in care for HIV treatment naïve patients: study protocol. *Contemporary Clinical Trials*. 108: 106514. DOI: 10.1016/j.cct.2021.106514.

Primeaux, SD, Simon, L, Ferguson, TF, Levitt, DE, Brashear, MM, Yeh, A, and Molina PE. (2021). Alcohol use and dysglycemia among people living with HIV in the ALIVE-Ex Study. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*. Ahead-of-print. PMID: 34342022. DOI: 10.1111/acer.14667.

Rosen, EM, **Primeaux, SD, Simon, L, Welsh, DA, Molina, PE, and Ferguson, TF.** Associations of binge drinking and heavy alcohol use on sugar and fat intake in a cohort of southern people living with HIV. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*. Accepted 8/30/2021.

Simon, L, Torres, D, Saravia, A, Levitt, DE, Vande Stouwe, C, McGarragh, H, Coleman, L, Schumacher, J, Dufour, JP, Amedee, AM, and Molina, PE. (2021). Chronic binge alcohol and ovariectomy-mediated impaired insulin responsiveness in SIV-infected female rhesus macaques. *American Journal of Physiology-Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology*. Ahead-of-print. PMID: 34524906. DOI: 10.1152/ajpregu.00159.2021.

Souza-Smith, FM, Albrechet-Souza, L, Avegno, EM, Ball, CD, Ferguson, TF, Harrison-Bernard, LM, and Molina, PE. (2021). Perspectives against racism: educational and socialization efforts at the departmental level. *Advances in Physiology Education*. 45(4):720-729. PMID: 34498936.

Presentations

Dr. Patricia Molina gave invited talks titled “Unravelling the neurobiological consequences of traumatic brain injury” (Shock Society Virtual

Webinar Series, July 2021) and “Historical perspective of the National Hispanic Science Network; El Faro still stands!” (National Hispanic Science Network [NHSN] Annual Conference, September 2021). She was also a panelist in the virtual Black in Physiology Week panel titled “How to Effectively Maneuver through the Early Stages of Academia” on September 20, 2021.

Dr. Lisa Harrison-Bernard was invited to give a seminar in the College of Pharmacy at Nova Southeastern University titled “Combating racial inequities in science”.

Combating Racial Inequities in Science
September 17, 2021
Nova Southeastern University
Pharmaceutical Sciences

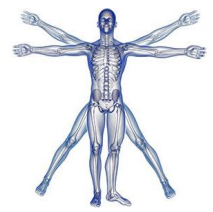
Lisa M. Harrison-Bernard, PhD
Professor
Department of Physiology
Louisiana State University School of Medicine

Dr. Stefany Primeaux gave a seminar titled “Role of lingual fat sensing on fat intake, fat preference and obesity” at Tulane University Brain Institute on Sept. 15, 2021.

**Tulane University
Brain Institute
Seminar Series**

“Role of lingual fat sensing on fat intake, fat preference and obesity”

Stefany D. Primeaux, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Physiology
Joint Diabetes, Endocrinology & Metabolism Center
LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans



Physiology News

Dr. Danielle Levitt gave a 2-part PREP workshop titled “Mental health in STEM.” She also co-chaired symposia titled “Emerging topics: Short- and long-term implications of COVID-19 on substance use” and “New investigators in drug abuse research panel” at the NHSN Annual Conference in September, 2021.

Dr. Lisa Harrison-Bernard welcomed a grandson, Cain Ryan Comeaux, on August 11. He weighed 8 pounds, 5 ounces and 21” in length. Her daughter and son-in-law are super excited to be new parents.

Professional Service

Dr. Lisa Harrison-Bernard began serving as a permanent member of the NIH-NIGMS TWD-D Training and Workforce Development Study Section.

Dr. Danielle Levitt was elected as the co-chair for the Early Career Leadership Committee (ECLC) of the National Hispanic Science Network (NHSN).

Dr. Christian Montanari served as reviewer (August 20 to September 10, 2021) for the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT) to select the scientific activity to be presented at the SRNT 2022 Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD, USA (March 15-18, 2022).



Taylor Templeton, Jessi Cucinello-Ragland, Muhammad Farooq, Samira Mohammad, and Heather Soileau

represented ADACE, the PREP program, and ENDURE program at Xavier University’s Recovery Day 2021.

Notable Events



Congratulations to **Brianna Bourgeois** for taking a huge first-place win in Physiolympics! Thanks to **Dr. Scott Edwards** for setting up the competition! Currently in-play: Fantasy Football.

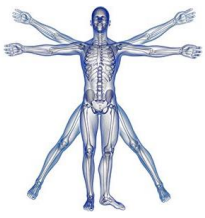
Taylor Templeton and Dr. Sydney Vita visited the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, MS while evacuated.



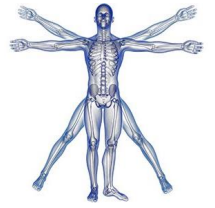
Taylor Templeton rescued a baby raccoon (Edgar) after the hurricane.

Laura Monteagudo Romero made new friends (including former mayor Mitch Landrieu) while volunteering with a disaster relief organization for Hurricane Ida.





Physiology News



You can recycle glass on-campus!

A message from Students for Sustainability:

How many times have you felt bad about throwing away all those spare glass bottles you have at home?

Students for Sustainability have come to help you! You can bring your glass to the gray box placed **by the elevators on the 3rd floor of the MEB** to be recycled. Together we can help our planet to be a little bit less polluted.

RECYCLE GLASS HERE!

- ✓ Condiment containers
- ✓ Food storage
- ✓ Jars
- ✓ Glass with recycling code
- ✗ Ceramics
- ✗ Decorative glass (painted or foiled)

STUDENTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Instagram: @sfs.lsuhs
Email: sfs@lsuhsc.edu

