

PharmTox Fights COVID-19

Week of May 3-7, 2021

Highlights from Experimental Biology 2021

Experimental Biology 2021 was held virtually on April 27-30. Events included the ASPET business meeting, symposiums, poster sessions, pharmacology datablitz, career development opportunities, and networking events. The following faculty, students and alumni represented the department at this annual meeting.



Associate professor **Bill Fantegrossi** chaired a symposium titled “Behavioral Pharmacology of Biased Agonists”, which was sponsored by four different ASPET Divisions including: Behavioral Pharmacology; Drug Discovery and Development; Molecular Pharmacology; and Neuropharmacology. The goal of the symposium was to survey the current state of research exploring the in vivo effects of drugs with biased signaling at G protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs) across

pharmacological classes, and perhaps identify common issues that may explain why the in vitro promise of these compounds fails to predict novel systems-level effects. Speakers included professor **Paul Prather** who presented a talk, “Characterization of structurally novel G-protein biases CB1 agonists”.

Graduate student **Amal Shoeib** presented a poster titled “Natural and synthetic cannabinoids reduce cell viability of Ewing sarcoma TC-71 cells potentially via non-canonical CB receptors”. A poster by **Christian Cabanlong** was titled “Major metabolites of the synthetic cannabinoid 5F-ADB retain high affinity and full efficacy at CB1 receptors; potential mechanism contributing to enhanced toxicity?”. His poster was a blue ribbon pick by the ASPET Program Committee. Graduate student **David Henry** presented a poster titled “Mechanisms of increased infarct volume in a rat model of ischemic stroke: Implications for leptomeningeal collateral artery function and beta blocker therapy”.



Associate professor **Eric Peterson** also virtually attended EB2021. His former graduate student, **Chris Bolden**, PhD, who is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, presented “Antibody gene therapy mitigates the immunosuppressive effects of 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) in the periphery of Male BALB/c mice”.

Alumni **Brenda Gannon**, PhD, now a regulatory specialist at UAMS, was a speaker in a symposium titled “Development of Cannabinoids for Clinical Use - CNS Hazards and Therapeutic Effects”, which was sponsored by five ASPET Divisions including: Behavioral Pharmacology; Drug Discovery and Development; Molecular Pharmacology; Neuropharmacology; and Translational and Clinical Pharmacology. Dr. Gannon talk was titled “Product quality information and regulatory expectations”. She also won a \$100 Amazon gift card from a raffle sponsored by Harvard Apparatus.



Alumni **Swapnil Sonkusare**, PhD, assistant professor in the Berne Cardiovascular Research Center at the University of Virginia, co-chaired the Division for Cardiovascular Pharmacology Trainee Showcase, which featured selected talks by predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows as they competed for division awards. Following the Trainee Showcase, Dr. Sonkusare introduced the winner of the 2021 Lucchesi Early Career

Award, who presented a 30-minute talk that highlighted her research. Professor and department chair **Nancy Rusch** chaired the awards committee that chose the awardee, Sarah Schumacher, PhD, from the Cleveland Clinic.