

Symposium | Influential Scientific Authors : [Symposium 54] Sharing of Impactful Research Findings from Highly Cited Researchers in the field of Psychiatry, Psychology, and Neuroscience in Asia

📅 Fri. Sep 26, 2025 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM JST | Fri. Sep 26, 2025 7:30 AM - 9:00 AM UTC 🏢 Session Room 8 (Meeting Room 1)

[Symposium 54] Sharing of Impactful Research Findings from Highly Cited Researchers in the field of Psychiatry, Psychology, and Neuroscience in Asia

Moderator: Roger Ho (National University of Singapore), Toshiaki A. Furukawa (Kyoto University)

[SY-54-01]

Sharing of Impactful Research Findings from Highly Cited Researchers in the field of Psychiatry, Psychology, and Neuroscience in Asia

*Roger Ho¹, *Toshiaki A Furukawa², *Brian J Hall³, *Cyrus SH Ho¹ (1. National University of Singapore (Singapore), 2. Kyoto University (Japan), 3. New York University Shanghai (China))

[SY-54-02]

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health – a psychoneuroimmunological perspective

*Roger Ho¹ (1. National University of Singapore (Singapore))

[SY-54-03]

My Journey: From Clinical Work to Systematic Reviews, Randomized Trials, and Smartphone Apps

*Toshi A. Furukawa¹ (1. Kyoto University (Japan))

[SY-54-04]

A reflection on my journey to the East and a career to help the underserved

*Brian J Hall¹ (1. New York University (Shanghai) (China))

[SY-54-05]

Precision Psychiatry in Practice: Leveraging fNIRS and Machine Learning for Scalable Diagnostic Biomarkers

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Keywords : Highly Cited Researchers, Asia, Psychiatry, Psychology, Neuroscience

Clarivate Analytics has been recognising outstanding researchers who have demonstrated significant and far-reaching influence in their fields through its annual Highly Cited Researchers list. This compilation highlights global researchers who have exhibited remarkable influence, as evidenced by publications ranked in the top 1 per cent by citations for their respective fields and publication year in the Web of Science over the past decade. Of the world's population of scientists, Highly Cited Researchers are 1 in 1,000. In 2024, there were only three researchers from China, Japan and Singapore who were acknowledged as Highly Cited Researchers in the field of Psychiatry and Psychology in Asia. This symposium provides a platform for three Highly Cited Researchers in the field of Psychiatry and Psychology and one Highly Cited Researcher in the field of Neuroscience to share their impactful research findings. Their contributions span diverse methods and focus, reflecting a relentless pursuit of excellence and groundbreaking discoveries. Professor Toshiaki Furukawa from Kyoto will share his clinical research findings from systematic reviews, randomized clinical trials, and ultimately, technology such as smartphone apps. Professor Brian Hall from Shanghai will share his research findings from digital mental health innovations, research on the mental health of migrants, and cultural factors in mental health. Professor Roger Ho from Singapore will share his research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health in the general population and psychiatric patients, from a psycho-neuro-immunological perspective. Dr Cyrus Ho from Singapore will share his research in neuroscience, focusing on the application of functional near-infrared spectroscopy and artificial intelligence to establish precision psychiatry. This symposium will inspire psychiatry residents and young researchers who are looking for role models who continue to push the frontiers of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience in the Pacific Rim.

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[SY-54-02] The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health – a psychoneuroimmunological perspective

*Roger Ho¹ (1. National University of Singapore (Singapore))

Keywords : COVID-19、 Depression、 Anxiety、 Burnout、 Immunological

The COVID-19 pandemic provides a golden opportunity to conduct the psycho-neuro-immunological research. In 2020, Professor Roger Ho led the China team to conduct one of the first COVID-19 mental health studies (53.8% of respondents rated the psychological impact of the outbreak as moderate or severe; 16.5% reported moderate to severe depressive symptoms; 28.8% reported moderate to severe anxiety symptoms; and 8.1% reported moderate to severe stress levels). Then he worked with international collaborators and studied the impact on healthcare workers (5.3% screened positive for moderate to very-severe depression; 8.7% for moderate to extremely-severe anxiety, 2.2% for moderate to extremely-severe stress). Prof Ho conducted comparative studies and found that the use of face masks was a protective factor for mental health in China but not in Western countries. Professor Ho was able to connect US and Chinese researchers to conduct a cross-country comparison despite political differences. His study found that Americans reported more physical symptoms, contact history, and perceived likelihood of contracting COVID-19. Americans also reported more stress and depressive symptoms, while the Chinese reported higher acute-traumatic stress symptoms. For psychiatric patients, more than one-third fulfilled the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and more than one-quarter suffered from moderately severe to severe insomnia. Psychiatric patients also showed high acceptance and willingness to pay for the COVID-19 vaccine. Similarly, COVID-19 patients reported a higher psychological impact of the outbreak than psychiatric patients and healthy controls, with half of them having clinically significant symptoms of PTSD. Functional neuroimaging studies found that past COVID-19 infection may not affect frontotemporal cortex function. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, Prof Ho and his research team developed COVID-19 Burnout Views Scale. The relationship among COVID-19 infection, psychiatric symptoms and inflammatory responses will be discussed in this seminar.

