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September 2017 archived news items

Undergraduates Discover Discovery

UNDERGRADUATES RESEARCH WORKSHOP SERIES SCHEDULE

2017-18 academic year

Research workshops for undergraduates are held at various locations on Western Michigan University campus from 2:30 to 4 p.m. A light snack is provided.

Thursday, Oct. 12—Getting Started with Discovery: Research and Creative Activities at WMU

Location: Bernhard Center Brown and Gold Room

Discovery experiences on a mentored research or creative project add great value to an undergraduate education. This session covers the basics for getting started with undergraduate research and creative activities mentored by WMU faculty and beyond. Topics will include finding a mentor, selecting a topic as well as resources for finding both internal and external funding opportunities for a project.

Wednesday, Nov. 15—Integrity, Compliance, and Safety in Research

Location: 210 Bernhard Center

This session covers important topics related to conducting research, including authorship and credit, data management, human subjects and animal research, and the expectations of a mentee in carrying out research responsibly and safely.

Thursday, Jan. 18—Summer Experience: Applying to NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates and Other Summer Programs Outside of WMU

Location: Bernhard Center Brown and Gold Room

This workshop examines resources for finding and applying to summer opportunities to enhance experiences in discovery while away from WMU.

Thursday, Feb. 15—Dissemination: Telling Others About your Work

Location: 3310 Sangren Hall

An important part of any discovery project is sharing results, whether it is research findings or a creative exhibition, with the public. This session will discuss how to find and prepare for professional conferences in a discipline; how to design posters and write project abstracts; and how to identify various avenues for publication and exhibition of projects.

Wednesday, March 14—What Comes Next: Planning for Graduate School, Careers and Beyond—~~Canceled~~

Location: Bernhard Center Brown and Gold Room

Learn how to leverage experiences in discovery at WMU while applying for graduate school or entering the job market. Discuss how best to pitch experiences with mentored research or creative activities to prospective graduate schools and employers.

WMU researcher awarded \$2.1 million to study evidence-based registers

CONTACT: MARK SCHWERIN
SEPTEMBER 26, 2017 | WMU NEWS



Magura

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—About 20 national registers are available to help clinicians find and use programs that are most effective in treating behavioral problems such as alcohol and drug misuse.

But how well are they working?

That's the question **Dr. Stephen Magura** will try to answer in a major three-year project sponsored by a \$2.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse.

ABOUT THE STUDY

Magura, director of the Western Michigan University Evaluation Center, says the registers help clinicians, practitioners and administrators make better decisions about which behavioral programs to implement or expand. These websites disseminate information on evidence-based programs and practices to community behavioral healthcare providers so they can make decisions based on scientific evidence rather than word of mouth, intuition or what other agencies are using.

But nobody has actually studied how well the websites are working for this purpose, at least not until now.

Magura's study will focus on registers providing information on evidence-based programs for behavioral health care, which broadly encompasses alcohol and drug misuse, mental health and child welfare programs. Magura says there are about 20 such registries. About five of those are more focused on systematic reviews and meta-analyses. Then there are roughly 15 sites that actually list and rate the effectiveness of individual programs.

"Of those 15, we were able to recruit 10 to participate in this study," Magura says. "So the purposes of the study are to look at who uses these registers, what they use them for, and do they find the sites are actually of benefit for their purposes, including single-state agency administrators for substance abuse, mental health and child welfare and staff that are responsible for program development in behavioral health care provider agencies."

The study also will delve into state and federal mandates for the use of evidence-based programs in behavioral health care.

The registers are part of a growing trend in the medical and health professions to make decisions based on research evidence, Magura says. From the medical field, that movement has spread to behavioral health care interventions.

"The registers are an innovative way to try to disseminate information about evidence-based programs and interventions," Magura says. "A dozen years ago, there was hardly anything like this happening."

