

1907 Foundation Announces the two Young Mental Health Scientists Selected for the Second Annual 1907 Trailblazer Award

1907 Foundation announced the recipients of the second annual 1907 Trailblazer Award today.

NAPLES, FL, UNITED STATES, December 26, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- 1907 Foundation announced the recipients of the second annual 1907 Trailblazer Award today. The two-year grants, valued at \$120,000 each, were awarded to two promising scientists to pursue novel mental health research proposals:



Our second year of the 1907 Trailblazer Award is a testament to the multidisciplinary approach. We are excited by these emerging scientists seeking uncharted territory across disciplines..."

Guoping Feng, PhD

Jonathan Power, MD, PhD for his proposal "Serial neuroimaging in pregnancy: linking neurosteroids to brain changes and mood."

Hongying (Hoy) Shen, PhD for her proposal "Enabling a metabolic approach to the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders."

"Our second year of the 1907 Trailblazer Award is a

testament to the multidisciplinary approach. We are excited by these emerging scientists seeking uncharted territory across disciplines and patient samples" said Guoping Feng, MD, PhD, Co-Founder and Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board at 1907 Foundation.

Dr. Jonathan Power is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medicine. Dr. Power's research will detect how women's brains and hormone levels change over pregnancy, and what specific kinds of structural and functional brain changes mark or predict peripartum mental illness by repetitive MRI scanning throughout pregnancy.

"Pregnancy is a common time window for developing mental illness, affecting 1 in 5 women. Brain scans, paired with biological and emotional measures, could help show why and how these illnesses develop, but scientists almost never scan pregnant women... We propose to scan women repeatedly over pregnancy, using cutting-edge, efficient, and safe scan techniques, while tracking their hormone levels and mood. We will detect, in individual women, how brains change over pregnancy, and what specific kinds of structural and functional brain changes mark or predict peripartum mental illness."

Dr. Hoy Shen is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Physiology, Yale School of Medicine. Recent findings in human genetics have implicated dozens of metabolic enzymes of unknown functions in psychiatric disorders. This presents an opportunity for Dr. Shen's research to overcome the limitations of the mainstream focus on neurotransmitters in the chemical imbalance theory of mental illness, where results have been stymied by ineffective treatments, difficult side effects, and the lack of molecular biomarkers.

"My laboratory studies cellular metabolism, cell biology and metabolomics to characterize "orphan" metabolic enzymes and transporters encoded in the human genome... Uncovering these unknown metabolic activities could generate fundamental biological insights into the complexity of the human metabolome operated in the human brain and bridge the knowledge gap at the interface between metabolism and neuroscience, while also holding translational potential to uncover new biochemical bases for brain disorders."

Her goal is to elucidate the roles of these novel brain enzymes to create transformative knowledge of biochemical mechanisms that cause mental illness. They expect their findings to enable novel metabolic approaches for the diagnosis and treatment of a range of psychiatric conditions.

"Even in science, confirmation bias can be a negative influence on what theories get supported. 1907 Foundation is building a system to reduce this effect as much as possible and reward fresh ideas rather than suppress them," said Vanessa Tolosa, PhD and Chair of the Scientific Research Committee at 1907 Foundation.

To support cutting-edge research in mental health and sponsor a promising young researcher's Trailblazer Award, please make a contribution to 1907 Foundation at <https://1907.foundation/donate>.

Visit <https://1907.foundation> and follow 1907 Foundation on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for updates about the Trailblazer Awards.

About 1907 Foundation:

1907 Foundation is a public charity that funds innovative mental health research. The 1907 Foundation team of scientists, technologists and investors take a blinded, software-assisted approach for deciding on which novel research projects to fund. The 1907 Trailblazer Award is granted annually to a select cohort of early career MDs and PhDs at leading hospitals and universities. Donations support young scientists' investigation of the causes and cures of mental illness.

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