The UTHealth Center of Excellence on Mood Disorders at the Faillace Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences is collaborating with LivaNova, a global medical technology company, to start a new clinical trial - the “RECOVER study” - to help treat depression.

One out of every three patients who have tried several antidepressant treatments still have symptoms of depression, according to LivaNova. For the study, vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) therapy is used to treat the depression symptoms.

VNS is a well-studied treatment approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for patients with treatment-resistant depression. VNS involves a small surgical procedure that places a pulse generator in the patient’s chest area. The generator is connected to the left vagus nerve by a wire threaded underneath the skin. The device is programmed to give an electric current in a continuous cycle for a set amount of time. After that period has passed, the process will repeat itself.
The RECOVER study is designed in partnership with the nation’s top experts in treatment-resistant depression to provide additional evidence of the benefits VNS therapy offers.

We are actively looking for patients to participate in the RECOVER study. Those who participate in the study will receive VNS therapy and all study-related care at no cost to them.

To join the RECOVER study, you must be 18 years and:

- Currently depressed
- Have depression, or bipolar depression, that has lasted for more than two years or recurred several times
- Have tried at least four types of antidepressant treatments and not found them helpful

To see if you qualify for the study, visit [https://recovervns.com/](https://recovervns.com/)

---

**Faculty spotlight:**

**Anderson finds passion in neuropsychology treatment**

Kendra Anderson, PhD, the inaugural clinical neuropsychologist at UTHealth Harris County Psychiatric Center. In her role, she administers brief and comprehensive neuropsychological batteries to assist attending psychiatrists with fine-tuning their differential diagnosis and discharge recommendations for patients.

Neuropsychology is an applied science that focuses on brain-behavior relationships. Clinical neuropsychologists use their specialized knowledge in brain systems and assessment tools to assess and diagnose changes in brain functioning associated with medical, neurological, neurodevelopmental, and psychiatric conditions, as well as identify how these brain changes impact an individual’s day-to-day functioning.

Anderson has always been interested in what drives people’s behavior. She was inspired to get into psychology, ultimately settling in neuropsychology, after her grandfather lost his battle with leukemia. Being close to her grandfather, Anderson wondered how her family’s experience might have been different if a psychologist had been present to suggest coping mechanisms. Would her grandfather’s quality of life have been better throughout his illness with help from a psychologist?

After completing her internship at the Faillace Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and neuropsychology fellowship in the Department of Neurology, Anderson has had the opportunity to provide neuropsychological services to individuals, give brief therapy interventions, and supervise psychology interns and psychiatry residents.

Anderson is excited to be doing her life’s work while having opportunities to continue to grow and learn from her peers and help underserved communities.

“I work with an amazing team of psychologists. My colleagues are leaders in their own areas of specialty, and I learn from them daily. Perhaps the best part about my job is that I get to enact aspects of my core values, such as social justice and advocacy when working with patients, every day.”
When she’s not working, Anderson has a 10-month-old son that keep her extremely busy. She enjoys trying new restaurants in the area as well as watching her favorite sports team, the Houston Rockets. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she’s picked up photography as a hobby.

**Sanches starts bipolar disorder clinic**

Marsal Sanches, MD, PhD, is starting a specialty bipolar disorder outpatient clinic at the Faillace Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences as a part of the UTHealth Center of Excellence on Mood Disorders.

Bipolar disorder is a highly prevalent and potentially disabling condition, according to Sanches. This, along with the backing of the department, inspired him to start the clinic, aiming at offering high-quality treatment for patients suffering from bipolar disorder.

The clinic will focus on state-of-the-art pharmacological treatment, using medication to address mood symptoms and reduce their intensity, as well as supportive psychotherapy techniques. Sanches’ goal is to contribute to improve patients’ outcomes and their function and well-being in battling bipolar disorder.

Sanches hopes this clinic will become an example of excellent bipolar disorder treatment for the Greater Houston area. He also hopes to facilitate research studies in the clinic, addressing novel treatment strategies for bipolar disorder.

Sanches is excited for the possibilities the clinic can provide the community.

“This is an amazing opportunity,” Sanches said. “I’m extremely thankful to the Faillace Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences’ leadership for this honor.”

Read more about bipolar disorder [here](#).

**2021 psychiatry update conference preview**

The UTHealth 2021 Psychiatry Update Conference is will take place on Saturday, April 10, 2021. This year’s topic, titled “Treatment Innovation for Veterans and First Responders,” will explore the needs of active military, veterans, and first responders and how to help those experiencing psychological problems in the aftermath of traumatic life experiences.

An expert group of speakers in treating veterans and first responders will present at the conference, which will be held virtually.

Topics include firefighter resilience strategies; first responders:
Deborah Little, PhD, professor in the Faillace Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, will give a lecture titled “Early Intervention to Reduce Caregiver Burden.” Little specializes in working with combat veterans and their families. This is just one of many lectures presented at the conference.

Registration is currently open for the 2021 UTHealth Psychiatry Update conference. Until December 31, we are running an early bird special. Health care providers can use the code 1688HCP-1 ($200 – regular price $300) and students can use 1688STUDENT-1 ($100 – regular price $150) to receive their discount.

