Clinical Research Training Track Alumni

2026

Brennan Carrithers, MD

Brennan Carrithers holds a BS in Biology and Psychology from Georgetown College and an MS in Biophysics & Physiology with a concentration on Integrative Medicine from Georgetown University, where he initially developed an interest in cultural and traditional medicine. He later earned an MD/MBA from the University of Louisville School of Medicine. His work with the NYU Center for Psychedelic Medicine began early in his residency, where he has since contributed to multiple ongoing and upcoming clinical trials. These include studies on psilocybin-assisted therapy for cancer-related existential distress, depression, alcohol and tobacco use disorders, and LSD for pain in advanced cancer. His research primarily focuses on investigating the long-term effects of psychedelic therapy and elucidating underlying mechanisms driving therapeutic efficacy, particularly in addiction-spectrum disorders.

Benjamin Trnka, MD

Benjamin Trnka grew up in Seattle within the ex-Yugoslavian diaspora, informing his third-culture identity and appetite for languages. He completed his BA in Biology (Neuroscience) at the University of Chicago, while also pursuing subjects in South Asian Studies, leading to his Fulbright-Nehru
Research Fellowship (Public Health) in New Delhi. There, he developed the concept of 'chakkar' as 'social vertigo,' a unique idiom of distress. Then, as a Yenching scholar at Peking University (Philosophy and Religion) in Beijing, he situated the displacement of the local category 'shenjing shuairuo' for' depression' within wider trends of Western Psychiatric hegemony. While earning his MD at the University of Washington, his fieldwork in Sarajevo led to a localized model for intergenerational resilience among young professionals. Threading his academic engagements are themes of individual agency, cultural expression, and structural constraints, which now inform his work with the Nathan Kline Institute. Alongside mentor Helen-Maria Lekas, he studies the agential and enjoying emergentist theories of agency and Lekas' reworking of Bourdieu's habitus. Dr. Trnka's research involves both patients and providers across New York State and the role of consult-liaison providers in these encounters. Through this research, he hopes to enrich our understanding of structural constraints and enablement in our health systems in order to reduce further harm to already vulnerable populations. In doing so, Dr. Trnka also contends that the insights of social theory can pair with the pragmatics of psychiatric work to generate even more ethical and humanistic clinical practices.

2024

David Liebers, MD

David Liebers is originally from upstate New York and earned a B.S. and B.A. at the University of Rochester, where he developed an interest in genetics and the history of medicine. He studied the history and philosophy of science at the University of Cambridge, where he worked on the philosophy of biology. He earned an M.D. and M.P.P. from Harvard Medical School and Harvard Kennedy School, where his research investigated how polygenic risk scores may predict illness course in mood disorders. His current focus is on novel therapeutics for psychiatric conditions that target abnormal brain bioenergetic metabolism and treatments that could potentially be "disease-modifying." He is currently leading a clinical trial studying the effects of an antidiabetic medication in the SGLT-2 inhibitor class in major depressive disorder.

2023

Mira Milad, MD

After earning her undergraduate and medical school degrees in Lebanon, Mira developed an interest in studying the neural mechanisms of anxiety and trauma. She completed postdoctoral training, studying the neuroscience of trauma- and stress-related disorders at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital and then at the University of Illinois at Chicago before joining the Psychiatry Residency at NYU Grossman School of Medicine. She used functional MRI to explore brain network mechanisms in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other psychiatric disorders and studied the influence of cognitive modulators on brain activations. During residency, she gained additional training in computational modeling and advanced statistics to interrogate large neuroimaging datasets, including task-based and resting-state functional MRI, in patients with PTSD and other diagnoses. The overarching goal of her training was to improve diagnostic accuracy and enhance the efficacy of current therapies for anxiety- and trauma-related disorders.

Petros Petridis, MD

Petros Petridis received his BA in biology at Columbia University before completing an MS in biomedical engineering supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Petros remained at Columbia for his MD, where he spent an additional year researching applications of functional MRI for detecting brain tumor infiltration. Petros works within NYU Langone's Center for Psychedelic Medicine. His current research interests are focused on understanding the therapeutic potential of psychedelic compounds for treating a variety of psychiatric conditions. He plans to use resting-state and task-based blood oxygenation level–dependent functional MRI, along with other advanced techniques, to elucidate the neural correlates by which psychedelics exert their effects.

2022

Yoonju Cho, MD, PhD

Yoonju Cho began her training in neuroscience at Johns Hopkins University, where she studied sensory perception via psychophysics on human subjects as well as electrophysiology of single-cell recordings from awake, behaving animals. Through her MD/PhD training at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, she became fascinated by how psychiatric disorders such as depression can influence sensory perception, and treating their psychiatric disorders could alter the sensory experience in those patients. Yoonju's research interests include investigating neurobiological pathophysiology of psychiatric disorders and advancing neurostimulation treatment methods such as electroconvulsive therapy, transcranial magnetic stimulation, and photo-biomodulation.

Daniel Roberts, MD

Daniel Roberts is interested in exploring the therapeutic potential of psychedelic compounds in a psychotherapeutic framework. He is currently involved in a phase 2 clinical trial exploring the treatment potential of psilocybin for major depressive disorder, and as part of the current faculty at NYU, he plans to expand his involvement into the growing number of psychedelic research projects here at NYU Grossman School of Medicine. Daniel earned his BA in philosophy and religious studies at Purdue University and his MSW from the University of Michigan. He worked as a clinical social worker focusing in the area of co-occurring disorders before completing his MD at the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine.

2021

Wei (“Vic”) Qi, MA

“Vic” Qi graduated from Shanghai Jiao Tong University, School of Medicine, with postdoctoral training in psychiatry, and received an MA in clinical psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. She studied post-traumatic stress disorder risk prediction before starting her residency at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, which led to her fascination with the neurobiology of schizophrenia. Her dream is to one day develop an effective treatment for negative symptoms of schizophrenia.

Mu Xu, MD, PhD

Mu Xu earned his PhD in developmental genetics at NYU in the laboratory of Christine Rushlow, PhD, where he studied transcription regulation in fruit fly embryogenesis. He then conducted his postdoctoral research in fly muscle development in the laboratory of Mary Baylies, PhD, at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Subsequently, Mu went on to obtain his MD from the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine. His research interests include precision medicine, integrating molecular biomarkers to predict responses to different medications in military veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders. Another aspect of his research is clinical trials on the efficacy of some medications in subjects with both post-traumatic stress disorder and alcohol use disorder.