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[SY-54-03] My Journey: From Clinical Work to Systematic Reviews, Randomized Trials, and Smartphone Apps

*Toshi A. Furukawa¹ (1. Kyoto University (Japan))

Keywords : Systematic reviews, Clinical trials, Smartphone CBT

I obtained my MD at the University of Tokyo in 1985. After being Visiting Professor at McMaster University in 1997 and becoming Professor and Chair in the Department of Psychiatry, Nagoya City University in 1998, I moved to Kyoto University in 2010 and retired in 2024. I am currently Program-Specific Professor at Kyoto University Office of Institutional Advancement and Communications.

I wear three hats of clinical epidemiologist, cognitive-behavioral therapist, and psychiatrist. I have been conducting systematic reviews, running randomized trials, performing meta-epidemiological research, and developing smartphone CBT apps in the past three decades. I am author and co-author of over 650 peer-reviewed original articles in English as well as JAMA Users' Guides to the Medical Literature 3rd Ed (McGraw Hill, 2014). I have been nominated Clarivate Highly Cited Researcher for four consecutive years in 2021-2024. My h-index is 105 on Google Scholar and 80 on Web of Science (with 3 Hot Papers and 26 Highly Cited Papers: B-9259-2011) as of April 26, 2025.

In this presentation I will share my early days as a clinical psychiatrist, then some representative systematic reviews and randomized controlled trials that I have conducted, and finally introduce my smartphone CBT app. It is my great honor to share my academic journey with young colleagues. And it will be a great pleasure for me if you can learn from my experiences, both good and bad.

For more details you may enjoy reading: Venkatesan P (2020) Toshi A Furukawa: pursuing humankind's best possible care. *Lancet Psychiatry*, 7, 393.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/32353273> and Furukawa TA (2024) Scientific Autobiography of a Japanese Psychiatrist Turned Cognitive-Behavioral Therapist, Clinical Epidemiologist and Smartphone App Developer. *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 32, 1166-1176. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/38926055>

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[SY-54-04] A reflection on my journey to the East and a career to help the underserved

*Brian J Hall¹ (1. New York University (Shanghai) (China))

Keywords : Digital mental health, migrants, China

I received my Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Kent State University in 2011 and completed postdoctoral training in Psychiatric Epidemiology and Global Mental Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. In 2013 I was awarded a Fogarty Global Health Fellowship by the NIH Fogarty International Center, and became the last global health fellow to China where I remained ever since. Since 2020, I have served as Professor of Global Public Health and Founding Director of the Center for Global Health Equity at NYU Shanghai. I also hold affiliated and adjunct professorships at Sun Yat-sen University where my Fogarty was hosted, and at the Shanghai Mental Health Center. I am currently Editor-in-Chief of *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*. As a global mental health researcher, licensed clinical psychologist, and psychiatric epidemiologist, I wear three hats: conducting large-scale mental health studies, advising WHO and UN agencies, and mentoring early-career scientists. Over the past two decades, my work has centered on the mental health of marginalized populations—including migrants, refugees, and displaced communities—through digital health interventions, longitudinal studies, and mixed-method designs. I have authored over 330 peer-reviewed publications and was named a Clarivate Highly Cited Researcher from 2022 to 2024. In this presentation, I will trace the evolution of my career—from clinical training and early research in trauma to my current work co-developing digital mental health tools and shaping research agendas for the WHO Western Pacific Region. It is a privilege to reflect on these experiences with colleagues, especially younger scholars navigating similar paths. I hope my journey offers insights not just into research success, but into resilience, collaboration, and systems change.

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[SY-54-05] Precision Psychiatry in Practice: Leveraging fNIRS and Machine Learning for Scalable Diagnostic Biomarkers

*Cyrus Su Hui Ho¹ (1. National University of Singapore (Singapore))

Keywords : Precision Psychiatry、 Functional near-infrared spectroscopy、 Machine learning、 Biomarkers

Psychiatry continues to face a critical gap in the availability of definitive, objective biomarkers for diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment stratification. Functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS), a portable and non-invasive neuroimaging modality, holds promise in addressing this need, particularly when combined with machine learning techniques. In this presentation, I will share findings from our research leveraging fNIRS to differentiate between major psychiatric conditions, including depression, bipolar disorder, and borderline personality disorder. I will demonstrate how machine learning models can enhance diagnostic accuracy and offer potential for predicting treatment responses. Furthermore, I will explore the integration of fNIRS data with other omics-based biomarkers to further refine diagnostic precision. Crucially, this approach may be particularly valuable in low-resource settings, where access to psychiatric expertise is limited, enabling earlier detection and timely intervention. This work marks a meaningful step toward scalable, data-driven solutions that advance the vision of precision psychiatry.