

Vaccinating for Anxiety and Depression



Christopher A. Lowry

Associate Professor, Integrative Physiology and Center for Neuroscience

CURRENT RESEARCH

Innovative approaches to treatments of anxiety and affective disorders

Imagine a new treatment for anxiety and affective disorders that worked much like a vaccine against the flu yet, rather than fighting against a pathogen, this vaccine allowed the patient to have a period of time in which they didn't suffer from anxiety or depression. A treatment such as this would have implications affecting millions of patients in the United States alone. Consider a shot that could help prevent the long term hardships that PTSD brings to millions of military men and women and victims of trauma. Novel methods of treatment and prevention such as this are not as distant as one might think.

In fact, Dr. Christopher Lowry of the University of Colorado Boulder has been developing a treatment that is now poised to initiate clinical trials. Dr. Lowry's research seeks to understand the neural mechanisms underlying stress-related physiology and emotional behavior, with a focus on the role of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that is believed to have a profound effect on both anxiety and depression.

- Dr. Lowry has identified many types of serotonin neurons with various types of functions. By isolating specific serotonin neurons, his research has already characterized those implicated in inhibition of panic, causing depression and anxiety, and helping with stress resilience.
- The Hygiene Hypothesis states that we are no longer exposed to environmental bacteria that would help to build our immune system's tolerance. Therefore, our immune system has an inflammatory bias. By using *Mycobacterium vaccae*, a microorganism that co-evolved with humans and is therefore tolerated by the immune system, he hopes to be able to induce anti-inflammatory responses to prevent or...

AFFILIATION



University of Colorado, Boulder

EDUCATION

- Ph.D., in Zoology, 1995 . Oregon State University

AWARDS

- Young Investigator Award, NARSAD
- National Science Foundation, Career Award
- Young Investigator Award, NARSAD
- Donald F. Klein Early Career Investigator Award, Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA)

RESEARCH AREAS

Life Science, Health IT, Neurological / Cognitive, Veteran's Causes

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support the innovative research of Dr. Lowry as he seeks to find new methods to prevent and treat anxiety and affective disorders through the use of new therapies and vaccines, thereby applying a holistic approach to the treatment of disorders that affect millions of Americans each year.

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