

Vicki Nejtek, PhD
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Pharmacology & Neuroscience
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Area of Expertise

My laboratory is interested in studying how people with mild brain trauma, mood problems, medical diseases, and/or addiction problems will react to treatments and how their responses to treatment might differ among others without such problems. We are also interested in studying the brain and biology of those with mild brain trauma, mood problems, medical diseases, and/or addiction problems as we look for clues to identify the people who might be more at-risk for developing Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease than others.

Active research includes longitudinal outcomes research, matched-control cross-sectional biomarker studies to predict risks for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, community-based program effectiveness, and treatment response research in the following populations: co-occurring disorders, addiction, veterans with mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) with and without posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), veteran spouses and their children, and at-risk grade school children with adverse childhood experiences.

Qualifications

BA in Psychology, University of Texas at Dallas

MS in Cognitive Neuroscience, University of Texas at Dallas

PhD in Cognition Behavioral Neuroscience, University of Texas at Dallas

Recent Publications

Editorial: Translational research advancements utilizing the Iowa Gambling Task in preclinical and clinical studies: 30 years of the IGT

Nejtek, V. A. & Salvatore, M. F., 2025, In: *Frontiers in Psychiatry*. 16, 1686127.

Eye movements during the Iowa Gambling Task in Parkinson's disease: a brief report

Doshier, K., Ryals, A. J., Nejtek, V. A., Salvatore, M. F. & Lisk, J., 2025, In: *Frontiers in Psychology*. 16, 1478500.

Moderate intensity aerobic exercise alleviates motor deficits in 6-OHDA lesioned rats and reduces serum levels of biomarkers of Parkinson's disease severity without recovery of striatal dopamine or tyrosine hydroxylase

Kasanga, E. A., Soto, I., Centner, A., McManus, R., Shifflet, M. K., Navarrete, W., Han, Y., Lisk, J., Ehrhardt, T., Wheeler, K., Mhatre-Winters, I., Richardson, J. R., Bishop, C., Nejtek, V. A. & Salvatore, M. F., Sep 2024, In: *Experimental Neurology*. 379, 114875.

Ageing accelerates locomotor decline in PINK1 knockout rats in association with decreased nigral, but not striatal, dopamine and tyrosine hydroxylase expression

Soto, I., McManus, R., Navarrete, W., Kasanga, E. A., Doshier, K., Nejtek, V. A. & Salvatore, M. F., Jun 2024, In: *Experimental Neurology*. 376, 114771.

PINK1 knockout rats show premotor cognitive deficits measured through a complex maze

Soto, I., Nejtek, V. A., Siderovski, D. P. & Salvatore, M. F., 2024, In: *Frontiers in Neuroscience*. 18, 1390215.

Nigral-specific increase in ser31 phosphorylation compensates for tyrosine hydroxylase protein and nigrostriatal neuron loss: Implications for delaying parkinsonian signs

Kasanga, E. A., Han, Y., Shifflet, M. K., Navarrete, W., McManus, R., Parry, C., Barahona, A., Nejtek, V. A., Manfredsson, F. P., Kordower, J. H., Richardson, J. R. & Salvatore, M. F., Oct 2023, In: *Experimental Neurology*. 368, 114509.

Differential expression of RET and GDNF family receptor, GFR- α 1, between striatum and substantia nigra following nigrostriatal lesion: A case for diminished GDNF-signaling

Kasanga, E. A., Han, Y., Navarrete, W., McManus, R., Shifflet, M. K., Parry, C., Barahona, A., Manfredsson, F. P., Nejtek, V. A., Richardson, J. R. & Salvatore, M. F., Aug 2023, In: *Experimental Neurology*. 366, 114435.

Establishing Equivalent Aerobic Exercise Parameters Between Early-Stage Parkinson's Disease and Pink1 Knockout Rats
Salvatore, M. F., Soto, I., Kasanga, E. A., James, R., Shifflet, M. K., Doshier, K., Little, J. T., John, J., Alphonso, H. M.,
Cunningham, J. T. & Nejtek, V. A., 2022, In: Journal of Parkinson's Disease. 12, 6, p. 1897-1915 19 p.

