

HOPE THROUGH RESEARCH



HDRF CLINICAL TRIAL SET TO BEGIN IN 2020



Dr. James Murrough will head the HDRF clinical trial at the Mount Sinai site.

The Depression Task Force has identified several molecular targets in the brain that represent new and entirely unique pathways for the diagnosis and treatment of depression.

We are thrilled to announce that we are on deck to enter pilot clinical trials to test one of these new treatment strategies in humans this spring/summer. The trial will begin once the global COVID-19 pandemic is squarely under control.

The two-year clinical trial will be conducted at two sites: Columbia University and Mount Sinai. The planned study size is 75 patients.

The compound we will test during the clinical trial is tianeptine.

Tianeptine is an atypical anti-

depressant that has been used clinically in Europe and Asia for 30 years, but is not offered in the United States. The Task Force has identified for the first time how tianeptine works – by activating specific receptors in the brain’s pain relief circuits.

That means tianeptine is an entirely different class of drug than today’s commonly available antidepressants. These include SSRIs such as Prozac, Paxil and Zoloft and SNRIs such as Cymbalta and Effexor.

Our team believes there is a direct link between many symptoms of depression and insufficient activation of the system of receptors targeted by tianeptine. The team

believes that tianeptine can repair deficits in the system and help many patients who do not respond to other medications.

“Our goal is to identify brain markers that allow us to predict the subgroup of depressed patients most likely to respond to tianeptine,” says neuroscientist Dr. Jonathan Javitch, a member of the Depression Task Force who is leading this research program.

We are very excited to test this novel treatment pathway with the hope of advancing a brand new category of medication that can more precisely target the root cause of depression in the brain for many patients.

FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

HDRF LAUNCHES NEW TREATMENT INITIATIVE

Nationwide Search for Proposals to Increase Clinical Activity and Research

The Hope for Depression Research Foundation (HDRF) is thrilled to announce a major new program to accelerate drug discovery in 2020 and the decade to come.

This year we launch the New Treatment Initiative (NTI), a program to grow research into innovative treatments or diagnostic tests for depression and other related mood and anxiety disorders. Through a competitive grants process, our goal is to meaningfully advance new treatments and tests into the clinic.

Since 2012, our Depression Task Force has shed new light

on the mechanisms of depression in the brain. Their research using laboratory rodents has identified molecules, circuits and genes that point to novel treatments.

The New Treatment Initiative is designed to leverage these discoveries and move them quickly to the clinic where they can help patients. The NTI will also identify new leads in the clinic that can inform our laboratory research.

I am thrilled to share this news with you, as it represents



an exciting new phase of growth for HDRF. We are excited to see what the future will bring and to share it with you. We would not be able to accomplish any of this work without your support.

Sincerely yours,



Audrey Gruss
Founder & Chair

BRUCE MCEWEN, PH.D. • 1938 - 2020

A neuroscientist, he showed how an unrelenting barrage of stress hormones can change the brain, leading to depression and other illness.

Dr. Bruce McEwen, a founding member of the HDRF Depression Task Force, died on January 2, 2020, at the age of 81 after a brief illness. He was head of the Neuroendocrinology Laboratory at Rockefeller University.

McEwen was a giant in the field of neuroscience who transformed our understanding of how the brain changes throughout life. He is renowned for his studies on how stress hormones reshape the brain – work that has profound implications for public health and the understanding and treatment of



depression.

As a young scientist, McEwen challenged the established view that the brain's neural circuits stop changing when we become adults. In a landmark 1968 study, McEwen showed that stress hormones like cortisol

alter the hippocampus, a key mood area of the brain.

Thus began a 60-year career in which McEwen and his lab detailed how circulating hormones enter the brain and profoundly affect mood and mental health.

In award-winning work funded

by HDRF, McEwen and his lab recently discovered that a naturally occurring compound known as Acetyl-L-Carnitine can often be deficient in the blood of depressed patients, pointing to a potential blood test and novel treatment for depression.

