



The Thermometer Times

Published by The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Riverside, California

VOL. 20 NO. 3 *Out of darkness . . .* **March, 2008**

Dates to Remember

CARE & SHARE GROUP

Clients and their guests are invited to come and participate. Professional care providers very welcome.
Riverside County Mental Health Administration Building
(see page 13 for address & map)
Saturday 10:00 am - 12 noon
March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Saturday, March 22

Tom Wootton, author of The Bipolar Advantage and The Depression Advantage will speak
see details on page 8

TO FIND US ONLINE

Web Site: [DBSA, Riverside:](http://californiadbsa.org/dbsariv.html)

<http://californiadbsa.org/dbsariv.html>

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[DBSA, California:](mailto:dbsaofca1@aol.com) dbsaofca1@aol.com



Meetings start promptly at 10 am. Do yourself a good turn: Be on time to visit with friends before the meeting starts. If you come late,

please enter quietly. Announcements will be made at the close of the meeting.

Directions to

Jo Ann Martin's Home

Exit 91 Frwy at Van Buren. Go south 4.2 miles on Van Buren to Whispering Spur. Turn left.

2nd driveway on the right



16280 Whispering Spur
Riverside, CA 92504
951 / 780-3366



Blood Test Could Reveal Bipolar Disorder

Method that could diagnose, assess patients also raises ethical question

By Steve Mitchell

MSNBC, Monday, February 25, 2008

A blood test could be used to diagnose and assess the severity of certain mental illnesses, such as bipolar disorder, according to a new study. But some experts think this raises ethical concerns about prying into a person's mental status.

Lab tests that can accurately detect mental illnesses have long been considered the "Holy Grail" of psychiatry. Currently, bipolar disorder and other conditions such as depression are diagnosed based on the patient's description of their symptoms and the physician's judgment, sometimes making it difficult to get an accurate diagnosis or determine the severity of a patient's condition. But now researchers have shown that 10 genes that can be detected in the blood could provide a better way to assess a patient.

Continued on page 3 (Blood Test)

a note from the Editor

We invite you to submit material for review and possible publication in the newsletter. Your articles allow us to get to know one another in greater depth and to learn of the many talents, interests and assets of our members.

Articles, poetry and/or drawings can be on anything pertaining to experiences you have to share regarding depression and/or Bipolar Disorder; what it is to live and cope with the disorder; how you learned of it, what helps, what doesn't. You may write on any other mental health issue or problem that you are passionate about. You can tell us about yourself and how you spend your time and what's important to you. You may want to write a report on a mental health event you attended or a mental health book you have read. We would appreciate that, too.

Drawings should be black and white, line or half-tone.

Your work may be submitted to JoAnn, Leroy or Lynne at DBSA Riverside meetings.

**It may be mailed to: *The Thermometer Times*
% Jo Ann Martin
16280 Whispering Spur
Riverside, CA 92504**

E-mail it to: JoAnnMartin1@aol.com

FAX to: 951/780-5758

Materials submitted may or may not be published, at the discretion of the editors, and may be edited for length.

Get your creative juices flowing and share your knowledge and experience with your DBSA friends through *The Thermometer Times*.

Thank you. Lynne Stewart

MOVIE NIGHT AT JO ANNS*

2nd and 4th Tuesday

of March

6:30 PM

Tuesday, March 11

"I'd Rather Laugh" Linda Richman, the mother-

law of Mike Myers of Saturday Night Live deals with issues from depression to agoraphobia. Subtitled "How to Be Happy When

Life Has Other Plans. A must see!

Tuesday, March 25

"Laura Smiles" A vivid portrayal of Manic Depression (Bipolar Disorder). Her feelings are triggered by flashbacks which make her unable to distinguish past from present from dreams. She acts out...watch the ending.

Enjoy pizza and an additional movie of your choice!

*Directions to Jo Ann's home on page 1, bottom of column 1 of this Newsletter.

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Please feel free to reprint any of our articles. However, please acknowledge our publication, date, and author or source. It will please the authors and recognize their efforts.

Riverside Suicide Crisis Help Line

Call (951) 686-HELP [686-4357] if you need to talk to someone. It is available 24 hours - 7 days a week.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) if you need to talk to someone in any of 109 crisis centers in 42 states. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has just been launched by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) as part of the National Suicide Prevention Initiative (NSPI). In addition, a new Web-site has been established at

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

BLOOD TEST (Continued from Page 1)

“Patients aren’t sure how ill they really are, and neither is the clinician — sometimes dismissing their symptoms, sometimes overestimating them,” said Dr. Alexander Niculescu, III, a psychiatrist at the Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis, who led the research published Tuesday by the journal *Molecular Psychiatry*. “Having an objective test for disease state, disease severity, and especially to measure response to treatment, would be a big step forward.”

