



Richard Jed Wyatt (1937-2002) was one of the preeminent figures of his generation of biological psychiatrists. A protean clinician, neuroscientist, educator, and mentor to a generation of current leaders in schizophrenia research, Richard spent his career—after completing his medical degree at the Johns Hopkins University Medical School—in the Intramural Research Program (IRP) of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

His lifelong work on the course and roots of schizophrenia led him into research on sleep and imaging, mood disorders, psychopharmacology, biochemistry, neuroplasticity, tardive dyskinesia,ⁱ Alzheimer's disease, and brain grafts for Parkinson's Disease. This and other work produced roughly 800 scientific publications and six books, and his many and varied contributions to the field of psychiatry were often seminal ones. Although we now take a biological basis for schizophreniaⁱⁱ for granted, Richard was one of

the early pioneers who championed this view and brought research on schizophrenia into the lab. He was the prototypical translational researcher.

Richard presided over a research portfolio that was as varied as it was innovative. For instance, his interest in the neuropharmacology of sleep led to the first report that monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) suppressed REM sleep and could treat narcolepsy. He and his colleagues also developed a platelet assay for monoamine oxidase (MAO), which eventually led to one of the first replicated biologic correlates of schizophrenia; the finding of low platelet MAO activity in patients with schizophrenia was seen at the time as a turning point in schizophrenia research. His laboratory at the NIMH tested numerous biochemical theories of schizophrenia, from the dopamine hypothesisⁱⁱⁱ, to abnormal methylation of indoleamines, to autoimmunity.

He was also instrumental in the development of a variety of **neurochemical assays and in their applications in basic and clinical studies**. His laboratory was responsible for several archival developments in schizophrenia research, including the first systematic brain imaging studies, the first brain tissue archiving for postmortem neurochemical analyses, and the first systematic approach to experimental therapeutics. Richard also launched a landmark series of studies of brain plasticity, long before it was widely appreciated as an important topic. His group was the first to demonstrate the viability of fetal substantia nigra grafts and of autologous adrenal medulla grafts to reverse aspects of experimental Parkinsonism. In the last decade of his life, much of his work focused on the potential benefits of early intervention in psychotic illnesses, and he continued to collect and analyze these data until the final days of his life.

As a mentor Richard encouraged creativity; he believed in learning by doing. He pushed for new ideas, challenged old ones, and gave his associates the opportunity to pursue their own interests. It is said that Richard mentored more of today's eminent schizophrenia researchers than anyone else before or after him, and his students have seeded some half of all American institutions of psychiatric research, as well as a good few of those abroad.

Over the course of his illustrious career Richard Wyatt received many honors and awards for his work. He was also a tireless advocate for raising public consciousness about mental illness, lobbying for increased research funding and to mitigate the consequences of laws that released patients from care without first providing suitable places for them to live. He volunteered generously of his time and energies to help organize NAMI, to serve on the board of NARSAD, to serve as president of the Manic-Depressive Illness Foundation, and to lobby government officials. He was an active participant in the educational and executive functions of the ACNP. Richard also co-produced (with his wife, Dr. Kay Jamison) a series of films about manic depressive illness and creativity that aired on public television.

Richard was deeply devoted to discovering the etiology of schizophrenia and developing new and effective treatments for it. He was always looking for new experimental treatments to alleviate the pain of those suffering with schizophrenia. Richard's enormous contributions transformed the research and treatment landscape for many neuropsychiatric disorders, most significantly for schizophrenia. Psychiatric research owes him an immeasurable debt.

ⁱ Egan MF, Apud J, Wyatt RJ. Treatment of tardive dyskinesia. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*. 23: 583-609. (997211) PMID: 9365997

ⁱⁱ Wyatt RJ, Apud JA, Potkin S. New directions in the prevention and treatment of schizophrenia: a biological perspective. *Psychiatry*. 59: 357-70. (1628435) PMID: 9029657

ⁱⁱⁱ Egan MF, Chrapusta SJ, Karoum F, Wyatt RJ. The effects of acute and chronic haloperidol treatment on dopamine release mediated by the medial forebrain bundle in the striatum and nucleus accumbens. *Neuropsychopharmacology : Official Publication of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology*. 14: 211-23. (997213) PMID: 8866705; and Chrapusta SJ, Egan MF, Wyatt RJ, Weinberger DR, Lipska BK. Neonatal ventral hippocampal damage modifies serum corticosterone and dopamine release responses to acute footshock in adult Sprague-Dawley rats. *Synapse (New York, N.Y.)*. 47: 270-7. (997190) PMID: 12539200 DOI: 10.1002/syn.10179