McEwen worked with HDRF Founder Audrey Gruss in 2010 to tap other pioneers in brain science who agreed to join forces as the Depression Task Force. McEwen said that being part of this group was a highlight of his career. His intellectual legacy undergirds all of the research activity underway in the Depression Task Force labs.

DEPRESSION TASK FORCE

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Jonathan Javitch, M.D., Ph.D.
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THIRTEENTH ANNUAL HOPE LUNCHEON SEMINAR

Our keynote speaker for the 13th Annual HOPE Luncheon, University of Pennsylvania's Chair of Psychiatry **Dr. Maria Oquendo**, gave an illuminating medical overview of depression and anxiety, two complex conditions that are misunderstood but widespread.

LeAnn Rimes accepted the **HOPE Award for Depression Advocacy** and spoke candidly about entering treatment for depression and anxiety. Many in the audience were visibly moved and all rose to their feet to applaud at the end.

"A day after my 30th birthday I checked myself in to treatment, and it was the best birthday gift I could have ever given myself because I don't know if I would have made it to the next one," LeAnn said.

The Luncheon also featured the real woman behind the Anne Hathaway character in the *Modern Love* series on Amazon: **Terri Cheney**, an author, attorney and mental health advocate.

"Not in my wildest dreams did I think that being spectacularly bipolar would one day bring me to a podium at The Plaza," said Cheney to warm laughter in the audience while accepting the **Ambassador of HOPE Award**.

To wrap up the day, HDRF Founder and Chair Audrey Gruss presented the **HOPE Corporate Visionary Award** to Dr. Husseni Manji and Janssen Research & Development for their longstanding commitment to research into complex mood disorders like depression.



LeAnn Rimes and **Audrey Gruss**



Dr. Maria Oquendo
delivers the keynote speech.



OVER 600 PARTICIPANTS RAISE \$400,000 AT PALM BEACH RACE OF HOPE!



Co-Grand Marshals **Audrey Gruss** and **Scott Snyder**

More than 600 men, women and children raised over \$400,000 on Saturday, February 15, at the second annual **Palm Beach Race of Hope to Defeat Depression**.

Race Co-Grand Marshals, HDRF Founder **Audrey Gruss** and Board member **Scott Snyder**, led the 5K run/walk starting and finishing at the Royal Poinciana Plaza.

Audrey Gruss said, "One of the most important things about the race is raising awareness and changing our culture's approach to mental health, ultimately saving lives. While research for this subject takes a while, here people are doing something active for the cause."

Best time medals went to **Dixon McDonald** (male) and **Marie Sippus** (female). **Paul Totman**, 66, was the winner for the Wheelchair Division. **Ben Allina** and **Meredith Woods** took home the top youth awards. Gruss and Snyder then presented **Kimberly Bitterman** and **Kristina McCoey** with an award to Sister Sledge as the Top Fundraising Team for raising over \$25,000 and presented **Linda Olsson** an award for Top Individual Fundraiser for raising \$1,767. The award for Largest Fundraising Team went to **Livingston Builders** with 26 runners.



Audrey Gruss (left) and **Scott Snyder** (second from left) with team **Sister Sledge**.



Cheers at the finish line.



A day for the whole family!

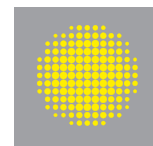
UPCOMING EVENTS

SOUTHAMPTON RACE OF HOPE

Sunday, August 2, 2020
Southampton, NY

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL HOPE LUNCHEON SEMINAR

Wednesday, November 11, 2020
The Plaza Hotel



SPRING 2020 ISSUE

SUPPORT HDRF

100% of all donations go directly to research into the origins, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of depression and its related mood disorders including: bipolar disorder, post-partum depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, and suicide.

HDRF is a non profit 501(c)(3) public charitable organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Visit us at:
hopefordepression.org