More work remains to be done to confirm these findings, Niculescu said, adding that tests could hit the market in as little as five years.

The goal of the new study was to identify genes or biomarkers that could be used to track the severity of the symptoms of mania or depression in people already diagnosed with bipolar disorder, but these same genes could ultimately be turned into a test to make an initial diagnosis, he said.

Niculescu, who is also working on identifying biomarkers for diagnosing anxiety and stress as well as hallucinations in schizophrenia, said the bipolar findings could be the dawning of a new age in psychiatry. “It would put psychiatry on par with other medical specialties,” he said.

This could be especially helpful for ensuring a patient is getting the right medication. Bipolar patients are sometimes first seen by a physician during one of their low periods. Consequently, they may be misdiagnosed with depression and prescribed antidepressants, which can trigger a dangerous manic state. A blood test that could be used to monitor the patient might enable physicians to catch this mood elevation before it was too late. “This may be especially important in children and adolescents, who are hard to diagnose for sure using clinical criteria only, and in whom mood states can change fast, sometimes dangerously so,” Niculescu said.

Beyond the stigma

Dr. Carlos Pato, chair of the psychiatry department at the University of Southern California School of Medicine in Los Angeles, thinks a test for mental illness should be viewed no differently than a test for other medical conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease risk.

“We should look beyond the stigma of a mental illness because the most important thing is to have a very clear diagnosis to get the best treatment for the patient,” Pato said.

Genetic testing for disease has long been controversial, but Art Caplan, director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania and an msnbc.com columnist, said a genetic test for mental state could intensify that debate.

“We’re likely to see much more controversy with genetic testing when it’s about behavior, mental states and personality characteristics than when you’re testing for cancer risk or prostate problems,” Caplan said.

The tests are particularly concerning if they could be used to screen for mental illness in the workplace or for college

admittance, Caplan said. Other controversial areas include requiring people pass a blood test for mental competency to purchase a gun or for high sensitivity jobs, such as police officer or to enroll in the military.

Genes predict mood state

In the new study, designed to assess the severity of the disease, Niculescu’s team first drew blood samples from 29 bipolar patients (27 men and two women) who were also asked about their mood level at the time of collection.

The researchers looked for differences in gene activity (whether the genes were turned on or off) between the high and low mood groups. They then incorporated the results with genetic data from animal models and gene activity from samples taken from the brains of deceased bipolar or depressed patients. The comparison enabled them to identify 10 genes for predicting mood state. (It is not yet known if any of these genes play a direct role in causing bipolar disorder or depression.)

By calculating a score based on whether each gene is active in a blood sample, the researchers could predict high mood if the score was high and low mood if score was low. When these genes were examined in the initial group of patients, the calculated scores were 85 percent accurate in predicting high mood and 77 percent accurate in predicting low mood.

While this isn’t perfect Niculescu said this accuracy rate is within range of other medical tests, such as some cancer screening methods.

But one challenge to the test could be a disconnect between the results and how a patient says they feel, said Dr. Peter Rabins, a psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins University’s Berman Bioethics Institute in Baltimore. Rabins noted that in cases of severe depression, a patient sometimes will look better to their friends and doctors after starting treatments but will say they don’t feel better.

So who’s right? The patient or the test? he said. “Ultimately, my feeling would be we have to listen to the person and what they’re experiencing and not the blood test.”

Steve Mitchell is a science and medicine writer in Washington, D.C. His articles have appeared in a variety of newspapers, magazines and Web sites, including UPI.

Source: Reuters Health, The Scientist and WebMD.

URL: <http://www.msnbc.com/id/23337532/>

The man who insists upon seeing with perfect clearness before he decides, never decides. Accept life, and you must accept regret.

~Henri-Frederic Amiel~ 1856

Upon the precipice
Suspended
Flight



Crucified upon the sky.

Waiting.

My spirit is a cry. Shrill wail of the red tail
Circling the black mountain.
Upon the precipice. Thick white bandages
Across my soul.

