

ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

THOUGHTS AND UPDATES FROM DR. W. P. ANDREW LEE

May 24, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to announce the appointment of **Tarek K. Rajji, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.**, as the new Chair of the Department of Psychiatry, with a secondary appointment in the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute, effective on or before Oct. 1. He will hold the Stanton Sharp Distinguished Chair in Psychiatry.

Dr. Rajji joins us from the University of Toronto where he is Professor of Psychiatry, Director of the Geriatric Psychiatry Division, and Executive Director of the Toronto Dementia Research Alliance. He also serves as Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). Affiliated with the University of Toronto, CAMH is Canada's largest mental health teaching hospital and one of the world's leading research centers in the field.

Dr. Rajji undertook undergraduate studies and obtained his medical degree at the American University of Beirut. He then completed a residency in general psychiatry at UT Southwestern Medical Center and continued his training as a fellow in psychiatric research and neuroscience sponsored by the VA North Texas Health Care System and UT Southwestern. He pursued further training in geriatric psychiatry with a clinical fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh and a research fellowship at the University of Toronto.



His research has focused on neuroplasticity and restoring brain function in older patients with mental illness and Alzheimer's disease. To improve cognition in older adults with dementia or at risk for dementia, he combines brain stimulation, including transcranial magnetic and electrical stimulation, with cognitive, functional, and pharmacological modalities. He also studies standardization of care for patients with dementia. He has led multiple clinical trials with older patients with depression, neurocognitive disorders, and schizophrenia, including trials that for the last 15 years have been continuously funded by entities including the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and Brain Canada. He has authored more than 280 peer-reviewed publications.

In 2021, Dr. Rajji was elected to the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology. He is an active member of the American Psychiatry Association, the American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry, and the Society of Biological Psychiatry.

A dedicated educator and mentor, he has been recognized with multiple awards, including the 2022 Best Clinical Fellowship Supervisor from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the 2021 Mel Silverman Mentorship Award from the Institute of Medical Science at the University of Toronto.

I would like to express my appreciation to **William T. Dauer, M.D.**, Professor of Neurology and Neuroscience and Director of the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute, for his service as Chair of the Search Committee and to all the Search Committee members – D. Mark Courtney, M.D., Nora Gimpel, M.D., Carlos Girod, M.D., Kim Huber, Ph.D., Nneka Ifejika, M.D., M.P.H., Kimberly Kho, M.D., Bradley Lega, M.D., Elan Louis, M.D., M.S., Joseph Takahashi, Ph.D., Jennifer Walsh, M.D., and Eric Peterson, M.D., M.P.H. (ex-officio) – for the dedication and insights they brought to this comprehensive international search. I would also like to express my gratitude to Carol A. Tamminga, M.D., who will step down as Chair of Psychiatry after 16 years of distinguished leadership and championing the expansion of specialized areas of psychiatric care and research.

Dr. Rajji's leadership experience will continue to build on the Department of Psychiatry's success and, with the expected opening of the Texas Behavioral Health Center at UT Southwestern in late 2025, further accelerate the momentum in psychiatric research, education, and clinical care at our institution.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Rajji to UT Southwestern.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

W. P. Andrew Lee, M.D.

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Dean, UT Southwestern Medical School

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Academic Connections is a publication of Communications, Marketing, and Public Affairs (CMPA) at UT Southwestern Medical Center.