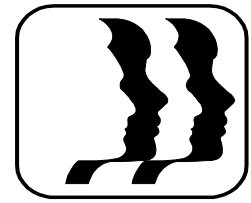


CONCORDANCE

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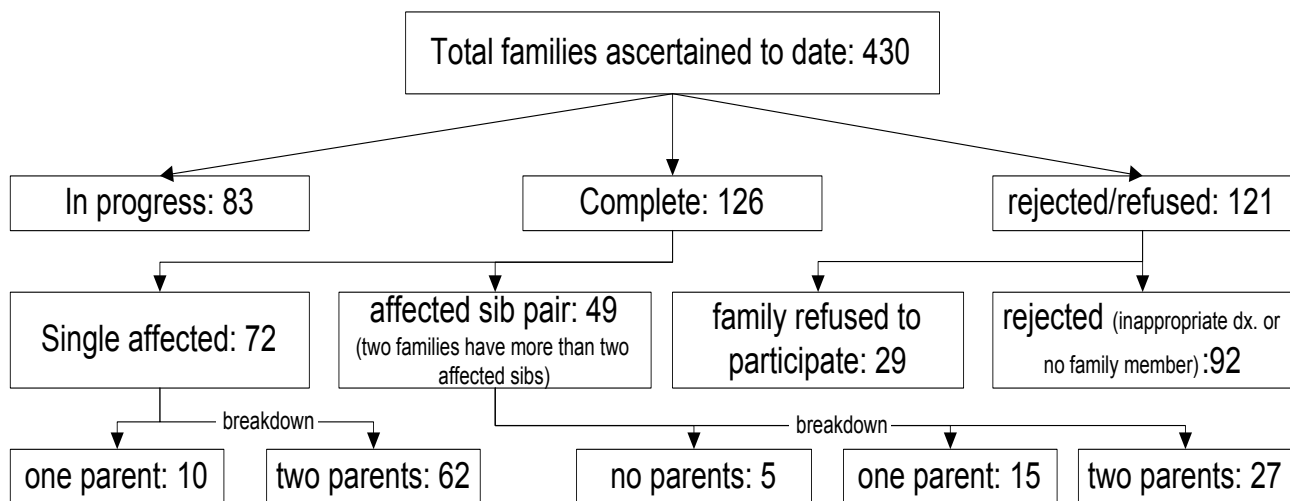
Research into the Causes of Schizophrenia and related illnesses
Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic -- University of Pittsburgh



Research into the Causes of Schizophrenia and Related Illnesses Progress to Date in New Delhi, INDIA

While we conduct our research into schizophrenia in the United States, a sister project identical in its aims and methods is being performed in New Delhi, India, under the direction of Dr. Nimgaonkar and Dr. B.K. Thelma, an experienced geneticist at the University of Delhi--South Campus. Dr. Smita Deshpande, an experienced psychiatrist and epidemiologist, is another collaborator on site in New Delhi. Dr. Deshpande consults with Dr. Nimgaonkar, and directs the work of Senior Research Officer, Dr. Triptish Bhatia, who recruits participants and conducts interviews in New Delhi.

The flow chart below illustrates progress through December 31, 1998 for the New Delhi project. It reflects the total number of families initially contacted (430), and the outcomes that resulted. To date, our collaborators in India have gathered all the clinical information needed on 126 families. Of these 126 families, 49 have more than one child affected with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder. An additional 72 families have been completed in which there is one person affected. Of these 72 families, 62 of them had both parents participate along with their ill son or daughter.



Drs Thelma, Deshpande and Bhatia extend their appreciation to all the psychiatrists and hospitals in New Delhi who continue to help them contact families willing to participate.

The progress in India is most encouraging. Too, it is scientifically valuable, as data gathered in India will supplement the data being gathered in the United States and elsewhere. By adding a large cohort of participants of Asian descent to the predominantly Caucasian and African American group of participants from the United States, we will be better able to generalize about the causes of schizophrenia, and suggest factors that put a person at risk of becoming ill that are common to people of all races and regions of the world.

CONTACT US! Toll free: 1 - 800 - 994 - 8182 / e mail nimga+@pitt.edu / Dr. Nimgaonkar's office (412) 624-0823. On the web: <http://www.pitt.edu/~nimga/> (schizophrenia) OR www.wpic.pitt.edu/research/neurogen/ (bipolar disorder)

BOOK REVIEW: *Mona Wasow, The Skipping Stone*
By Patrick Reitz

In October of last year, I had the privilege of attending the annual banquet of the Johnstown, PA NAMI affiliate (now known as NAMI - Cambria County Affiliate). I was impressed by the vibrancy and genuine warmth of this gathering, and felt honored to be a guest there. After an evening spent recognizing the special efforts of its membership over the past year, the keynote speaker, Mona Wasow, M.S.W., was introduced.

Ms. Wasow, a professor of Clinical Social Work at the University of Wisconsin, and the mother of a son with schizophrenia, has recently published a book, *The Skipping Stone*, exploring the ripple effect mental illness has on the extended family. While much has been written about the experience of near relatives (parents, siblings) of the mentally ill, very little has been observed about more distant relatives (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins). Ms. Wasow and her associates interviewed over 100 family members of seriously mentally ill persons, including relatives beyond the immediate family. From these discussions, Ms. Wasow drew some general,

preliminary conclusions. Among the conclusions which she shared with the group in Johnstown were the following: 1) mental illness indeed does have an emotional impact on the entire extended family, causing a sense of loss and grief even among the cousins of the mentally ill; 2) despite this pervasive grief, family members rarely spoke to one another about the ill person; 3) when interviewed, even distant relatives of the mentally ill stated a willingness to help support the ill person or that person's immediate caretaker; 4) despite the willingness to help, few had done so, primarily because the stigma and silence around the issue of mental illness had kept them from talking about the problem directly. Unfortunately, one other experience was shared almost universally by all manner of relatives: almost everyone reported being frustrated, angered, or disappointed by their interaction at some point with mental health professionals.

I recommend Ms. Wasow's book to you. I found her to be a forthright and compassionate speaker. She has brought a fresh, creative perspective to the issue of coping with mental illness.



Questions & Answers by Laurie Brar, R.N. A Little Information About DNA.....

Q: What are you looking at when you examine my blood?

A: After your blood is drawn, the DNA is extracted. It is this part of the blood that contains the genetic information, and thus is what we examine. DNA, or deoxyribonucleic acid, was first discovered in 1953, by James Watson and Francis Crick. It is made up of strands of four simple chemical building blocks called bases. These bases, named adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine, (abbreviated A, G, C, and T) join together as pairs, A joining with T, and C with G. Specific clusters of bases make up your genes. In our research, we attempt to pinpoint the gene(s) that cause susceptibility to schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder and bipolar disorder.

Q: How is DNA used by the body?

A: DNA is divided into many segments, each containing a unit of information, a gene. These genes encode information that can be used by the body. They must first, however, be translated into a protein. Each gene does this by sending out a messenger (messenger RNA) that eventually determines the structure and manufacture of a protein. It is these manufactured proteins that guide bodily functions such as the release of hormones.

*Source for information: Barondes, Samuel H. (1998). *Mood Genes Hunting for Origins of Mania and Depression*. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR STUDY?

Individuals with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, or bipolar disorder. To be eligible, each person with one of these illnesses must also have other family members willing to participate along with them. These family members can be either:

One or both parents willing to participate (by answering questions and giving a blood sample)

****OR****

A brother or sister who is also diagnosed with schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, or bipolar disorder and willing to participate (by answering questions and giving a blood sample).