Wings tethered-
Wind brushes against tentative feathers
And lifts them gently as a tender hand.
Wind lifts them, beseeching-
The vastness of the depth Below and Above-
The weightlessness. Soaring. Plummeting.
Which one
Will take me
If I tear off my bandages
And fly?

Rhue Pritchard

Author Can't Shed Legacy of 1964 Novel “...Rose Garden”

By BILL REED

Joanne Greenberg can't escape the rose garden.

She's written 18 books in five decades, yet it's her 1964 semiautobiographical novel, *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*, for which she is remembered.

It's not only at the top of my bio, it is my bio', she said from her home near Denver.

So it is for a writer, especially a writer of autobiography, and most especially a writer whose intimate details have been turned into a movie. To her readers, she will forever be a young woman trying to overcome the trauma of isolation, of a painful surgery for urethral cancer, and of anti-Semitism. She will be a girl who struggles with mental illness as she creates the fanciful kingdom of Yr, a place where she is queen, a place she can escape to when reality is too jagged and hard. She will be fragile and vulnerable, her psyche still lurking on the edge between fantasy and reality.

In truth, the 75-year-old woman coming to Author Fest in Manitou Springs this weekend is anything but fragile. She is intelligent, cantankerous, delightful and utterly sure of herself. She left the rose garden decades ago.

She's been married for 52 years and has raised two children into middle age, living through the heart-stopping moment of standing over her son's chair at dinner and seeing the first signs of a bald spot. She became an advocate for the disabled and the marginalized, visiting state hospitals for the mentally ill in nearly every state in the not-so-distant dark ages when deafness was often mistaken for a mental disorder. She was a friend of the women's movement until, she said, feminist icon Gloria Steinem called her a parttime prostitute for being married. She's been a teacher, a professor of anthropology, and a fire department EMT.

She is a fierce skier who loves the way gravity transforms the everyday drawbacks of her body's bulk into exhilarating speed. And she has kept writing novels through the years.

Wouldn't you know it, though? Author Fest organizers are screening the 1977 film version of *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*. Greenberg doesn't think much of the film. The moviemakers scrubbed out the anti-Semitism because they were terrified, she said. The characterization of mental illness stank on ice.

Misconceptions about mental illness led Greenberg to write her book in the first place. In the 1960s people were taking all kinds of drugs to get artificial insanity, she said. They were praising the very thing that my friends and I were trying to get rid of.

Now she's been there and done that. Lived it, wrote about it, fought for others, and is sent every book about it.

I never sought this out, she said. Stuff falls on me. And then you say something.

But it isn't all deafness, deaf/blindness or mental illness. I make very nice blintzes.

She is a writer, not an activist. She loves her research into other lives. She loves the art itself.

But book signings? For her, they can be a fate worse than death. Passersby tell her how much they liked *Rose Garden* and then glance at a recent book, say her 2006 effort, *Appearances*, before picking it up like a dead fish, flipping through a few pages and then silently drifting away.

Or they dish out her favorite insult to receive: "Oh you're my favorite writer, you and Danielle Steel." Greenberg bites her tongue.

My mother said, 'Be a lady. Be a lady if it kills you.'"

She loves to meet readers face to face, to tell stories and hear the audible ahh that writers rarely get to enjoy.

If you want to make her happy, read one of her other books after you finish *Rose Garden*.

And talk to her about skiing instead of mental illness.

Source: THE GAZETTE

October 16, 2007



Professor Joanne Greenberg



Professor Joanne Greenberg

State Cites Psychiatric Facility Again

ARLINGTON CAMPUS: At issue is the length of time patients were kept in the emergency room.

BY LORA HINES

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE December 7, 2007

Riverside County's psychiatric facility continued to violate state law by holding patients in its emergency room longer than 24 hours, despite receiving citations for doing the same thing within the last three years.

Investigators with the state Department of Public Health again cited the facility, known as Riverside County Regional Medical Center's Arlington Campus, following an Aug. 23 inspection. They found that about 18 percent of 5,309 patients treated at the facility from Dec. 1, 2006, to July 31, 2007, were held in the facility's emergency room longer than 24 hours, according to the inspection report.

Patients who need inpatient hospital admission cannot be treated in outpatient or emergency-room beds, the law states. Crowding has forced patients to lie on the floor, according to a report released last summer by a Riverside County grand jury.

The inspection came after the grand jury's July report, which was highly critical of the facility's management and patient care. The grand jury report found that substandard conditions, including patient violence and lack of beds, adversely affected patient care at the facility. It also stated that staff members were not reporting serious injuries and medical records were incomplete.

