



*American College of Neuropsychopharmacology*

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## **Eric Nestler Receives the ACNP Barbara Fish Award**

The American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP) has named Eric J. Nestler, M.D., Ph.D., as the winner of the 2021 Barbara Fish Memorial Award for outstanding research contributions to neuroscience.

Dr. Nestler is the Nash Family Professor of Neuroscience, Director of the Friedman Brain Institute, and Dean for Academic and Scientific Affairs at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. In an independent career spanning more than three decades, Dr. Nestler has led one of the nation's top research programs investigating the molecular and cellular underpinnings of neuropsychiatric disease. He has emerged as a true national and international leader in neuroscience research, at various times serving as president of the Society for Neuroscience and for our own American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, and he is a long-standing member of the National Academy of Medicine and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards, including the Paul Hoch Distinguished Service Award, the Sarnat Prize from the National Academy of Medicine, and the Wilbur Cross Distinguished Alumnus Medal from Yale University. He chairs the research program supported by the Hope for Depression Research Foundation and co-chairs the scientific advisory board for One Mind. Moreover, Dr. Nestler has an incredibly distinguished history of training some of the world's strongest neuroscience researchers, and dozens of his former trainees run independent research programs at esteemed institutes from Yale to the National Institutes of Health to the Sorbonne in Paris.

Dr. Nestler has made seminal contributions to our understanding of the mechanisms regulating gene expression in neurons and how alterations in these mechanisms may underlie psychiatric syndromes like addiction and depression. His laboratory established the use of state-of-the-art experimental approaches, including viral-mediated gene transfer and inducible, cell-targeted mutations in mice, to experimentally alter the activity of genes within reward pathways and to then study the consequences on the function of neural circuits and their behavioral outputs. Dr. Nestler's willingness to embrace new technologies and his ever-expanding vision for his research program allowed him to uncover key transcription factors driving addiction- and depression-related behaviors and demonstrate the role of neurotrophic factors in the lasting actions of drugs of abuse and of chronic stress on the brain. More recently, he has pioneered the use of unbiased transcriptomic approaches to explore epigenetic mechanisms regulating gene expression in discrete brain regions, cell types, and circuits, identifying pathways that are compromised in illnesses like addiction and depression, expanding our understanding of the etiology of these disorders, and paving the way for future development of novel therapeutic approaches. Most importantly, Dr. Nestler has an incredibly generous and collaborative approach to science, and this approach has resulted in a titanic impact on

the field reflected in his 12 books, more than 30 book chapters, and nearly 650 research papers and review articles.

The Barbara Fish Memorial Award presented at the 60<sup>th</sup> Virtual Annual Meeting of the ACNP is in recognition of outstanding basic, translational or clinical neuroscience. The selection of the awardee is based on the quality of the contribution and its impact in advancing neuroscience. The award is named in honor of Barbara Fish, a pioneering researcher who was a founding member of the ACNP.

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ACNP, founded in 1961, is a professional organization of more than 1100 leading scientists, including four Nobel Laureates. The mission of ACNP is to further research and education in neuropsychopharmacology and related fields in the following ways: promoting the interaction of a broad range of scientific disciplines of brain and behavior in order to advance the understanding of prevention and treatment of disease of the nervous system including psychiatric, neurological, behavioral and addictive disorders; encouraging scientists to enter research careers in fields related to these disorders and their treatment; and ensuring the dissemination of relevant scientific advances.