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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Texas Christian University	8/2025- present
Research Associate, Department of Psychology, Cornell University.	2/2025- 7/2025

EDUCATION

Postdoctoral Associate, Cornell University - Mentor: Katherine Tschida	10/2020 - 2/2025
Postdoctoral Fellow, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Science. - Mentor: Amanda Kentner	2/2019 - 9/2020
Ph.D. in Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Madison. - Advisor: Catherine Marler	8/2011 - 12/2018
M.S. in Ecology, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China - Advisor: Dingzhen Liu	9/2007 - 6/2010
B.S. in Biotechnology, Henan Agricultural University, Zhengzhou, China	9/2002 - 6/2006

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

1. **Zhao, X.**, Chae, Y.†, Smith, D.†, Chen, V.†, Sadangi, A.†, DeFelipe, D.†, Sokol, J. W.†, & Tschida, K. A. (2024) Short-term social isolation acts on hypothalamic neurons to promote social behavior in a sex- and context-dependent manner. ***eLife.*** *13:RP94924*
2. Monari, P. K., Hammond, E. R., **Zhao, X.**, Maksimoski, A. N., Petric, R., Malone, C. L., Riters, L. V., Marler, C. A., (2024) Conditioned preferences: Gated by experience, context, and endocrine systems. ***Hormones & Behavior****. 161:105529*
3. **Zhao, X.**, Erickson, M.†, Mohammed, R.†, & Kentner, A. C. (2022). Maternal immune activation accelerates puberty initiation and alters mechanical allodynia in male and female C57BL6/J mice. ***Developmental Psychobiology****. 64 (5), e22278*
4. **Zhao, X.***, Ziobro, P.*, Pranic, N. M.*, Chu, S., Rabinovich, S.†, Chan, W., Zhao, J., Kornbrek, C., He, Z., & Tschida, K. A. (2021). Sex- and context-dependent effects of acute isolation on vocal and non-vocal social behaviors in mice. ***PLoS ONE****. 16(9): e0255640* (* co-first authorship)
5. **Zhao, X.**, Tran, H.†, DeRosa, H., Roderick, R. C.†, & Kentner, A. C. (2021). Hidden Talents: Poly (I:C)-induced maternal immune activation improves mouse visual discrimination performance and reversal learning in a sex-dependent manner. ***Genes, Brain and Behavior****. e12755*
6. **Zhao, X.**, Mohammed, R.†, Tran, H.†, Erickson, M.†, & Kentner, A. C. (2021). Poly (I: C)-induced maternal immune activation modifies ventral hippocampal regulation of stress reactivity: prevention by environmental enrichment. ***Brain, Behavior, and Immunity****. 95, 203-215*

7. **Zhao, X.**, Rondón-Ortiz, A., Lima-Queiroz, E., Puracchio, M.†, Roderick, R. C.†, Kentner, A. C., (2020) Therapeutic efficacy of environmental enrichment on behavioral, endocrine, and synaptic alterations in an animal model of maternal immune activation. ***Brain, Behavior, & Immunity – Health***. *3, 100043*
8. **Zhao, X.**, Castelli, F. R., Wang, Y.†, Auger A. P., and Marler, C. A., (2020) Testosterone-related behavioral and neural mechanisms associated with location preferences: A model for territorial establishment. ***Hormones & Behavior***. *121, 104709*
9. **Zhao, X.**, Fuxjager, M. J., McLamore, Q.†, Marler, C. A., (2019) Rapid effects of testosterone on social decision-making in a monogamous California mouse (*Peromyscus californicus*). ***Hormones & Behavior***. *115, 104544*
10. Rieger, N., Fuxjager, M. J., Trainor, B. C., **Zhao, X.**, and Marler, C. A. (2018) Behavioral and Neuroendocrine Plasticity in the Form of Winner and Loser Effects. *In Handbook of Social Neuroendocrinology. Oxford University Press.*
11. **Zhao, X.**, and Liu, D. (2018) Aggression and plasma testosterone in response to encounters with receptive vs. non-receptive females in male golden hamsters. ***Canadian Journal of Zoology***. *96: 876-881*
12. Fuxjager, M. J., **Zhao, X.**, Riger, N., and Marler, C. A. (2017) Why animals fight: uncovering the function and mechanisms of territorial aggression. *In Handbook of Comparative Psychology*. *American Psychological Association: Washington DC.*
13. **Zhao, X.**, and Marler, C. A. (2016) Social and physical environments as a source of individual variation in the rewarding effects of testosterone in male California mice (*Peromyscus californicus*). ***Hormones & Behavior***. *85: 30-35*
14. **Zhao, X.**, and Liu, D. (2015) Removal of the vomeronasal organ impairs predator odor detection in female golden hamsters. ***Animal Biology***. *65(1): 1-12*
15. **Zhao, X.**, and Marler, C. A. (2014) Pair bonding prevents reinforcing effects of testosterone in male California mice in an unfamiliar environment. ***Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences***. *281(1788): 20140985*