LOOKING FOR SPACE

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, the federal agency that covers treatment for poor, disabled and elderly patients, requested the inspection.

Inspectors didn't mention the grand jury findings in their report, released this month after hospital administrators submitted a correction plan to the state Public Health Department. Administrators intend to move some services out of the building to increase capacity and alleviate emergency-room crowding at the 77-bed facility, the inspection report states.

In 2006, administrators offered a proposal for a facility remodeling, which investigators said never started, according to the inspection report.

Doug Bagley, CEO of Riverside County Regional Medical Center, on Monday said the inspectors' most recent finding

was minor.

"It's just an acknowledgement of what everyone knows is a problem," he said. "The county has been looking for a place for more beds. It just can't find them."

Lea Brooks, spokeswoman for the state Public Health Department, said Wednesday that the agency asked hospital administrators to submit another correction plan because they failed to implement their first one in 2006.

The department, she said, "will follow up to make sure the facility is in compliance. Follow-up visits are not announced in advance."

'EVERYONE HAS QUESTIONS'

Hal Adams, of a Riverside County branch of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, said he was astounded by the inspection report. Members of Adams' nonprofit patient-advocacy group have met with county officials to discuss problems at the psychiatric facility identified in the grand jury report.

"Nobody holds them accountable," he said. "There are no consequences when they find a problem."

Holding a patient in an emergency room may seem like a minor problem to hospital administrators, Adams said. It's major to someone who needs help.

"Everyone has questions about what we can do to help," he said. "But nobody has any answers."

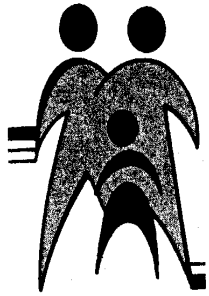
Grand jury foreman John B. Todd couldn't be reached Wednesday. He had refused in the past to discuss the report, which did not specifically identify emergency-room crowding as a problem.

In September, Bagley told the Riverside County Board of Supervisors that investigators found no serious problems during their inspection. Evaluators also determined the grand jury report was unfounded, Bagley said.

None of the county's five supervisors could be reached Wednesday for comment. They rejected the grand jury report.

Brooks repeatedly has refused to say what prompted the August inspection.

Grand jurors spent about a year investigating the Arlington Campus after receiving complaints from employees. They recommended that the county Board of Supervisors immediately audit the facility, ensure proper staff training and take steps to improve patient care and safety.



Family/Friends Support Groups

Riverside County Dept. of Mental Health
Offers Support groups for families and friends
of people with severe
and persistent mental illness.
These Support Groups are offered
throughout the County of Riverside.

The County also offers the NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program

This program is a 12-week series of
educational meetings for
family members.

There is NO COST TO YOU.

For information on dates, times and location,
Please contact:

Riverside Co. Dept. of Mental Health
The Family Advocate Program
951 / 358-4987 or 800 / 330-4522

The Starting Point SUPPORT GROUP FOR DEPRESSIVES AND BIPOLARS

Mesa Clinic, 850 Foothill Blvd., Rialto
Mondays from 10:30 to 12:10
For more info: *82 (909) 864-4404

ORIGINAL MATERIAL WANTED

Do you have a story to tell, or a poem or art work?

We welcome submissions
to our newsletter.



If you have something you think
we could use, please send it to:



EDITOR

DBSA P.O. Box 51597 Riverside, CA 92517-2597
FAX 951/780-5758

Join friends of DBSA-Riverside

*At Jo Ann Martin's**

for the

Holidays

Picnics or dinners
at noon

~

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Friendly sharing during the winter.

~

Bring a salad, main dish,
or dessert.

If you can't bring a dish, come anyway.

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~

Holidays include: Memorial Day,
4th of July, Labor Day,
Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

~

*Directions to

Jo Ann Martin's Home

Exit 91 Frwy at Van Buren. Go south 4.2 miles on Van
Buren to

Whispering Spur. Turn left.

2nd

driveway
on the right



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**Are you interested in
art or writing sessions?**

**Rhue Prichard
held our first session.**

**We made Collages. It was great fun
and a good number of people showed
up.**

**We plan to hold two sessions a month at
Jo Ann's after lunch.**

**The next one will be a poetry session. For
more details or to let us know of your interest,
call us at: 951 / 780 - 3366**