

# Cutting-Edge Tools to Combat Depression



Snezana Milanovic  
Instructor, Psychiatry

## CURRENT RESEARCH

### Moving past the "trial and error" approach to psychiatric health

Depression is predicted to become the most common world health problem by 2020. Presently, up to 70% of patients continue to have depressive symptoms after their first antidepressant treatment, and up to 50% will stop taking antidepressants due to their side effects. Despite the grim statistics, progress in understanding the underpinnings of depression have been frustratingly slow. While many subtypes of depression exist, we currently lack the molecular tools to capture them. Dr. Snezana Milanovic, of Harvard Medical School, works to identify the "molecular alphabet" of depression. This will help accurately predict and treat depression than does the trial and error approach scientists have relied upon. Determined to alleviate human suffering, Dr. Milanovic and her lab ultimately hope to help decrease healthcare and work disability costs associated with depression treatment.


Using brain and blood metabolomics, a young research discipline that provides a window into numerous small molecules, Dr. Milanovic and her team are gaining an implicit understanding about gene-environment interactions. Collaborating with international and national researchers to build sensitive, cutting-edge tools that will efficiently detect various small metabolites in the brain and blood, Dr. Milanovic is applying these new detection methods to human models of stress resilience and susceptibility, depression, and early brain development. Therefore, as a young investigator tackling big research questions, Dr. Milanovic delineates from the traditional approach of detecting and treating psychiatric illness, and offers a refreshing perspective on the future of treatment and diagnoses.

Current research includes:

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## AFFILIATION

 MGH, a teaching Hospital of Harvard Medical School

## EDUCATION

- M.D., Psychiatry, 2003 , Yale School of Medicine

## AWARDS

- Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award
- Young Investigator Award, National Alliance for Research of Schizophrenia and Depression (NARSAD)
- Sarasota Opera Benefit, Southwest Florida Investigator
- Young Investigator Award, Brain and Behavior Research Foundation Award

## RESEARCH AREAS

Life Science, Diagnostics, Neurological / Cognitive, Veteran's Causes

## FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support the continued research of Dr. Snezana Milanovic, at Harvard Medical School, as she introduces reliable molecular tests and human research-based novel drug targets to psychiatric research. Donations will fund the \$76K required for the Stress Resilience and Susceptibility project, \$47K required for the Depression research, and \$94K for the Early Brain Development project. Join in ending the "trial and error" approach to psychiatric research and clinical practice; fund Dr. Milanovic and her group.

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