

Title of Talk:

NINDS perspectives on translational and clinical research for neurodevelopmental disorders: new directions and opportunities.

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Abstract:

Recognizing the many challenges – and a disappointing history of translating what seemed to be promising preclinical leads into clinical success, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) at the NIH has created a new suite of translational and clinical programs and funding opportunities designed to bridge the gap from basic discovery to the successful development of candidate therapeutics for neurological disorders. Dr. Mamounas will discuss NINDS perspectives and priorities for improving the success of NIH-supported translational and clinical research in neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) including a pressing need: to increase the rigor and reproducibility of preclinical research; develop improved and more sensitive outcome measures and translatable biomarkers to guide clinical trials; and innovative clinical trial design especially for NDDs involving children. The presentation will consider the factors that constitute a promising, translational/clinical application package at the NINDS, and will describe the recent launch of some innovative new biomarker development projects and Phase II clinical trials in related neurodevelopmental disorders.

Bio:

Dr. Laura Mamounas joined the NINDS in 2001 and serves as a Program Director in the Neurogenetics Cluster at NINDS. She currently oversees research grant portfolios and programs in basic neurodevelopment and childhood neurodevelopmental disorders including Angelman Syndrome, CDKL5 Deficiency Disorder, Rett Syndrome, Tuberous Sclerosis Complex, Fragile X Syndrome, Phelan McDermid Syndrome and other rare, genetic forms of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Dr. Mamounas is currently involved in a number of translational and clinical projects funded by the NINDS, including clinical biomarker projects and Phase II clinical trials in neurodevelopmental disorders. Dr. Mamounas received her Ph.D. in Neurobiology from Stanford University and completed her postdoctoral training in the Department of Neuroscience at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Prior to joining the NINDS, Dr. Mamounas conducted basic research at the Gerontology Research Center (National Institute on Aging), and then was a faculty member in the Department of Pathology (Division of Neuropathology) at Johns Hopkins where she directed an NIH-funded research program investigating the role of neurotrophic factor mechanisms in brain development/maturation and regeneration after injury.