

Project 5: Stress, HPA Axis Dysfunction and Relapse in Alcoholism
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Primary Aims:

1. Examine the contributions of previous trauma, recent stress, and chronic alcohol use to the ACTH and glucocorticoid response in one-month abstinent alcohol-dependent subjects.
 - *Measures of the neurobiologic stress response (ACTH, cortisol, and neuroactive steroids) will be assessed in response to the Trier Social Stress Test (TSST) and ovine corticotropin-releasing hormone (oCRH), cosyntropin (ACTH_{α1-24}), and dexamethasone challenge.*
 - *Measures of previous childhood and adult trauma as well as recent stress will be assessed in alcohol-dependent subjects and associated with pituitary and adrenocortical reactivity.*
2. Assess the predictive validity of pituitary ACTH and adrenocortical reactivity and ongoing episodic stress to subsequent drinking behavior following treatment discharge.
 - *Drinking behavior and episodic stress in the alcohol-dependent subjects will be assessed for six months following neuroendocrine assessment.*