

## PNIRSA<sub>Asia-Pacific</sub> Annual Committee Report

June 1, 2020 – May 31, 2021

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We all know this has been a tough year for families, professions and particularly global academic research meetings. This is certainly true for PNIRSA<sub>Asia-Pacific</sub>, whose goal is to connect professors, post-docs and both graduate and undergraduates interested in brain, behavior and immunity research in the Asia-Pacific region with other laboratories throughout the world. In our humble view, this goal was significantly stymied this year for four major reasons: (a) Spread of SARS-CoV-2, officially declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020 by the World Health Organization, (b) major cuts to University funding and blows to University income sources, (c) growth in global divisiveness and (d) policies promoting scientific/research protectiveness that strain global scientific collaborations. Our hope is that the rising temperature and the controversies related to each of these issues will abate during the coming year. The work of PNIRSA<sub>Asia-Pacific</sub> is needed now more than ever.

Although paradoxical, SARS-CoV-2 and Covid19 are advancing psychoneuroimmunology research in the same way that HIV and AIDS did in the 1990s. Fever, cognition, mental health, sleep, fatigue, pain, stress, age, comorbid conditions - all integrative, physiological, whole-body research areas that have long engaged PNIRSA society members – are now not only in the scientific literature but also in our daily news. And the large number of Covid-19 papers that Carmine has brought to *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity* is very impressive. Indeed, a very timely special issue entitled,

“Immunopsychiatry of COVID-19 Pandemic,” was organized by Carmine and Associate Editor Kuan-Pin Su. This series published 94 papers between March 25 and July 10, 2020 from laboratories all over the world. A little less than half of the papers (42) originated from Australasia (22 papers were featured from Chinese Mainland, 4 from the Taiwan region, 5 from Singapore, and 11 more from other Asian-Pacific countries). We would like to think that the work that PNIRS **Asia-Pacific** has done for the past 9 years contributed in a very positive way to this growing visibility of psychoneuroimmunology in the whole of Australasia.

That said, we also have some other good news to share. (a) thanks to our growing collaboration with biomedical scientists from the Taiwan region, and moving toward making the 2020 meeting available globally, last November we were still able to participate in a successful virtual PNIRS **Asia-Pacific** symposium at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Mind-Body Interface meeting, (b) Chinese, Japanese, Australian and American scientists worked together to publish a paper in *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity* that summarized the contributions of scientists from their respective countries to psychoneuroimmunology research, (c) significant growth of registrants at the new PNIRS **Asia-Pacific** Global Connections website and (d) development of a major social media marketing campaign to promote the chief goals of PNIRS **Asia-Pacific** throughout the Asia-Pacific region. For more details, read on....

### **CONTINUING OUR COLLABORATION WITH THE TAIWAN REGION'S MIND-BODY INTERFACE MEETING**

The PNIRS **Asia-Pacific** committee was once again invited by Professors Jane (Pay) Pei-Chen Chang, Hui-Chih Chang and Kuan-Pin Su to their 10<sup>th</sup> annual Mind-Body Interface symposium. Michael Irwin, a past-president of PNIRS, was honored as a keynote speaker. Eight other professors from five different countries represented PNIRS by presenting lectures at this virtual conference. Despite the challenges presented by the Covid19 pandemic, the conference was a stellar example of how a hybrid in-person video conference can work and successfully permit many speakers from both the East and West to present their newest data. A special thanks to everyone for their time and service. The organizers and PNIRS **Asia-Pacific** are now beginning to plan the 2021 MBI conference in the Taiwan region that will be held on October 23 and 24. Make sure to add this meeting to your conference schedule this year.

**PNIRS **Asia-Pacific** Speakers at the 2020 Mind-Body Symposium**

<http://www.mbisymposium.org/index.php>



**X** | **10th Mind-Body Interface International Symposium**  
PNIRSAAsia-Pacific Symposium  
ISNPR Regional Meeting

## The Mind Maze

Early Life Experiences That Shape Adult Health of Mind and Body

**Oct. 30 – Nov. 1, 2020**  
Taichung & Tainan, TAIWAN



Michael Irwin, **USA**  
[Detail...](#)



Keith Kelley, **USA**  
[Detail...](#)



Annabelle Réaux-Le Goazigo, **France**  
[Detail...](#)



Jan Pieter Konsman, **France**  
[Detail...](#)



Sanae Hasegawa-Ishii, **Japan**  
[Detail...](#)



Teresa M. Reyes, **USA**  
[Detail...](#)



Sarah J. Spencer, **Australia**  
[Detail...](#)



Elisa Hill-Yardin, **Australia**  
[Detail...](#)



