NCANDA: Testing the Boundaries

Sara Jo Nixon, Ph.D., Moderator
Professor & Co-Vice Chair, Department of Psychiatry
University of Florida

Research Society on Alcoholism Annual Meeting 2016
Sunday, June 26th
New Orleans LA
Groundbreaking Longitudinal Studies

Are NOT immediately Longitudinal
(A reality not always appreciated)

Critical Early Scientific Objectives

• Establish sufficient descriptors of “meaningful” states
• Establish face/construct validity of the key factors
• Establish “credibility” of the overall framework
• Establish rationale for intended future directions and demonstrate sensitivity to developing innovations
Today’s Presentations

• Dr. Colrain: Sleep Patterning
  – Characterizing age, sex and interaction
  – Exploring innovative means of measurement

• Dr. Clark: Executive Function
  – Battery validation
  – Group Differences/Beginnings of the Prediction
Today’s Presentations

• Dr. Nooner: Childhood Adversity
  – Focus on NON group
  – Establishing foundation for synergistic effects

• Dr. Müller-Oehring: Neuroimaging Methods
  – Characterizing between group differences in f2x networks
  – Demonstrating capacity to use complex multi-site data
Continuing Study Challenges

- Evaluating and Sustaining Study Fidelity
- Identifying and Disentangling Cumulative & Interactive Insult
- Producing quantitative (?) risk thresholds
- Not losing sight of resiliency
Advancing the Scientific Method

- Unique opportunity for “big data” advances
- Enable unparalleled capacity for description & solid explanation
- Regression models will allow careful detail of variability

- Effect Sizes: When is small important and large… well, obvious
- Avoid temptation to “settle” on cataloguing group differences
- Apply full intent of scientific methods with model building, making room for null and contradictory findings
THANKS!
Questions for Panel

Nixon Acknowledgments:
R01AA019802
R01AA022456
U01DA041106
Thanks to Neurocog Lab Members Past and Present!