

International Psychopharmacology Expert Professor Barbara Sahakian to Speak at 11th Armenian Medical World Congress

Recent neuroscience and mental health policy reports have emphasized the importance of biomarkers in early detection and early effective treatment. Biomarkers can include cognitive, neuroimaging, genetic and CSF and blood-based measures.

Cognitive problems in neuropsychiatric disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, schizophrenia, depression and Alzheimer's disease, impact on people's wellbeing and ability to function at school, university, work or home in daily life. If mental health disorders go undetected and become chronic, they are also very expensive for societies and governments.

In July, Barbara Sahakian, PhD, FMedSci, Professor of Clinical Neuropsychology at The University of Cambridge Department of Psychiatry and MRC/Wellcome Trust Behavioral and Clinical Neuroscience Institute and President of the British Association for Psychopharmacology (BAP), will speak on "Psychopharmacology and Cognition" at the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress in Los Angeles.

"Cognitive enhancing drugs, including donepezil and methylphenidate, have been a great benefit to those with neuropsychiatric disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, respectively. Currently, drugs such as the cholinesterase inhibitors help treat the cognitive symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, especially attention and concentration. However, in the near future, we will have neuroprotective drugs for Alzheimer's disease which will halt the underlying disease process. These drugs will need to be given early before there is extensive neuropathological damage and while people can still maintain good quality of life, wellbeing and functionality at work and home. Recently, there has been an increasing lifestyle use of cognitive enhancing or 'smart' drugs by healthy people which raises ethical considerations for society. My research focuses on the treatment of cognitive problems in people with neuropsychiatric disorders and brain injury and the neuroethical issues involved in the lifestyle use of these drugs by the healthy," says Dr. Sahakian.

Dr. Sahakian is internationally known for her research on cognitive enhancement using pharmacological treatments, early detection of Alzheimer's disease, cognition and depression and neuroethics. She was one of the first researchers to suggest that attentional dysfunction in Alzheimer's disease could be ameliorated using pharmacotherapy, such as cholinesterase inhibitors.

She has over 16,000 citations to her published work and she has over 300 publications in prominent scientific journals. In addition, she is co-editor of The Oxford Handbook of Neuroethics and co-author of Bad Moves - how decision making goes wrong, and the ethics of smart drugs. In April 2013, she was featured on The Forum, as part of the BBC World Service's "What If" season along with quantum physicist Michio Kaku and writer Karen Lord.



Dr. Sahakian has been a member of the Medical Research Council Neurosciences and Mental Health Board, the Science Coordination Team for the UK Government Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing, and the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) Committee on Women in Neuroscience. She was recently appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board for Grand Challenges in Global Mental Health.

Dr. Sahakian has received many honors, including the FC Donders Chair in Psychopharmacology (Utrecht University, 2005), Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences (2004-), Distinguished International Scholars Award (University of Pennsylvania, 2009-2010), Plenary lectures at the Annual Meetings of Society of Biological Psychiatry (San Francisco, 2013), ECNP (Barcelona, 2008) and CINP (Hong Kong, 2010; Stockholm, 2012) and a Lecture for the President's Teaching Day at ACNP and the David Kopf Neuroethics Lecture at Society for Neuroscience (New Orleans, 2012).

Advanced registration for the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress ends on May 1, 2013. For more information and to register please visit our website at www.aamsc.com.