

Innovatively Exploring New Approaches to Diagnosing and Treating Infection and Inflammation-triggered Neuropsychiatric Conditions



Jennifer Frankovich

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CURRENT RESEARCH

Understanding the drivers of these inflammatory brain diseases will lead to improved diagnosis and treatment with the ultimate goal to prevent serious and permanent neuropsychiatric illness

During childhood and adolescence, some children experience sudden-onset neuropsychiatric deteriorations. Known as "Pediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS)," symptoms of this illness include abrupt-onset obsessions, compulsions, eating restrictions, anxiety, cognitive impairment, memory problems, academic decline, movement disorders, severe sleep disruptions, and behavioral changes. Currently, PANS has not been widely recognized as an illness; therefore, no epidemiologic studies have occurred to understand this condition. Dr. Jennifer Frankovich, Associate Professor of Pediatric Rheumatology and Co-Director of the PANS Clinic and Research Program at Stanford University, is exploring PANS and the key role infections play in its development. When children are not diagnosed early, infection-triggered inflammation injures brain tissue causing severe psychiatric disability. Dr. Frankovich wants to treat and prevent deteriorations, which will lead to overall improved well-being and prevent expensive, lifelong institutionalization.

The standard approach to treat children suffering from this growing epidemic uses psychotherapy and psychiatric medications alone, which have proven largely ineffective. By identifying which infections and inflammatory processes tip a child into a deterioration, Dr. Frankovich's novel approach enables the discovery of treatments that restores the brain-immune and vascular health and allows the mind to heal after the inflammatory process stops. When patients come into their clinic, the patient undergoes a systematic assessment for infections, inflammation, and autoimmune disease. By targeting the source of neuronal and vascular inflammation in the brain, including...

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AFFILIATION

 Stanford University

EDUCATION

- Pediatric Residency, Stanford University
- Pediatric Rheumatology Fellowship, Stanford University
- M.S. in Clinical Epidemiology, Stanford University
- M.D. in Medicine, University of Nevada, School of Medicine

AWARDS

- School of Medicine Academic Excellence Award, 1998
- School of Medicine Professionalism Award, 1999
- Alpha Omega Alpha Award, University of Nevada School of Medicine, 2000
- Senatorial Recognition, Regents Scholar Award from the University of Nevada Board of Regents, 2001
- American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology, Chrysalis Award and Scholarship, 2001
- and 4 more...

RESEARCH AREAS

Life Science, Genomics / Congenital, Immunology / Inflammatory, Neurological / Cognitive

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will help fund the Stanford PANS Clinic and Research Program, so that they can discover better ways to diagnose, treat, and prevent severe neuropsychiatric deteriorations in youth, which will lead to overall improved well-being and prevent lifelong institutionalization of these young people. Costs include \$2M/year to run the current PANS clinic and research program, and \$3M/year to expand their biobank and hire an epidemiology team to report on current clinical data, which would enable more basic science collaborations. Therefore, a range of donations would be of help in furthering Dr. Frankovich's research. Play a role in discovering opportunities to catch this illness early and prevent future deterioration; fund Dr. Frankovich and the Stanford PANS Team.