Bush serves as guest co-editor for special issue of 'Psychosomatic Medicine'

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By Nicholas Roznovsky [1]

Nicki Bush, PhD [2]

UC San Francisco Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics Nicki Bush, PhD [2], was recently invited to serve a guest editor for a special issue of the journal Psychosomatic Medicine. The issue, titled "Mechanisms Linking Early-Life Adversity to Physical Health," [3] was published late last year.

Psychosomatic Medicine, founded in 1939, is the official peer-reviewed journal of the American Psychosomatic Society [4]. It publishes experimental and clinical studies dealing with various aspects of the relationships among social, psychological, and behavioral factors and bodily processes in humans and animals.

The issue focused on articles exploring the forces driving the extensively researched association between exposure to adverse childhood experiences (poverty, neglect, abuse, and violence) and elevated risk for poor health outcomes later in life. Among the questions
explored were whether the mechanisms linking adversity to later health outcomes were universal or specific, if particular periods in development were more sensitive in terms of exposure to adversity, and if altered development after experiencing adversity reflect a true dysfunction or an adaptation for survival.

"Understanding these pathways is of obvious general scientific interest, but moreso because such knowledge is needed to inform the development of novel interventions to prevent the onset of health problems following adversity," explained Bush in a podcast offering further insight [5] into the special issue.

"People tend to focus on health behaviors as a primary factor in the etiology of physical health, and although health behaviors clearly play an important role, a number of longitudinal studies have shown that early-life adversity is associated with poor physical health even after you adjust for the effects of health behaviors like smoking, alcohol use, and physical activity."

"This suggests that other critical mechanisms are involved in the pathway from early-life adversity to poor health," Bush continued, "and that is what we wanted to help unpack through the work in this special issue."

Also serving as guest editors for the special issue were the University of Washington's Katie McLaughlin, PhD, and Richard Lane, MD, PhD, from the University of Arizona. Authors of research presented in the issue from UCSF included Melissa Hagan, PhD, MPH [6]; Danielle Roubinov, PhD [7]; Nancy Adler, PhD [8]; W. Thomas Boyce, MD [9]; and Bush.

Read the special issue

- *Psychosomatic Medicine: Mechanisms Linking Early-Life Adversity to Physical Health* [3]
- Editorial: "Introduction to the Special Issue of *Psychosomatic Medicine: Mechanisms Linking Early-Life Adversity to Physical Health*" [10]
- Podcast: "Mechanisms Linking Early-Life Adversity to Physical Health" [12]

About UCSF Psychiatry

The UCSF Department of Psychiatry [13] and the Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute are among the nation's foremost resources in the fields of child, adolescent, adult, and geriatric mental health. Together they constitute one of the largest departments in the UCSF School of Medicine and the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences, with a mission focused on research (basic, translational, clinical), teaching, patient care and public service.

UCSF Psychiatry conducts its clinical, educational and research efforts at a variety of locations in Northern California, including UCSF campuses at Parnassus Heights, Mission Bay and Laurel Heights, UCSF Medical Center, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals, Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center, the San Francisco VA Health Care System and UCSF Fresno.

About the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences
The UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences [14], established by the extraordinary generosity of Joan and Sanford I. "Sandy" Weill, brings together world-class researchers with top-ranked physicians to solve some of the most complex challenges in the human brain.

The UCSF Weill Institute leverages UCSF’s unrivaled bench-to-bedside excellence in the neurosciences. It unites three UCSF departments: Neurology, Psychiatry, and Neurological Surgery that are highly esteemed for both patient care and research, as well as the Neuroscience Graduate Program, a cross-disciplinary alliance of nearly 100 UCSF faculty members from 15 basic-science departments, as well as the UCSF Institute for Neurodegenerative Diseases, a multidisciplinary research center focused on finding effective treatments for Alzheimer’s disease, frontotemporal dementia, Parkinson’s disease, and other neurodegenerative disorders.

About UCSF

UC San Francisco (UCSF) [15] is a leading university dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care. It includes top-ranked graduate schools of dentistry, medicine, nursing and pharmacy; a graduate division with nationally renowned programs in basic, biomedical, translational and population sciences; and a preeminent biomedical research enterprise. It also includes UCSF Health, which comprises top-ranked hospitals—UCSF Medical Center [16] and UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospitals in San Francisco [17] and Oakland [18]—and other partner and affiliated hospitals and healthcare providers throughout the Bay Area.

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