Premature cognitive decline in specific domains found in young veterans with mTBI coincide with elder normative scores and advanced-age subjects with early-stage Parkinson's disease

Nejtek, V. A., James, R. N., Salvatore, M. F., Alphonso, H. M. & Boehm, G. W., Nov 2021, In: PLoS ONE. 16, 11
November, e0258851.

Is there a Neurobiological Rationale for the Utility of the Iowa Gambling Task in Parkinson's Disease?

Salvatore, M. F., Soto, I., Alphonso, H., Cunningham, R., James, R. & Nejtek, V. A., 2021, In: Journal of Parkinson's
Disease. 11, 2, p. 405-419 15 p.

Sponsored Projects

Academy 4 Leadership Demonstration Project for At-Risk Children

Nejtek, V. (PI)

Texas Academy 4

15/07/14 → 31/08/16

Blood Biomarker Links Mild Traumatic Brain Injury to Alzheimer's Risk - Phase II

Nejtek, V. (PI)

J. E. S. Edwards Foundation

1/09/16 → 31/08/22

Effectiveness of Psychological & Cognitive Program Interventions in Veterans, Veteran Women, and Their Families

Nejtek, V. (PI)

Recovery Resource Council

1/02/15 → 28/02/23

Examining Risk Markers in People Vulnerable for TIA

Nejtek, V. (PI)

Intramural Research(UNTHSC)

1/10/14 → 30/09/15

Health Navigation Incentives for Dual Diagnosis Patients (Medicaid Waiver 1115)

Walters, S. (PI), Nejtek, V. (Col), Thombs, D. (Col) & Spence, E. (Col)

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

28/05/13 → 31/01/18

Homeless Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation Project

Nejtek, V. (PI)

Fort Worth Foundation

1/08/12 → 30/11/13

**Identifying Client Needs and Improving Outcomes Using an Integrated Behavioral Health & Primary Care Program
Evaluation Model**

Nejtek, V. (PI)

Recovery Resource Council

1/02/13 → 30/09/15

Linking Biomarkers & Cognitive Functioning in Veterans with Mild TBI to Risks for Alzheimer's Disease

Nejtek, V. (PI)

Intramural Research(UNTHSC)

1/09/16 → 31/08/20

MedStar Acute Crisis Intervention Effectiveness Project

Nejtek, V. (PI)
MedStar Mobile Healthcare
15/12/14 → 31/08/16

Prescribing patterns treating veterans (For: Scott Vicenzi)

Nejtek, V. (PI)
Intramural Research(UNTHSC)
5/06/17 → 31/08/20

Program Evaluation of the Project Towards No Drug Abuse Ground Zero Program

Nejtek, V. (PI)
Recovery Resource Council
1/12/17 → 30/09/22

Program Evaluation of the Project Towards No Drug Abuse Ground Zero Program

Nejtek, V. (PI)
Recovery Resource Council
1/12/17 → 30/09/21

Rainbow Day's Curriculum-Based Support Group (CBSG®) Program

Nejtek, V. (PI)
Rainbow Days, Inc.
1/08/13 → 31/08/16

Reforming and Integrating Policies for Hospital Discharge, Continuum of Care, and Social Services for People Who Are Homeless with Co-Occurring Mental and Medical Illness in Tarrant County

Nejtek, V. (PI) & Spence, E. (Col)
Hogg Foundation For Mental Health
1/02/13 → 31/01/15

Six and Twelve Month Outcome Effectiveness of Cognitive Program Interventions in Veterans

Nejtek, V. (PI) & Zhang, F. (Col)
Recovery Resource Council
1/09/17 → 31/12/19

Sunshine Club Program Evaluation

Nejtek, V. (PI)
Recovery Resource Council
1/03/22 → 28/02/23

Texas Center for Minority Health Education, Research and Outreach - Research Core, Project 1

Ghorpade, A. (PI) & Nejtek, V. (Col)
NIMHD: Natl Institute on Minority Health
16/07/12 → 31/05/17