Register for the conference [here](#).

---

**Participate in the following COVID-19 surveys**

Scott Lane, PhD, and Salih Selek, MD

Please take a few moments to participate in a survey on how you've been doing during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was put together by Scott Lane, PhD, and Salih Selek, MD, to explore how the pandemic has affected the UTHealth community’s mental health. All results will remain anonymous. Take the survey [here](#).
Jane Hamilton, PhD, MPH, invites you to participate in a large international survey project called “Collaborative Outcomes study on Health and Functioning during Infection Times (COH-FIT).”

The COH-FIT project aims to identify risk and protective factors that will inform prevention and intervention programs for the COVID-19 pandemic and future pandemics in the future. The project involves almost 200 investigators in more than 35 countries.

Take the survey.

---

**Clinical trials**

The following clinical trails are also back in operation, following all necessary safety guidelines. If you’re interested, contact the appropriate study.

**Neuroimaging and Brain Cell Structure and Function in Substance Abuse (In Vitro and In Vivo Evidence of Neurotoxicity in Substance Abuse)**
Contact: 713-500-DRUG (3784)

**Management of Chronic Pain and PTSD in Veterans with tDCS+Prolonged Exposure**
Contact: Melba A. Hernandez-Tejada, PhD, DHA PI, 713-486-2524

**Candesartan as an Adjunctive Treatment for Bipolar Depression**
Contact: Valeria Cuellar, 713-486-2841

To see all open studies, visit our [website](#).

---

**We're hiring!**

The following positions are open at our department:

**Adult Psychiatrist – Baytown – Outpatient**
*Telemed 80%, Onsite 20%*
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
1 Hour New Patient
30 Min Followup
*Extra Supplement for location*

**Adult Psychiatrist – Settegast**
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
1 Hour New Patient
30 Min Followup

**Adult Psychiatrist – Acres Homes**
Monday through Friday
Child and Adult Psychiatrist – Rosenberg – Outpatient

*Telemed 80%, Onsite 20%*
Monday through Friday
8 am – 5 pm
1 Hour New Patient
30 Min Followup

Extra Supplement for provider to see life span

Child Psychiatrist (Bilingual Spanish/English) – Spring Branch – Outpatient

*Telemed 50%, Onsite 50%*
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
1 Hour New Patient
30 Min Followup

To find out more information about these academically-driven positions or to apply, please forward a CV and letter of interest to Jair C. Soares, MD, PhD, Professor and Chair, 1941 East Road, Houston, TX 77054, email: Jair.C.Soares@uth.tmc.edu, phone 713-486-2507, fax 713-486-2553.

---

**Publications**

*The kynurenine pathway in major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia: a meta-analysis of 101 studies*  
Wolfgang Marx, Amelia J McGuinness, Tetyana Rocks, Anu Ruusunen, Jasmine Cleminson, Adam J Walker, Susana Gomes-da-Costa, Melissa Lane, Marsal Sanches, Alexandre P Diaz, Ping-Tao Tseng, Pao-Yen Lin, Michael Berk, Gerard Clarke, Adrienne O'Neil, Felice Jacka, Brendon Stubbs, André F Carvalho, João Quevedo, Jair C Soares, Brisa S Fernandes

*Re-engaging Dropouts of Prolonged Exposure for PTSD Delivered via Home-Based Telemedicine or In Person: Satisfaction with Veteran-to-Veteran Support*  
Melba A. Hernandez-Tejada, PhD, DHA; Ron Acienro, PhD; David Sánchez-Carracedo, PhD

*From QAAPAPLE 1 to QAAPAPLE 2: how do we move from one algorithm to another one with Long Acting Antipsychotics (LAIs)*  
Sylvain Grignon, Marc André Roy, David Bloom, Ossama Osman, Leena Amiri, Karim Abdel Aziz, Syed Fahad Javaid, & Danilo Arnone

---

**In the news**

Vineeth John, MD, MBA, and Andrea Taylor, PhD, were quoted in a KPRC-TV Channel 2 story about the psychological benefits of holiday decorating. News Medical Life Sciences also ran the story.

Salih Selek, MD, and Jair Soares, MD, PhD, were quoted in a News Medical Life Sciences story about their clinical trial assessing the benefits of magnetic seizure therapy to treat depression in bipolar patients. Read more in UTHealth News.

Segundo Robert-Ibarra, MD, was interviewed by Telemundo Houston Channel 47 about how to handle situations when family members gathered for the holidays don't want to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines.

Lokesh Shahani, MD, MPH, was interviewed by Texas Highways about how Texans have grown in their love for the outdoors during the pandemic. The story also ran on click2houstontx.com
Utility of a brief assessment of opioid demand among post-discharge trauma care patients
Yoon JH, Suchting R, Kessler D, Soder HE, Kapoor S, Stotts AL, Heads AM, Harvin JA, Green CE, Lane SD, Schmitz JM

Upcoming events

Save the Date

April 10, 2021

12th Annual Psychiatry Update

Treatment Innovation for Veterans and First Responders

Register now

Join our mail list

We appreciate your donation!