

Catch the NNDC Presentations

at the American Psychiatric Association 2026 Annual Meeting

National Network of Depression Centers (NNDC) Best Practices In Mood Disorders

Chair: Mark Rapaport, MD. **Presenters:** Erika Saunders, MD, Michael Thase, MD, Mark Frye, MD, C. Neill Epperson, MD and Mark Rapaport, MD
May 17, 1:30-5:30 PM | Moscone Convention Center

Abstract: The National Network of Depression Centers (NNDC) Best Practices for Mood Disorders, at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, will provide clinically relevant updates that inform the management of mood disorders and associated comorbidities. All clinical treatments with an evidence base (FDA approval, positive controlled study, consensus guidelines) underscore the efficacy of the specific treatment. However, they do not provide a road map on how best to individualize the treatment, nor do they provide an algorithm or road map on when to consider a specific treatment and how to integrate that treatment with other existing modalities. Therefore, practitioners are challenged with the synthesis and application of infinite permutations of treatment approaches. The NNDC faculty are active, leading clinicians informed by new research, and committed to meet the mission of NNDC – to advance scientific discovery, and to provide stigma free, evidence-based care to patients with depressive and bipolar illnesses. After a brief introduction to the mission and vision of the NNDC, Dr. Saunders will review key real-world clinical examples that highlight distinguishing features of major depressive and bipolar disorders, subtype and specifier patterns, as well as the differential or comorbid diagnosis of borderline personality and or substance use disorders. Dr. Thase will review an ever-increasing array of treatment options for depression and the associated challenges as to synthesizing road map of recommendations for difficult to treatment depression. As FDA approved options are much narrow in scope, Dr. Frye will then review on and off label treatment strategies for bipolar depression, rapid cycling / mixed symptoms, and associated comorbidities. Dr. Epperson will provide an overview of key endocrine and clinical features of pre-menstrual, peri-, and post menopause and treatment strategies to optimize mood and cognition. Finally, Dr. Rapaport will introduce the concept of a biomarker, with an emphasis of inflammatory markers, and their potential utility to provide greater precision in pharmacotherapy of mood disorders. Each Q&A will be attended by a majority of speakers for the entire course.

Transforming Women’s Mental Health Care: The National Network of Depression Centers in Action

Chair: Aysegul Ozerdem, MD, PhD. **Presenters:** Sandra Weiss, PhD, DNSc, FAAN, Marie Gaine, PhD, Ritika Baweja, MD, Aysegul Ozerdem, MD, PhD, Sarah Nagle-Yang, MD,
May 19, 1:30-3:00 pm PST | Moscone Convention Center.

Abstract: Women are twice as likely as men to experience major depressive disorder, with risk rising at puberty and persisting across the lifespan. Over one in three U.S. women will be diagnosed, often with greater severity and distinct symptom profiles. Suicide data underscores the need for gender-sensitive prevention. Yet the complex interplay of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors affecting women’s mental health remains understudied. The Women and Mood Disorders Task Group of the National Network of Depression Centers (NNDC) seeks to address these gaps through collaborative research, community engagement, and identification of unmet needs. This session will highlight the group’s work on gender-specific phenotypes, female-specific biological stress responses linked to depression, sociocultural influences on risk and treatment, and maternal suicide prevention. Presentations from a biobehavioral expert, neuroscientist, and reproductive psychiatrists will include NNDC Mood Outcomes data on gender differences, HPA axis mechanisms and biomarkers, case-based social determinants, and a community-driven model to advance maternal suicide prevention. Each segment will conclude with Q&A.

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Medical Education across borders. NGOs fulfilling the CME mission in the Americas

Chair: Bernardo Ng, MD, **Presenters:** Thelma Sanchez, MD, Ruby Castilla, MD, Mark Frye, MD, and Nancy Colimon, MD

May 19, 3:45-5:15 PST | Moscone Convention Center

Abstract: In psychiatry as well as in other fields of medicine, the continuation of medical education and professional development after residency is one of the pillars to maintain qualified, precise, compassionate, and evidence-based competencies for proper provision of care. This is also true in Latin America, however, the infrastructure to provide ongoing and updated CMEs sometimes proves to be insufficient especially in smaller countries. Therefore, the tendency had been for Latin American psychiatrists to travel to the United States to attain such education, which has markedly gone down due to a variety of reasons (i.e. registration fees, visa issues, anti-immigrant environment, travel costs), creating a growing breach in the completion of such education. This symposium will elaborate on how existing NGO's have worked together in closing this growing educational gap, by bringing educators across the border to the Latin American psychiatrists, either virtually or in person. Bridging Anglo America and Latin America presents its own challenges (i.e., language, connectivity, demographics, culture, technology cost) and advantages (i.e., travel cost, visa issues, shared culture) which are the substance of this presentation. This presentation will also offer examples of success, which has extended to the creation of research networks, hybrid educational programs, opportunities for international collaboration and publications, strongly suggesting that the progress of science is not limited by geographical borders.

National Network of Depression Centers (NNDC) Revisiting Contrasting Dopamine Antagonist / Agonist Mechanism of Actions in Clinical Practice of Mood Disorders

Chair: Mark Frye, MD, **Presenters:** Mark Frye MD, Alfredo Cuellar Barboza, MD and Dr. Giselle Scaini, PharmD, PhD

May 20, 10:30 AM-12 pm PST | Moscone Convention Center

Abstract: For more than 50 years, the dopamine hypothesis has been a mainstay with classic CSF studies showing increased and decreased levels of dopamine metabolite homovanillic acid (HVA) in mania and depression respectively. In turn, the mood disorder pharmacopoeia has a clinical evidence base focused on dopamine, but with contrasting antagonist and agonist treatment interventions that can give an appearance of conflicting recommendations. This symposia will focus on the contrasting clinical evidence base that can generate clinical dilemmas how to then help answer the following questions: 1) whether to pursue dopamine antagonism in mania (vs lithium, valproate), 2) why would similar dopamine antagonist have efficacy in adjunct depression treatment, 3) how best to use dopamine agonists (non-mood stabilizer, non-unimodal antidepressant) targeting depression, and 4) the potential role of sex differences and biomarkers to help guide greater precision to dopaminergic treatment selection in mood disorders. Dr. Frye will present a 50-year historical perspective of dopamine and drug development in mood disorders. Dr. Cuellar Barboza will review the role of antagonism in treating mania and provide insights into additional efficacy of antipsychotics in bipolar depression and adjunct major depression. Dr. Frye will review the role of positive dopamine modulation such a partial dopamine agonist, wakefulness promoting agents and stimulants for bipolar depression and adjunct major depression. Finally, Dr. Scaini will review the potential of biomarker development to provide greater precision to individualizing dopaminergic treatments in mood discord.

Don't miss the NNDC Reception at the APA Annual Meeting!

Date: Saturday, May 16, 2026

Time: 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. PST

Location: 111 Minna Gallery, 111 Minna Street, San Francisco, CA

Cost: Free, with pre-registration required

NOTE: The venue capacity is capped at 250, and we had that many attendees last year, so we expect to sell out! Sign up early to grab your spot!

