

MOUNT SINAI SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
PSYCHIATRY RESIDENCY  
INCOMING RESIDENTS 2010



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MEDICINE



**Benjamin Angarita, MD**

***Physician-Scientist Research Track***

UNDERGRADUATE: Williams College, BA in Latino Studies

MEDICAL SCHOOL: Weill Cornell Medical College

Ben Angarita's facilities lie in many different areas, from institutional politics and business savvy to translational research and child psychiatry. He has been president of his class, president of the Boricua Latino Health Organization, team leader of the NYC firefighters skin bank, and the recipient of the prestigious Jeanne Spurlock child and adolescent psychiatry research award. Between college and medical school, he co-founded the company Visual Introspections, which developed the prototype of a game which helps parents teach their children about personal finance and sexual behavior. Building on a background in which he mapped the neurobiology of startled fish, he subsequently worked with BJ Casey in studying the effect of a polymorphism in the BDNF genotype and early psychosocial stress on anxiety. His preliminary results show that a greater number of early psychosocial stressors are needed to produce a higher amount of anxiety in the Val/Val genotype than in the Val/Met genotype. This increased sensitivity of the Val/Met genotype to anxiety symptomatology is exaggerated with increased levels of psychosocial stress. He presented his findings at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. He is fluent in Spanish.



**Le-Ben Wan, MD, PhD**

***Physician-Scientist Research Track***

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Pennsylvania, BA in Molecular Biology, *Summa Cum Laude*

MEDICAL SCHOOL: University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

GRADUATE SCHOOL: University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, PhD in Cell and Molecular Biology, Genetics, and Gene Regulation

Ben has had a stellar scientific career. Beginning his genetics research in college, he characterized a mutation affecting inner ear development in Zebrafish, receiving distinction within his major. After college, he spent one year at the NIH, where he modified the ferritin gene for potential use as a transgenic MRI marker in cell lineage and gene therapy studies. His doctoral thesis in medical and graduate school was undertaken in Dr. Marisa Bartolemei laboratory, where he examined the in vivo functions of CTCF, a nuclear protein hypothesized to regulate long-range transcriptional silencing by influencing higher-order chromatin structure. Using RNA-inhibition in mice, Ben found that maternal stores of the protein are essential for early embryonic development. His work was the first to describe global developmental and transcriptional functions of CTCF, some of which was quite unexpected. His research was published in a first-author paper in *Development* and was selected as the feature article for that issue. Ben was awarded an NIH training grant to fund several years of his research. Continuing his focus on genomic imprinting and epigenetic regulation during mouse oogenesis and early embryogenesis, his current work seeks to delineate the effect of maternal factors during pregnancy on behavior in offspring.

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**Rachel Berkowitz, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Pennsylvania, B.A. in Biology

MEDICAL SCHOOL: Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons

Rachel has been interested in the brain and behavior since high school when she worked in the laboratories of Eric Kandel and Christian Gilliam studying transgenic mouse models of schizophrenia and autism. She also did volunteer work for the NYC branch of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). Her published paper in *Reviews in Neuroscience* ("The Human Dimension: How the Prefrontal Cortex Modulates the Subcortical Fear Response") is based on ideas she developed during college. After college she worked in the sleep research laboratory of David Dinges and presented her work on a cognitive assessment tool for astronauts at a national sleep conference. During medical she focused her attention on neurology with particular interest in movement disorders, but also found time to analyze a large Medicaid data set to determine whether the CATIE study on the treatment of schizophrenia has had an impact on physician prescribing behavior. A paper based on this work is now in press in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*. After two years of a neurology residency at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical College, Rachel decided to switch to psychiatry. Rachel is also an accomplished viola player and downhill skier.



**Michael Brus, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Pennsylvania, BA in Political Science

MEDICAL SCHOOL: University of Washington School of Medicine

With a longstanding interest in public and community psychiatry since before medical school, Michael Brus spent several years in the trenches, employed as a clinical case manager with a caseload of about 65 chronically mentally ill adults, half of whom suffered from schizophrenia and/or addiction. He also worked as a floor worker in one of Seattle's largest homeless shelters, providing mental-health outreach, distributing hygiene and food supplies, and enforcing rules of conduct. While in medical school, he was awarded a monetary grant for international public health research which he used to provide in-class HIV education to over 1,000 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students at four public and private schools in rural southern India. Michael is also an avid swing dancer and a writer, having been an Assistant Editor at *Slate Magazine* and the web-content editor at the University of Washington School of Medicine.

