

ADVANCING NEUROPSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY IN AFRICA: AFCNP SCHOOL

The African College of Neuropsychopharmacology (AfCNP), in collaboration with the Aga Khan University Brain and Mind Institute, organized a one-week school themed “Neuropsychopharmacology of Stress and Substance Use Disorders” from June 2nd to June 8th, 2024, at the Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya. This initiative was aimed at offering advanced training for junior to mid-level African faculty and early career scientists poised to establish independent programs in mental health and brain science.

Objectives:

- To provide early career scientists with up-to-date information on stress-related disorders and co-morbidity of stress with other psychiatric disorders, including substance use disorders (SUDs).
- Enhance collaboration between early career researchers and established scientists across the world.

This inaugural school, led by AFCNP president Prof. Lukoye Atwoli and supported by Prof. Peter Kalivas, the Director of the Center for Opioid and Cocaine Addiction (COCA) at the Medical University of South Carolina (also a past president of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology), attracted 20 early career researchers from across Africa and a diverse faculty from around the globe.

The program featured intensive lectures by distinguished international faculty and participant-led professional development sessions, offering a balanced approach to deepening expertise in neuropsychopharmacology.

Generous funding from the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse supplement for the Center for Opioid and Cocaine Addiction (COCA) at the Medical University of South Carolina supported this initiative. This initiative is evidence of the impact of collaboration across colleges and other entities can have in kick-starting research careers and igniting life-long relationships that will change the face of mental health and brain science in Africa.

The AfCNP will organize another School mid-2025, and with continued funding the school will become a permanent feature in the College Calendar. The College leadership expresses its enduring gratitude for the generous funding from ACNP and NIDA (through COCA) that made this initiative possible.