

# The VOICE of FTD

WINTER 2020

## Perspectives in FTD Research

*Webinars conducted in partnership between AFTD and FTDDR*

The FTD Disorders Registry and The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration (AFTD) have developed a partnership to present a series of educational webinars for the FTD community called “Perspectives in FTD Research.”

“AFTD and the Registry share the aim of educating the community about research and connecting people with opportunities to participate,” noted Dianna Wheaton, M.S., Ph.D., CHES, director of the FTD Disorders Registry.

The first jointly hosted webinar, “Gene Therapy in FTD,” was presented on Thursday, December 3, 2020, using AFTD’s Go To Webinar platform and facilitated by Dr. Wheaton. The topic was chosen because gene therapy is showing promise for treating a wide range of diseases, and related clinical trials are emerging for FTD.

“Our first webinar provided information on frontotemporal degeneration and gene mutations, and specifically about gene therapy,” Dr. Wheaton said. “Prevail’s PROCLAIM study is the first of its kind to reach Phase 2 in treating persons diagnosed with a progranulin mutation (*GRN*).”

A recording of the 90-minute presentation is available.

### WATCH GENE THERAPY WEBINAR

#### PRESENTERS

##### **Dr. Olga Uspenskaya**

Dr. Uspenskaya is a neurologist and serves at [Prevail Therapeutics](#) as Vice President, Clinical Development. Prior to joining Prevail Therapeutics, she served as senior medical director at IQVIA where she was responsible for the medical strategy of the neurology portfolio and was overseeing the execution of CNS clinical trials across different stages of clinical development.

Dr. Uspenskaya earned her M.D. and completed a residency in neurology at the First Moscow State Medical University. Subsequently, she completed a Ph.D. program in neurosciences at First Moscow State Medical University and Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich, Germany; and a postdoctoral fellowship at the Sorbonne University Hospital Pitié-Salpêtrière, Paris, France. Her research was mainly

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on understanding of early phases of Alzheimer’s disease and validation of clinical biomarkers of neurodegeneration.

During her clinical and research career, Dr. Uspenskaya held academic positions which included research grants and lecturing on neurology topics. She has published in peer-reviewed clinical related journals, contributed to chapters in neurology textbooks, and presented at neurology conferences worldwide.

### **Dr. Erik Roberson**

Dr. Roberson is a physician-scientist dedicated to reducing the impact of age-related cognitive impairment. The [Roberson Lab](#) studies the neurobiology of Alzheimer’s disease (AD) and frontotemporal dementia (FTD), with a focus on understanding the cellular and molecular mechanisms of these disorders and identifying new therapeutic strategies. Focus areas include tau and its binding partners in neuronal dysfunction in AD, the mechanisms by which genetic risk factors drive AD, and how progranulin deficiency causes FTD.

Dr. Roberson received his A.B. with highest honors from Princeton University and then earned his M.D. and Ph.D. in neuroscience at Baylor College of Medicine where he studied molecular mechanisms of learning and memory. He completed a residency in neurology at the University of California San Francisco, where he also served as Chief Resident in Neurology. After residency, he completed a clinical fellowship in behavioral neurology with Dr. Bruce Miller at UCSF and resumed basic research in the laboratory of Dr. Lennart Mucke at the Gladstone Institute of Neurological Disease, initiating his current



studies of neurodegenerative disease using mouse models. He joined the neurology faculty at UAB in 2008.

In addition to directing his laboratory, Dr. Roberson directs the UAB Alzheimer’s Disease Center and the Center for Neurodegeneration and Experimental Therapeutics. Dr. Roberson also cares for patients with memory disorders and dementia at the Kirklin Clinic and directs clinical trials related to tauopathies.

**Join the Registry.  
Tell Your Story.  
Advance the Science.**

*“Together, we can make a difference!”*



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