



July 24, 2017

Thomas G. Schulze, M.D.
President
International Society of Psychiatric Genetics
Executive Office
5034A Thoroughbred Lane
Brentwood, Tennessee 37027

Dear Dr. Schulze,

I am writing to congratulate the International Society of Psychiatric Genetics (ISPG) on its 25th anniversary. This is an exciting time for the ISPG and for the field of psychiatric genetics. Although the risk architecture for psychiatric disorders is extremely complex, it is important that we examine genetic risk factors to better understand the underlying biology of these illnesses. I applaud the role that the ISPG plays in the advancement of psychiatric genetics research. By striving for high scientific standards, encouraging collaboration among researchers, and promoting education, the ISPG is a force for innovation and progress.

As genomic technologies advanced over the past 25 years, we progressed from genetic linkage analyses to association analyses, and researchers discovered hundreds of rare and common gene variants associated with severe psychiatric illnesses. These findings improved our understanding of the biologic complexity of these conditions, and spurred innovation in genetics research. Over the next 25 years, the field can build on this foundation, move toward functional characterization of specific risk variants, and examine the complex interplay between genetic and non-genetic factors that confer risk for psychiatric disorders. By leveraging data shared through biorepositories and large consortia, innovative approaches can be applied in the pursuit of new, reliable discoveries with real-world impact.

Psychiatric disorders have potentially devastating effects on the people who experience them, and on their families. The dedication of the ISPG to “pave the way to alleviate suffering due to psychiatric illness” evokes a future in which genetics research may lead to better—potentially personalized—treatments. Indeed, rapid progress in psychiatric genetics holds great promise for NIH’s goal to pave the way toward prevention and cures for devastating illnesses.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francis S. Collins".

Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.