GRANTS & AWARDS

1. **Summer Research Award ($1200)**, Department of Psychology, UW-Madison, 2018
2. **Hertz Travel Award ($195)**, Department of Psychology, UW-Madison, 2018
3. **ABS Diversity Travel Award ($150)**, Animal Behavior Society, 2018
4. **Hertz Travel Award ($750)**, Department of Psychology, UW-Madison, 2017
5. **Grant in Aid of Research ($530)**, Sigma Xi, 2017
6. **Student Research Travel Grant ($600)**, Graduate School, UW-Madison, 2017
7. **Hertz Travel Award ($750)**, Department of Psychology, UW-Madison, 2013
8. **Second Prize for poster presentation**,1st Asia-Pacific Conference on Integrative Behavioral Science, 2011
9. **Outstanding graduate student Award in academic research**, Beijing Normal University, 2009

PRESENTATIONS

1. **Special seminar. NIEHS, Durham, NC. 01/2024**
   Short-term social isolation acts on hypothalamic neurons to promote social behavior in a sex- and context-dependent manner.
2. **Special seminar. Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, NY. 12/2023**
   Short-term social isolation acts on hypothalamic neurons to promote social behavior in female mice.
3. **Nanosymposium: Motivation — Social Communication and Behavior. Society for Neuroscience Annual Conference. Washington DC, 11/2023**
   Acute social isolation acts on hypothalamic neurons to promote social behavior in female mice.

4. **Animal Behavior Society Annual Conference. 08/2021**
   Sex- and context-dependent effects of acute isolation on vocal and non-vocal social behaviors in mice.
5. **International Symposium on Reproductive Health. 05/2021**
   Poly (I:C)-induced maternal immune activation affects mouse visual discrimination performance and reversal learning in a sex-dependent manner.

Poster presentations:

1. **Hypothalamus Gordon Research Conference. Lewiston, 2022**
   Short-term social isolation acts on hypothalamic neurons to promote social behavior in a sex- and context-dependent manner.
2. **Society for Neuroscience Annual Conference. San Diego, 2022**
   Neural circuits underlying the effects of acute isolation on vocal and non-vocal social behaviors in female mice.
3. **NeuroBoston. Boston, 2019**
   Environmental enrichment rescues the effects of maternal inflammation on behaviors and markers of synaptic plasticity.
4. **Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology Annual Conference. Long Beach, 2017**
   Social environment as a source of individual variation in the rewarding effects of testosterone in male California mice (Peromyscus Californicus).
5. **Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology Annual Conference. Atlanta, 2013**
   Testosterone influences conditioned place preferences based on social and physical environment.
6. **Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) Second Annual Discovery Challenge, Madison, 2013**
   Testosterone influences conditioned place preferences but it depends on the external environment and mating status.
7. **Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology Annual Conference. Madison, 2012**
   Testosterone and conditioned place preferences in the territorial and monogamous California mouse.
8. **First Asia-Pacific Conference on Integrative Behavioral Science, Xi'an, China 2011**
   Female contact facilitates aggression in male golden hamsters regardless of differences in female receptivity.

TEACHING

1. **Instructor**
   - PSYC/BIOL 30463 Introductory Neuroscience, Texas Christian University — 8/2025 - Present
     Credit: 3, Class size: 40-50
2. **Guest Lecturer**
   - Department of Psychology, Cornell University — 2022 Spring
     Course: Neural circuits for social behavior (Instructor: Dr. Katherine Tschida)
   - Department of Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Madison — 2016 Fall
     Course: Behavioral neuroscience (Instructor: Dr. Yuri Saalmann)
3. **Teaching Assistant**
   - Department of Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011-2018
     Courses: Primate Behavior (1 semesters), Abnormal Psychology (1 semesters), Behavioral Neuroscience (2 semesters), Animal Behavior (2 semesters), Introductory Psychology (4 semesters), Statistics for Psychology (5 semesters).

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. **Professional Associations/Society Memberships**
   - 2020-present Member, Society for Neuroscience
   - 2012-2016 Member, Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology
   - 2015-2016 Member, Sigma Xi Society
2. **Peer reviewer**
   -Hormones and Behavior, -Physiology and Behavior, -Brain, Behavior, and Immunity, -Devlopment Psychology, -Journal of Cellular Physiology, -Journal of Neuroendocrinology - Brain Behavior Research, - Neuroscience Letters, - Scientific Reports
3. **Other professional development activities**
   - Mellon-Wisconsin Dissertation Writing Camp, UW-Madison, 05/2017
   - Noldus Traning Course on Research Methods and Tools of Animal Behavior, 12/2009
   - Advanced Courses and First Forum in Animal Behavior, Beijing, 11/2007

OUTREACH & COMMUNITY SERVICE

1. Pre–College Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence (demonstrated and explained Western blot), Madison, 07/ 2018
2. Expanding Your Horizons, exposed middle-school-aged girls to techniques in neuroscience (demonstrated and explained Western blot), Madison, 11/ 2017
3. Pre–College Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence, demonstrated and explained the conditioned place preference paradigm, Madison, 06/ 2017