The major goal of my research is to understand how alcohol problems develop and manifest themselves. My research program examines ethnic groups with varying patterns and consequences of alcohol use to identify genetic, biological, cultural, and psychosocial risk and protective factors associated with alcohol-related behaviors. I currently have three lines of research to address these issues.

For the past four years I have had a career development award from NIAAA to examine childhood risk factors (e.g., psychophysiology, temperament, behavior) and protective factors (e.g., variations in aldehyde and alcohol dehydrogenase genes \textit{ALDH2} and \textit{ADH1B}, female gender, and Muslim upbringing) as predictors of various dimensions of alcohol involvement. This research is a subproject of the longitudinal Joint Child Health Project directed by Adrian Raine, D.Phil., a study that has prospectively followed a sample of 1,795 individuals on the island of Mauritius for the past 35 years beginning when they were 3 years old. We have just submitted an R01 proposal to NIH to begin following the drinking behaviors of the children of the original subjects and expand this research to better understand how risk factors and alcohol involvement are transmitted across generations.

In addition to my primary appointment in at USC, I am also an Assistant Adjunct Professor the Department of Psychiatry at UCSD. The initial focus of my research at UCSD sought to understand the interactions among various risk and protective factors that have consistently been associated with alcohol behavior in previous studies of primarily White Protestant samples (e.g., religious service attendance, conduct problems) and factors that are unique to certain ethnic groups (e.g., \textit{ALDH2} genetic variations in Asians, Jewish religious rituals for alcohol use). This line of research is being extended to focus on understanding the underlying mechanisms for how these risk and protective factors lead to differences in alcohol involvement using studies of mediation, moderation, and mechanisms of action.

Finally, I have a grant from the Alcoholic Beverage Medical Research Foundation to use real-time assessment to examine naturalistic alcohol behaviors across individuals who do and do not possess an \textit{ALDH2*2} allele. This research will be continued with an R21 exploratory/development grant from NIAAA in a study that incorporates even more advanced technology in the methodology, including wrist sensors to detect alcohol concentrations and iPhones to connect to our website to record drinking responses in real time.
I was over-joyed and incredibly honored when I learned that I was going to have the opportunity to join the Psychology Department this past fall semester as a non-tenure track lecturer, a post-doctoral researcher in Gayla Margolin’s research lab, and a clinical supervisor in the Psychology Services Center after completing my doctoral degree at UCLA. Since joining the department in August, I have felt very welcomed and would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your graciousness.

I have been teaching undergraduate courses in Statistics, Psychology of Marriage and the Family, and Research Methods over the past two semesters and will teach Abnormal Psychology this coming summer. Teaching these courses has been a great fit for me as they play to my primary research interests in communication behaviors in couples and families and quantitative methods for analyzing nested designs. My work on communication behaviors in couples has focused on three primary areas: 1) the demand/withdraw interaction pattern, 2) non-verbal emotional expression and power-linked behaviors, and, 3) associations between communication behaviors and psychopathology (primarily depression). I hope to further this research with an NRSA post-doctoral fellowship (which is submitted and currently under review) in collaboration with Gayla Margolin, Jack McArdle, and Shri Narayanan (whose primary appointment is in Electrical Engineering) to continue an expanded scope of research which would examine non-verbal expressions of emotion in families with varying levels of intimate partner aggression. On a personal note, if you see me walking around the halls with a big smile on my face, I am getting married on March 20th and couldn’t be happier or more excited as I write this piece.

Most of what I do can be described as social cognitive neuroscience. I study the neural systems that are involved in our sense of self and in our relationships with other people. I am particularly interested in understanding the neural systems for empathy, and how empathy is regulated based on social relationships. Recently we found that people who describe themselves as more empathic show greater activity in ‘mirror’ neurons in the frontal lobe while watching someone else perform actions. Empathy may rely in part on neural systems that allow us to resonate with someone else’s actions, to simulate what they are doing as we watch. But we don’t feel connected to everyone to the same degree; we have different emotional reactions to those close to us compared with complete strangers, for example. To understand this I am currently studying how the brain modulates emotional reactions to in-group members compared with out-group members.

Another thread in my research involves understanding in various forms how different sensory modalities interact in the brain. For instance, I have studied how we can recognize actions by sight or by sound, and how we can recognize our own voice or face. Other interests include consciousness, self-awareness, the experience of will, and creative insight.

My main tool is functional MRI, and I have a special interest functional imaging methodology and data analysis. I am pursuing new data analysis techniques such as machine learning and pattern analysis which may allow us to predict behavioral or perceptual events from functional imaging data.

**USC-WIDE SUBJECT POOL**

USC.ALTERNATIVERESEARCH.ORG is a new site developed to connect researchers with students from around USC interested in participating in research. Undergraduates are volunteering to be a part of this alternative subject pool, thus creating a robust resource for Faculty and Graduate Students conducting studies and looking for subjects. This site offers the opportunity to expand studies utilizing the psychology subject pool to the entire USC population, as well as studies that are just beginning and require access to a larger population. If you are interested in posting your study to USC.ALTERNATIVERESEARCH.ORG, please click on the link below and complete the form. You will be contacted shortly with more information regarding the appearance of your study, access to the current alternative subject pool, and the necessary IRB amendment text. If you have any additional questions, please email Charisse Corsbie-Massay (Social Psychology) at charisse.corsbiemassay@usc.edu.
• **Dr. Frank Manis** has received the 2009 USC Mellon award for faculty mentoring undergraduates.

• **Nick Scurich** (advisor, Dr. Richard John) presented his paper “Formal Psychiatric Civil Commitment Decisions” at the American Psychology-Law Society (APLS) conference in San Antonio on March 6th.

• **Kysa Christie** (advisor, Dr. Beth Meyerowitz) has been named recipient of the 2009 Ethnic Minority and Multicultural Health Outstanding Student Award through the Society of Behavioral Medicine. She will receive her award on Friday, April 24. The title of her paper is “Sexual adjustment and depression following breast cancer in low-income Latina and White women”

• **Yan Zhou** (advisor, Dr. Jack McArdle) has been accepted into a summer internship at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton New Jersey.

• **Lina D’Orazio** (advisor, Dr. Beth Meyerowitz) has been awarded an EDGE travel grant to attend the Society of Behavioral Medicine Annual meeting in Montreal Canada in April 2009.

• **Dr. Kim Lindsey.** has been nominated as the 2009 Gamma Sigma Alpha Professor of the year.

• **Margaret Mackintosh** (advisor, Dr. Margaret Gatz) recently passed her dissertation defense. Her dissertation is titled, “Trauma-related treatment gains among women with histories of interpersonal violence and co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders”

• **Nicole Sintov** (advisor, Dr. Carol Prescott) was recently awarded the Oakley Fellowship for 2009-2010.

• **Houri Hintiryan** (advisor, Dr. Kathleen Chambers) recently passed her dissertation defense. Her dissertation is titled, “The Neural Mediations of Estradiol Learning and Estradiol Anorexia”.

• **Dr. Steven Lopez** has been notified that the department has received funds from NIH to support a summer research training program that focuses on research to reduce disparities in mental health care to Latinos. The training program, which collaborates with the USC School of Social Work and UCLA’s Psychology Department, will be comprised of a one-week training seminar to be held at USC and a 10 week research program in Puebala Mexico. Two teams of 3 undergraduates and one graduate student will carry out research in promoting community residents’ mental health literacy and in studying disability in persons with serious mental illness. The program is funded for five consecutive years.

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