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**Yuriy Dobry, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE: University of California, Berkeley, BA in Molecular and Cell Biology  
MEDICAL SCHOOL: Sackler School of Medicine - New York State American Branch

Dr. Dobry has extensive experience in basic science research. During college, he worked for two years in a research laboratory investigating bone marrow transplantation. After graduation, he joined the UCSF neuroscience laboratory as a full-time researcher, participating in parallel projects: one focusing on dopaminergic toxicity on substantia nigra neurons and the other in studying neuronal protein trafficking, the results of which were published in *Neuron*. After graduating from medical school a year ago, he worked as a post-doc supervising studies investigating synaptic vesicle recycling and neurotransmitter release suspected to be involved in schizophrenia, as well as experiments seeking to elucidate communications between neurons and astrocytes. He is fluent in Russian, enjoys global politics, and makes stained-glass art in his free time.



**Robert Jaffe, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE: University of Michigan, BS in Brain, Behavior, and Cognitive Science  
MEDICAL SCHOOL: Georgetown University School of Medicine

Continuing an interest first realized in college when he began working as an advocate to end violence against women, Robert has led various groups throughout his undergraduate and medical careers. At Georgetown Robert was the co-president of Medical Students for Choice, a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that women receive the full range of reproductive health care choices. Feeling that these choices were underrepresented in the medical school and in students' training, he has undertaken a successful lobbying campaign to allow interested Georgetown medical students the opportunity to work with abortion providers—a first for this medical school. He also worked with the Human Sexuality course directors to incorporate comprehensive education about contraception and abortion. He is an enthusiastic football fan, a drummer, and is interested in golf, space, and the history of the universe.

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**Adam Karz, MD, MSc**

UNDERGRADUATE: University of California, San Diego, BA in History, BS in Cell Biology

GRADUATE SCHOOL: University of California, San Diego, MS in Biology

MEDICAL SCHOOL: Sackler School of Medicine - New York State American Branch

In his educational career, Adam has made a name for himself in the capability he has in communicating, with peers, students, and with patients. He has been a teacher for most of his pre-medical school years, teaching courses as varied as Organic Chemistry, The History of Mental Disease in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century, United States History in the 18<sup>th</sup>-Century, and Biochemistry-Nutrition. His masters work was centered on Bio-informatics, in which he clustered protein domains in a novel, non-biased approach to study large data sets in the realm of cellular signaling. This process was applied to seven genomic screens involving various modes of cell migration across multiple species. Through this work, statistically significant functional classes of proteins were discovered, as he illuminated a valuable tool in understanding complex signaling networks.



**Evan Leibu, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE: Simon's Rock College of Bard, BA in Psychology and Biology

MEDICAL SCHOOL: University at Buffalo State University of New York School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

Evan took a non-traditional route through his academic career, entering college at the age of sixteen. From his double-major there (practically foreshadowing his becoming a psychiatrist), his academic potential continued to flourish. After college, he spent several years at Cold Spring Harbor laboratories as a research technician, and his work resulted in two papers published in peer-reviewed journals. In medical school, Evan's continued determination led to his receiving a scholarship and several Dean's Letters of Commendation as well as being elected Vice president of the Buffalo Chapter of the American Medical Association-Medical Student Section. His success in medical school has earned him induction into AOA, and he was consistently prized for his clinical attention and acumen, earning honors in every rotation.

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**John Leikauf, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE: University of California, Berkeley, BA in Cultural Anthropology  
MEDICAL SCHOOL: Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Beginning with his studies in cultural anthropology, John has shown a passion for making significant humanistic contributions to his peers, patients, and chosen subjects. He has been a class representative and/or a coordinator for a multitude of medical school activities, ranging from several community-care and international health projects, to student interest groups and environmental programs like Greening Mount Sinai. For his clinical care, leadership, compassion, and dedication to service, John was inducted into the Gold Humanism in Medicine Honor Society. He has co-authored several peer-reviewed journal articles, including one first-author paper delineating how inner-city senior citizens view their illnesses; this latter paper was the result of work funded by a scholar grant he was awarded, and it's poster won distinction as one of the top presentations at the American Geriatrics Society annual conference.



**Violeta Nistor, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE AND MEDICAL SCHOOL: University of Medicine and Pharmacy Carol Davila

Violeta originally matched into the General Adult Psychiatry program at North General Hospital, and upon that hospital's precipitous closure, she was able to transfer her residency position to Mount Sinai as a PGY-1. Violeta was born in Romania and is a graduate of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Carol Davila in Romania. After relocating to the United States with her son, she was self-employed for many years caring for the chronically and terminally ill. She has an extensive volunteer record in and out of the medical sphere, and most recently she worked as an extern in the child and adolescent psychiatric unit at the Westborough State Hospital in Massachusetts. Her professional interests include geriatric and community psychiatry. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, gardening, mystery novels, and theater.

