

WPA Early Career Research Award

2012 Winner: Dr. George M. Slavich, University of California, Los Angeles

Dr. George Slavich is an assistant professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles. Following his B.A. degree in psychology and M.A. degrees in psychology and communication at Stanford University, he earned his M.S. and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Oregon, completed his Clinical Psychology Internship at McLean Hospital and Harvard Medical School, an NIMH Postdoctoral Fellowship in Health Psychology at the University of California, San Francisco, and an NIMH Postdoctoral Fellowship in Psychoneuroimmunology at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The volume, substance, and range of Dr. Slavich's work are outstanding. His work has had a continuing, meaningful impact on understanding basic behavioral processes, as well as stress and depression, human gene expression, and transformational aspects of classroom teaching. He has published multiple articles in first rate journals including *PNAS*, attracting the attention of intellectual leaders. His research on human social genomics shows that social adversity (e.g., social isolation and rejection) can influence our most deeply internal biological processes – namely, the expression of our genes. This work has the potential to completely change our beliefs about gene X environment interactions in health and, at a more fundamental level, our notions about the “self” as being biologically stable across time and situations. He recently submitted an invited article to *Science* describing his research and the blossoming area of human social genomics.

Currently Dr. Slavich is co-authoring a review on stress, inflammation, and depression. The review examines evidence that stress precipitates depression in part by upregulating components of the immune system involved in inflammation. This review is likely to define future research on this cutting-edge topic.

Dr. Slavich has received multiple grants to support his work, including a Society in Science: Branco Weiss Fellowship, which provides over \$500,000 in personal research support for the study of how neural and peripheral processes translate the external social environment into the internal biological environment of disease pathogenesis.

The continuing contributions of Dr. Slavich to WPA are also noteworthy. He founded and served as Chair of the WPA Student Council from 2001-2005, served on the WPA Board of Directors from 2002-2006, has been a member of the WPA Council of Representatives since 2001, and has reviewed abstracts for the annual convention since 2006. He has presented at almost all of the annual conventions since becoming a member in 1999 (many times as an invited speaker) and has encouraged all of his students to present at the convention. He has also given two invited talks at the Terman Teaching Conference. Put simply, he has contributed to WPA in all ways possible – as a scientist, teacher, leader, and innovator.

In recognition of his prolific and substantive research contributions, the Western Psychological Association is pleased to recognize Dr. George Slavich with the 2012 WPA Early Career Research Award.