

# INSAR STUDENT & TRAINEE NEWSLETTER

Eleventh Edition

January 2020

## Update from the INSAR Regional Meeting in Chile!

In October, two of our Student & Trainee Committee (STC) members, Marika Coffman (Chair) and Alana McVey (Co-Chair), attended the Regional Meeting. Here is what they have to say:

Having the opportunity to attend the Regional Meeting in Puerto Varas, Chile was an inspiring experience! In our roles in leadership for the STC, our objectives were to connect with and support the local Latin American students and trainees execute their events during the meeting, and to assist with the events the STC runs during the Annual Meeting, such as the booth and social. To that end, we attended the Meeting of Young Researchers and learned about work being done by student autism researchers from Latin America, including Chile. We presented during the Network of Young Researchers in Latin America, describing the goals and events of the INSAR STC, and connected with the President of CERLA, Dr. Jaime Pereira, and many students and trainees eager to learn more about how to grow their organization. You can learn more about CERLA from Jaime in this newsletter! At our INSAR STC Booth we met (and played some booth games with) students, trainees, clinicians, and professors. The Booth was conveniently located by the poster sessions, where we spoke with many students and trainees about their exciting work. Lastly, we enjoyed live music and delicious food at the Student Social. During our visit, we were struck by the kindness, enthusiasm, and diligent effort of the students and trainees. In Chile, and in Latin America broadly, students and trainees described lacking access to the same resources and opportunities afforded to many in the United States and Europe. And yet, the energy and excitement among the students and trainees in learning more about autism and providing excellent care to autistic people in Latin America was evident and contagious. The STC is thrilled to work with INSAR to "broaden its global reach" to best serve students, trainees, young researchers, and, especially autistic people and their families. ~Marika & Alana



L-R: Marika, Gabriela Mundaca, Maite Lopez, Simon Latorre



Alana and Marika at the Booth!

## A new STC event!

Each year, the INSAR Annual Meeting presents an opportunity to connect, exchange ideas, and help advance autism research. Students and trainees not only learn science, they also build professional networks. Networking, however, can be an intimidating skill to master! Therefore, this year, for the first time, the STC is offering a **Workshop**. This event will provide an opportunity for students and trainees to *learn* and *practice* networking skills with *peers* and *senior scientists* in a safe environment. During the first portion of the event, a panel of senior scientists will offer their advice on effective conference networking strategies (e.g., initiating, maintaining, and following up an exchange) and, subsequently, students and trainees will have the opportunity to practice these networking skills with peers and senior scientists.

**Call for applications to attend coming soon!**

## 2019 INSAR Institute:

*Understanding Heterogeneity in Autism  
Research and Clinical Practice: A  
Multidisciplinary Approach*

The 2019 INSAR Institute was well-attended by hundreds of researchers and practitioners from all around the world. The speakers in the 6-week series included clinicians, researchers and stakeholders, who shared their exciting perspectives on recent advances and future directions and sparked engaging conversations during Q&A sessions. The speakers highlighted the importance of adopting a developmental perspective when approaching heterogeneity in autism research and practice, a theme which will be further discussed during the 2020 INSAR Institute. Speakers' list and registration details coming in early 2020! Stay tuned! In the meantime, the 2019 sessions are available to view at [autism-insar.com](https://autism-insar.com) with a membership!



## Student & Trainee Spotlight

Jaime A. Pereira, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and Doctor in Neuroscience, Chile

### What were your biggest take-homes from the Regional Meeting, and did you have a favorite presentation?

In Chile we had the privilege of having the Regional Meeting of INSAR this 2019 where we had participation of senior researchers from worldwide. Listening to them filled us with fresh knowledge and brought us closer to very productive research teams. Listening to them has also been a source of great inspiration. I would like to highlight the work presented by Dr Mazefsky. Her work to improve assessment and therapy of emotional dysregulation in ASD (EDI & EASE respectively) inspires and gives me hope. It is a great contribution to better understanding of individuality in ASD and therefore to the well-being of both patients and their relatives.

### You are the President of CERLA—can you tell us about your organization, and how to get involved?

A strong point of the conference was the development of networks to promote research in Latin America. In that sense, a protected space was provided for young researchers, graduate students and Latin American residents to show their work and to hear advice for their professional development from more experienced researchers. In addition, at the end of the day, work teams were formed to promote incipient professional development of both graduate students and young researchers. Thus, *CERLA* (for its acronym in Spanish: *committee of graduate students and Latin American residents*) was born with the objective of giving representation to this group at INSAR and STC-INSAR in benefit of the development of ASD research from Latin America and to promote those who are starting their research career. At present, CERLA is composed of 20 people. To participate in CERLA, please write to [cerla.insar@gmail.com](mailto:cerla.insar@gmail.com) or to my email address: [jpereira@uc.cl](mailto:jpereira@uc.cl).

### Tell us about your work and research!

The title of my doctoral thesis is "Real-time Neurofeedback based on functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging as a new approach to study the Face Processing network in Autism Spectrum". I have 2 daughters, I am a nature lover and currently work as a psychiatrist and as a researcher at the Department of Psychiatry of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. In addition, I am currently chairing CERLA's interim committee.

**CONGRATULATIONS on recently defending your Thesis, Dr. Pereira!**

## Research Corner

Autism research is being conducted all over the world, and it is important to know who is doing what, where, and how. By spotlighting a research group, lab, or consortium, we hope to foster more (inter)national collaborations, research stays, sharing of methods and data, and internationalization of doctoral and postdoctoral positions. One of INSAR's Strategic Initiatives is "to represent and serve a diverse and global community."

### Our pick for this edition:



The [Centre for Advanced Research and Excellence in Autism and Developmental Disorders \(CARE-ADD\)](#) at

St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences (Bangalore, India) is a multidisciplinary clinic-cum-research centre established with philanthropic support. It's goals are to perform state-of-the-art research towards tracing the biological underpinnings of autism and related conditions, while exploring cost-effective interventions. In addition to formal multidisciplinary clinical services, the Centre offers research and training tracks with a focus on community engagement.

### Research Track:

- Design computational models (using dyadic play-behaviours) for screening and diagnosis of autism in infants and toddlers and scale them into public health settings
- Explore brain circuitry with longitudinal EEG studies in children at risk for autism
- Examine neuro-developmental outcomes and placental molecular associations
- Build a large genotypic data base (trios) and make it available for research groups globally

### Training & Community Track:

- Scale screening, diagnostic, and intervention services to remote regions across the state in public health centres
- Developing productive routines for youth with autism
- Involve families in prioritizing research and service goals of CARE-ADD

The Centre plans to build a clinical database/ bio-repository representative of autism in India and use fellowship & collaborative models to further research.



*Sparked your interest? Sure, it did! There might be a future PhD opening, postdoc position, or collaboration in it for you, so be sure to check their website or write to [sowmyashree.careadd@stjohns.in](mailto:sowmyashree.careadd@stjohns.in)!*

**Want to see your lab here?** Is your lab conducting research right now that you would like to share with the INSAR community? Do you want to attract (inter)national colleagues to your lab? **Applications for the Lab Spotlight coming soon!**

**Want to see your work here?** This is your chance to let us know about the exciting work you are contributing to the autism research community. **Applications for the Student Spotlight coming soon!**