

Thursday, July 28, 2016

## NIH names Dr. Joshua Gordon director of the National Institute of Mental Health



National Institutes of Health Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., announced today the selection of Joshua A. Gordon, M.D., Ph.D., as director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Dr. Gordon is expected to join NIH in September.

"Josh is a visionary psychiatrist and neuroscientist with deep experience in mental health research and practice. He is exceptionally well qualified to lead the NIMH research agenda to improve mental health and treatments for mental illnesses," said Dr. Collins. "We're thrilled to have him join the NIH leadership team."

As NIMH director, Dr. Gordon will oversee the lead federal agency for research on mental illnesses. With an annual budget of approximately \$1.5 billion, NIMH supports more than 2,000 research grants and contracts at universities and other institutions across the country and overseas. In addition, the NIMH intramural research program supports

approximately 300 scientists working on the NIH campuses. The mission of the NIMH is to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the



way for prevention, recovery and cure.

Dr. Gordon will join NIH from New York City, where he serves as associate professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Center and research psychiatrist at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. In addition to his research, Dr. Gordon is an associate director of the Columbia University/New York State Psychiatric Institute Adult Psychiatry Residency Program, where he directs the neuroscience curriculum and administers the research programs for residents.

Joining the Columbia faculty in 2004, Dr. Gordon's research has focused on the analysis of neural activity in mice carrying mutations of relevance to psychiatric disease. The lab studies genetic models of these diseases from an integrative neuroscience perspective and across multiple levels of analysis, focused on understanding how a given disease mutation leads to a particular behavior. To this end, the lab employs a range of neuroscience techniques including neurophysiology, which is the study of activity patterns in the brain, and optogenetics, which is the use of light to control neural activity. His work has direct relevance to schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and depression, and has been funded by grants from NIMH and other research organizations. Dr. Gordon maintains a general psychiatric practice, caring for patients who suffer from the illnesses he studies in his lab.

Dr. Gordon pursued a combined M.D./Ph.D. degree at the University of California, San Francisco. Medical school coursework in psychiatry and neuroscience convinced him that the greatest need, and greatest promise, for biomedical science was in these areas. During his Ph.D. thesis, Dr. Gordon pioneered the methods necessary to study brain plasticity in the mouse visual system. Upon completion of the dual degree program at UCSF, Dr. Gordon went to Columbia University for his psychiatry residency and research fellowship.

Dr. Gordon has been a member of the Hope for Depression Research Foundation's Depression Task Force since 2012, where he works collaboratively with this international group to define the neurobiology underlying depression and identify novel treatment targets.

Dr. Gordon's work has been recognized by several prestigious awards, including the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation - NARSAD Young Investigator Award, Rising Star Award from the International Mental Health Research Organization, A.E. Bennett Research Award from the Society of Biological Psychiatry, and Daniel H. Efron Research Award from the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology.

"I want to recognize and thank NIMH Acting Director Bruce Cuthbert, Ph.D., for his exemplary leadership of the NIMH over the past several months," added Dr. Collins.

**About the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):** The mission of the NIMH is to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery and cure. For more information, visit <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>.

**About the National Institutes of Health (NIH):** NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes

27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov).

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