

Symposium 07

Steroid hormones & depression: What we can learn from animal models & gender differences?

Chair:
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Depression is 2x more prevalent in women than in men and there are sex differences in the efficacies of antidepressants. Steroid hormones such as estrogen, testosterone, and glucocorticoids likely play a significant role in depression and efficacies of antidepressants.

This symposium will focus on research exploring the role of steroid hormones in vulnerability to depression. Cheryl Frye will present her data on sex differences and the role of various steroid hormones in the etiology, exacerbation and/or treatment of depression. Then Liisa Galea will explore the contribution of estrogen-withdrawal in the establishment of postpartum depression and consequences for antidepressant efficacy. Susanne Brummelte will follow by describing an animal model of postpartum depression, based on exposure to high levels of the stress hormone, corticosterone, and examining the effects on both the dam and her offspring. Finally, Meir Steiner will show his data on the effects of antidepressants during pregnancy in humans.

The symposium will give an overview of research in the field of depression with an emphasis on steroid hormones. Despite the higher prevalence of depression in women, little attention has been paid in understanding how the unique physiology of females may contribute to gender differences in vulnerabilities for depression.

Our symposium will help to shed light on women's vulnerability to depression and provide a better understanding of sex differences and the role of steroid hormones in the etiology, exacerbation and/or treatment of depression in order to create better treatment options and ensure the well being of affected individuals.