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Vicarious Defeat: A Novel Preclinical Model of Juvenile Depression

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Keynote Speaker

Dr. Sergio D. Iñiguez



Sergio Iñiguez, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at California State University, San Bernardino. Dr. Iñiguez earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology at CSUSB before completing the Ph.D. program in neuroscience at Florida State University. He returned to CSUSB in 2011 as a faculty member where he established a behavioral neuroscience laboratory that examines, at the preclinical level, how early-life exposure to stress and psychotropic drugs influence responses to mood-related behaviors in adulthood.

Title of Presentation: Vicarious Defeat: A novel preclinical model of juvenile depression

Abstract: Exposure to stress during early development is highly correlated with the emergence of mood-related illnesses, such as general anxiety and major depressive disorder. Because the first episode of clinical depression often emerges during the juvenile stage of development, in my laboratory, we are investigating how exposure to social stressors during adolescence may provide a novel way to examine stress-induced depression at the preclinical level. Specifically, using behavioral and pharmacological approaches, I will be presenting data indicating that experiencing and/or witnessing social stressors results in a depression-like behavioral profile that is reversible by chronic, but not acute, administration of traditional antidepressant medications, such as fluoxetine (Prozac). As such, these findings indicate that vicariously experiencing social stressors may be a potential novel animal model to study the neurobiological factors that precipitate the development of adolescent mood-related disorders.