

Biological Psychiatry Australia Launch.

The launch of Biological Psychiatry Australia was at the Royal Society of Victoria on the 6th September 2010.

The launch began with two eminent psychiatric researchers presenting their vision of the approaches and advances needed to make significant inroads into understanding the causes of psychiatric disorders. These proved to be somewhat divergent views which meant the Launch began by a session where there was arrant but friendly discussion about the optimum way forward for biological psychiatry.



Professors John McGrath and Gin Mahli after vigorously debating the future of directions required of psychiatric research.

There then followed a series of presentations by a number of researchers taking a varied approach to understanding the causes and consequences of psychiatric disorders. This began with Dr Justine Gatt from the Brain Dynamics Centre, Westmead Hospital, The University of Sydney, NSW discussion the genetics of mental health and how she was adopting an integrative approach to understanding the role of genetics in mental illness. Dr Elizabeth Scarr from the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Melbourne and Mental Health Research Institute then asked can a neurochemical observation in schizophrenia be translated to a clinical intervention? There then followed a presentation by Dr Charles Claudianos from the Queensland Brain Institute, The University of



Drs Justine Gatt, Elizabeth Scarr, Charles Claudianos, Richard Saffery and Leanne Williams present a diverse range of approaches to understand psychiatric disorders.

Queensland, Queensland who uses bees as a model system to try and understand what molecular systems might be involved in autism, ADHD and schizophrenia. Dr. Richard Saffery from the Murdoch Children's Research Institute then discussed the hot topic of the role of epigenetics and psychiatric disorders and the session closed with Dr. Leanne Williams from the Brain Dynamics Centre, Westmead Hospital, The University of Sydney talking about psychiatry and the emotional brain. These wide ranging talks highlight the depth of the psychiatric research community in Australia and it is that community that BPA seeks to bring together to further foster young researchers and collaborations across the country.

There then followed a Smorgasbord of Research where 14 scientists presented brief presentations highlighting key areas of their work. Many of these



A smorgasbord of science as devised by Paul Fitzgerald and present by many excellent researchers.



Mark Bellgrove presents the 1st Annual Aubrey Lewis Lecture.

presenters were students and did a superb job of communicating the thrust of their research in a very regulated time frame. This session

also showed that biological psychiatry in Australia is nurturing a new generation of researchers dedicated to understanding the causes of mental illness.

The launch finished by the presentation of the 1st Aubrey Lewis Lecture by Dr Mark Bellgrove from the School of Psychology and Queensland Brain Institute at the University of Queensland. Mark gave an impressive presentation of his research combining studies on genetics, pharmacology and cognition to understand the underlying biology of ADHD.

At the business meeting of the Launch those present approved the first Executive Committee to take over the management of BPA affairs and resolved to meet at the first Annual Scientific Meeting of the Society in Melbourne in 2011.