



Welcome to the first NYU Child Study Center (CSC) *Research Update*, featuring highlights from the 50-plus innovative research projects currently underway. Each of these studies represents a step forward as we build on cutting-edge research in brain imaging, neuroscience, and genetics to develop new treatments and preventive strategies for millions of children and teens with or at risk for psychiatric and learning disorders.

F. Xavier Castellanos, M.D., *Director of Research NYU CSC; Brooke and Daniel Neidich Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; and Director, Phyllis Green and Randolph Cōwen Institute for Pediatric Neuroscience.*

## New Non-Medical Treatments Being Evaluated for Preschoolers with ADHD

**Institute for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity and Behavior Disorders**  
 Howard Abikoff, Ph.D., a 30-year-veteran of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) research, is investigating the effectiveness of new non-medical treatment options for preschoolers with ADHD. Funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Dr. Abikoff's study involves comparing a home-based treatment program with a clinic-based treatment program aimed at a) improving the parenting skills of parents of young children with ADHD and b) reducing ADHD symptoms and behavioral problems. This work has significant implications in terms of early prevention of the negative, long-lasting results of untreated ADHD in kids, which contribute to under-achievement, family conflicts and problems with peers. *Dr. Abikoff is the Pevaroff-Cohn Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and; Director, Institute for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity and Behavior Disorders.*

## Early Family Intervention Beneficial for Young Children at High Risk for Delinquency

**Institute for Prevention Science**  
 A ten-year NIMH-funded study led by Laurie Miller Brotman, Ph.D. has demonstrated that enhancing parenting practices and child social competence in low-income families is effective in preventing conduct problems. After a group intervention with preschool-aged siblings of delinquent youth and their parents, it was found that parents used fewer negative practices and more responsive parenting, and children showed improved social skills with peers and less physical aggression. Other positive outcomes of early intervention include less antisocial behavior by older siblings at school and lower rates of obesity in adolescent girls. In addition, children in the program developed an adaptive stress response (measured by salivary cortisol, a stress hormone), in anticipation of a challenging social situation. Based on these impressive findings, Dr. Brotman and her research team are now testing ParentCorps, a family and school intervention program, on 1,000 children in socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhood schools in Brooklyn, New York. *Dr. Brotman is the Corzine Family Associate Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; Director,*

*Harris Obesity Prevention Effort (HOPE); and Director, Institute for Prevention Science.*

## New Grant Helps Researchers Find Causes of Psychiatric Disorders

**Phyllis Green and Randolph Cōwen Institute for Pediatric Neuroscience**  
 The Stavros Niarchos Foundation recently awarded a two-year, \$375,000 challenge grant to the NYU Child Study Center. The project uses functional magnetic imaging (fMRI) to monitor brain activity patterns and brain structure in an effort to determine the underlying causes of psychiatric disorders. This work aims to find methods for earlier identification and treatment of children at risk for psychiatric disorders. Matching gifts to fund this project are being sought.

## Stimulant Medication Does Not Increase Risk for Later Substance Abuse

**Child Study Center and Nathan S. Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research**  
 New findings of a 17-year follow-up study of boys, conducted by Salvatore Mannuzza, Ph.D., Rachel G. Klein, Ph.D., and F. Xavier Castellanos, M.D. demonstrate that early treatment of children with stimulant medication for ADHD does not increase their risk for substance abuse later in life and may actually have beneficial long-term effects. For the first time, this new study shows that the risk of substance abuse was lowest in the group of boys who began treatment at an early age, but the rate of drug abuse was higher in those who began treatment at later ages, for example, between 8 and 12. These significant findings allay concerns expressed by parents and the clinical community that stimulant treatment in early childhood might lead to later substance abuse disorders. *Dr. Mannuzza is Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Dr. Klein is the Fascitelli Family Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; and Director, Anita Saltz Institute for Anxiety and Mood Disorders.*