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**Erica Rapp, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE: Columbia University, BA in Spanish Language and Literature  
MEDICAL SCHOOL: New York University School of Medicine

A Shakespearean actor who taught herself to play piano in 5th grade, Erika has a long track record of leadership, especially in community and public health. In college she became a certified rape crisis counselor and treated many acutely traumatized patients over nearly 2 years. After college, while working in research, she was also a financial counselor and case manager for an organization which provided financial assistance to women wishing to terminate pregnancies but unable to pay for the procedure. In her laboratory work, while managing a colony of over 1000 mice and overseeing budgeting, she investigated the role of the adenosine-A2A receptor in neurodegeneration in Parkinson's Disease and co-authored a paper in the *Annals of Neurology*. In medical school, she was a coordinator at the student-run free clinic and co-coordinator for the Community and Public Health Institute co-sponsored by the American Medical Student Association. Most recently she has undertaken a study with Dolores Malaspina on comorbid panic and schizophrenia and will be presenting her findings at the annual APA meeting.



**Timothy Rice, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE: Yale University, BS in Biology, with Distinction  
MEDICAL SCHOOL: Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons

Timothy is a born contributor. At Yale, he became a weekly docent, leading schoolchildren on art gallery tours, and he created a novel program to bring art activities to pediatric inpatients. Timothy has been a teacher, a proctor, a resident advisor, and a founder of various humanitarian endeavors. He created a weekly Saturday seminar in medicine and human physiology to engage at-risk adolescents and augment the public school curriculum. In medical school, he secured an American Psychiatric Foundation Grant to support bringing culturally competent psychiatric care and services to Columbia's free student-run primary care clinic. He also integrated the clinic into New York City's mental health service network. He was elected by his class to be the medical student representative to Addiction Illness: Medical Solutions, and he was responsible for broaching topics relevant to the mental health of his class and for providing informal peer counseling and formal referrals around issues of addiction and substance abuse. For his interests and activities, he earned an award for the student who best exemplified the intersection of psychiatry, the arts, and the outdoors.

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**Betsy O'Brien, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE: Yale University, BA in Psychology, *Cum Laude*  
MEDICAL SCHOOL: Mount Sinai School of Medicine

A nationally ranked junior tennis player for six years, Betsy was recruited to play tennis at Yale and played varsity her first year in college. While there, she pursued an interest in psychology and public health, designing and teaching a parenting program to parents at high-risk for domestic violence and child abuse. She also worked with children with conduct disorder and/or ADHD as part of a cognitive therapy study. Following college Betsy worked for Lehman Brothers for two years, where she focused her analysis on public data networking companies, advised investors about stock picks in the data networking market, and coordinated and attended trade meetings with CEOs. In medical school, Betsy returned to her involvement in women's mental health, ultimately being elected president and director of Mount Sinai's chapter of the American Medical Women's Association. Concurrently, she furthered her community-care focus, receiving a fellowship award for community-orientated research and service, allowing her to work with the Mount Sinai Department of Health Policy, studying weight loss education among low-income minority patients.



**Amy Shehata, MD**

UNDERGRADUATE: Fordham University, BA in Natural Science, *Cum Laude*  
MEDICAL SCHOOL: New York University School of Medicine

Caring for children and developmental research are the common threads which run through Amy's background of diverse experiences. She has been an elementary school tutor and mentor, and while in college she worked as a caregiver for a three-year-old with a Pervasive Developmental Disorder. Simultaneously, she gravitated toward scientific pursuits and was one of only two students to receive a prestigious basic science research award after she elucidated the role for heat shock proteins in the thermal biology of horseshoe-crab embryos and larvae. After college, she was again on the front-lines as an office manager for a practice specializing in pediatric language delay. Bringing her professional experience to medical school, she was elected the class representative to the Professional Development Committee, where she discussed the skills necessary for recognizing and analyzing conflicts between the values of professionalism and the daily pressures of medical school training. She also entered NYU's Honors Research Program, incorporating herself into the intellectual life of a research group and investigating the role hedgehog signaling plays in nail- and digit-tip development. She was president of NYU's psychiatry interest group, and she is fluent in Egyptian Arabic.