TEAM EFFORT

The study is titled "Community Utilization of Evidence-based Program Registers in Behavioral Health." Magura has enlisted the aid of researchers at the Developmental Services Group and Rady Children's Hospital San Diego to assist in the study. Collectively they will study visitors to evidence-based program register websites to determine their characteristics, their reasons for accessing the sites and the information obtained or that was sought, but not obtained; the mandates for implementing evidence-based programs by federal and state funding agencies; and key stakeholders of the registers—the program and policy developers in state and private sector provider organizations.

The grant was awarded in mid-August, so the study is in its start-up phase. Magura plans to post preliminary reports during the three-year study and publish a final report and articles when it is finished in an effort ultimately to make the registers more accessible, user-friendly and interpretable.

Magura says the registers serve a valuable role. Program developers and administrators used to have to sift through countless individual evaluation studies to try to determine the most effective programs. Moreover, the research and evaluation field has become more complex, making it difficult for practitioners and administrators, who are not necessarily highly educated in research and evaluation, to interpret study results.

"The evidence-based program registers fill the need as a sort of mediator between the rather complex research base and the practitioners, administrators and clinicians who need the results of that research," Magura says. "So the registers digest the research, summarize it and interpret it and then make it available in a more usable form. We're going to try to see whether the theory behind that is actually panning out."

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Leading scientists and treatment practitioners slated for Michigan Autism Conference

CONTACT: MARK SCHWERIN
OCTOBER 2, 2017 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Leading scientists and treatment practitioners in the field of autism will share their expertise on the latest research and treatment at the fifth annual Michigan Autism Conference **Wednesday through Friday, Oct. 11-13**, at the Radisson Plaza Hotel and Suites.

The conference is dedicated to providing families, practitioners, educators and researchers with the latest information on a variety of topics related to the assessment and treatment of autism. More than 700 people are expected to attend, representing over 20 states and hundreds of agencies providing the most up-to-date and effective treatment and support for individuals affected by autism. Online registration is now closed, but mail-in registrations are still being accepted. People also may register on-site during the conference.

The conference begins with a free Kick-Off Presentation and Recognition Ceremony beginning at **6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 11**, with a presentation titled "The Past, Present and Future of Applied Behavior Analysis and Autism." The presentation will feature **Drs. Richard Malott** and **Carmen Jonaitis**. The kickoff also will include a special tribute to Malott for his enduring contributions to the treatment of autism for more than 50 years.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

The keynote presentations are scheduled for the mornings of **Oct. 12 and 13**. These talks, from world-renowned researchers and practitioners, include:

- **Dr. Catherine Lord**, professor of psychology at the Weill Cornell Medical College and Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and director of the Center for Autism and the Developing Brain. Her presentation is titled "What Can We Learn about Appropriate Services in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder from Our Longitudinal Study from 2 to 22?"
- **Dr. James Partington**, director of Behavior Analysts Inc. and service provider to children and their families at the STARS Clinics in Walnut Creek, California. His presentation is titled "Programming for Success: Critical Elements of an Effective Intervention for Individuals with Autism."

- **Dr. Bridget Taylor**, co-founder and executive director of the Alpine Learning Group and senior clinical adviser for Rethink. Her presentation is titled "Behavior Analysis and Autism Treatment: A Rich History and a Promising Future."
- **Dr. Marjorie Charlop**, professor of psychology at Claremont McKenna College and director of The Claremont Autism Center. Her presentation will focus on "Creating Evidence-Based Treatment Procedures for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder with Everyday Technology."
- **Dr. Wayne Fuqua**, professor and former chair of psychology at WMU. His presentation is titled "Detecting and Troubleshooting Treatment Failures: A Crucial Component of Evidence-Based Practice of Applied Behavior Analysis."
- **Dr. Rick Kubina**, professor of special education at Penn State University. His presentation is titled "Educational Assessment and Effective Educational Programming."

WORKSHOP, BREAKOUT SESSIONS

In addition to the keynote speakers, several pre-conference workshops and breakout sessions will be offered on a wide variety of topics pertaining to autism. Subjects range from feeding interventions to educational programming, social skills and supports for transitions into adulthood, among others.

For more information, visit michiganautismconference.org. For questions about registration or the conference schedule, contact Kimberly Peck at kimberly.m.peck@wmich.edu.

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