Michael Dragnow, **New Zealand**  
[Detail...](#)

### **BRAIN, BEHAVIOR, AND IMMUNITY: PNIRSA**Asia-Pacific** GOES EAST**

Past-President Manfred Schedlowski officially established PNIRSA**China** in 2012. This affiliate was expanded to the whole of Asia in 2017 with the new name of PNIRSA**Asia-Pacific**. After eight years of existence, Professors Kuan-Pin Su and Huanxing Su asked our committee to summarize the history and progress of this relatively new PNIRS initiative in their special issue on "PsychoNeuroImmunity (PNI) Research in East Asia" that focused on Asia-Pacific laboratories. Leading scientists from five countries (two from Chinese Mainland, one from the Taiwan region, one from Japan, two from Australia and one from the USA) worked together on this project, and their paper was published as the featured article in that special issue of in *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*. The authors not only described the success and growth of PNIRSA**Asia-Pacific** but also summarized their countries' contributions to psychoneuroimmunology research.

Kelley, K.W., Y.P. Peng, Q. Liu, H.C. Chang, S.J. Spencer, M. Hutchinson and A. Shimada. 2020. PsychoNeuroImmunology goes east: Development of the PNIRS<sup>China</sup> affiliate and its expansion into PNIRS<sup>Asia-Pacific</sup>. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*. 88:75-87. [doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2020.04.026](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2020.04.026)

### **PNIRS<sup>Asia-Pacific</sup> GLOBAL CONNECTIONS WEBSITE**

Just before Covid19 closed the doors to international travel, the PNIRS<sup>Asia-Pacific</sup> committee launched a new website, coined PNIRS<sup>Asia-Pacific</sup> Global Connections (<https://pnirs.ansc.illinois.edu>). Unfortunate timing! However, the goal of this new initiative is to connect laboratories in the Asia-Pacific region with those in the West in order to promote and expand global psychoneuroimmunology research. The website is publically available and registration is free. To register, all that is needed is the scientist's name, country, email address, link to the scientist's website and specific interest in psychoneuroimmunology, broadly defined as neuroscience, immunology or clinical. This site provides quick and easy access and connections to Asia-Pacific scientists engaged in brain, behavior, and immunity research. Despite the Covid19 pandemic, more than 90 scientists have already signed up at this website. A little more that 75% of the registrants are <45 years of age and about half are female. This initiative is already providing a basis for collaborative interactions and for sourcing the very best scientists to speak at conference symposia and related events.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING CAMPAIGN THROUGHOUT ASIA**

We contracted with a private marketing company in the United Kingdom to promote psychoneuroimmunology research throughout the entire Asia-Pacific region. They have already developed a two-page marketing brochure, written in both English and Mandarin, complete with novel figures and promotional materials. We are now working on a video abstract. The company has assured us that these materials will generate at least 50,000 views at leading hospitals and biomedical academic centers throughout Australasia with an emphasis on China. The current plan is to release these marketing campaign materials in the second half of 2021, depending on the status of the Covid19 pandemic.

### **DEVELOPMENTS FOR 2021-2022 PNIRS<sup>Asia-Pacific</sup> SYMPOSIA**

We will continue to promote the goals of PNIRS<sup>Asia-Pacific</sup> by bringing together our members and interested parties at meeting symposia. It will be more challenging than ever

to be globally inclusive given the current nearly worldwide travel restrictions. Nevertheless, thanks to the leadership of Professor Shimada in Tokyo, the Japanese Society for Neuroimmunology (JSNI) has invited PNIRS **Asia-Pacific** to participate in their October 21, 2021 hybrid meeting in Fukuoka. Following our successful PNIRS **Asia-Pacific** symposium at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Japan Neuroscience Society, JSNI members want to learn more about the goals of PNIRS. Current PNIRS President Julie Bower was selected by the PNIRS **Asia-Pacific** committee to present this lecture. She has informally agreed to accept this nomination, and now the JSNI is in the process of sending her a formal invitation. We have also submitted a formal proposal to the Australasian Neuroscience Society (ANS) meeting to be held this fall, 2021 in Melbourne. If accepted, this symposium will feature up-and-coming key emerging scholars. Recently, we began discussing the possibility of holding a hybrid meeting in Dalian, China in August, 2021. Although just in its formative stages, the meeting would be hosted by Professor Quentin Liu and the central theme would be psychoneuroimmunology and cancer. Finally, we are developing another symposium proposal for New Zealand's prestigious Australasian Winter Conference on Brain Research to be held later this year in Queenstown. Who knows, some of us may even be able to attend one of these meetings in person!