

*An interview with Prof. Gin Malhi, ISBD 2018 Keynote Speaker. Prof. Malhi will present “Identifying the Origins of Emotional Disorders” on Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am in Mexico City.*



**Please introduce yourself and what are your current ongoing projects?**

Professor Gin S Malhi – I hold a Chair at the University of Sydney and I am the Head of the Department of Psychiatry at the Northern Clinical School. I am running a number of projects. The first is the longitudinal examination of the emergence of mood symptoms and depression in adolescents in which we are interrogating brain function throughout the teenage years using fMRI. We are also examining the neural substrates of suicidality and the effects of treatments in an attempt to understand the neural basis of the process of suicide and how this can be averted. Clinically, we are conducting a trial examining the effects of lithium in acutely unwell patients and at the same time we are examining patients with mixed affective states to better define this clinical presentation.

**What is the greatest challenge at the moment in the field of bipolar disorders?**

The greatest challenge to the field of bipolar disorders is the lack of definition of clinical presentations, which is reflected in the heterogeneity of terms used to describe common manifestations of mood changes. A good example is how to define mixed states which are relatively common and yet there is no consensus for capturing these either in the clinical or research setting. As a consequence, there are no clear guidelines regarding treatment. Until we have clarity regarding diagnoses, much of our research runs the risk of missing the mark.

**What will you speak about at the conference? And why is this controversial/important?**

I will be talking about the emergence of mood disorders. This is controversial because it separates ill health from normal experiences and at the same time we are constantly trying to identify illnesses early so that we can intervene and ideally prevent the onset of disorders. This is clearly an enormous challenge and I will be presenting research that provides some insights as to how we could perhaps address this and what future directions we might take in terms of both biological research and clinical management, particularly in the field of prevention.

**What are you looking forward to at ISBD 2018?**

Coming from Australia we have great weather and so what I am most looking forward to at ISBD is the food and gaining an insight into Mexican culture. I always enjoy the ISBD because it provides the best opportunity to catch up with distant friends.

**Why should others attend ISBD 2018?**

Everyone interested in mood disorders should attend the ISBD as it has always been a high quality, focussed meeting that provides a good balance between science and clinical practice, education and research and the establishment of academic and social networks.