



Carilion Clinic
Department of Child
and Adolescent
Psychiatry

Dr. Felicity Adams

Overview

- Currently I am the Division Director of Child Psychiatry at Carilion Clinic and the Training Director for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.
- At Carilion Clinic we have a child psychiatry training program and we train 4 fellows: 2 a year for 2 years.
- We have ongoing treatment for children with Autism, Aspergers and PDD-NOS
- We have an upcoming research protocol for children with autism, using memantine

Ongoing Trial

Funded by Forest Pharmaceuticals

- Trial is studying long acting memantine (safety and tolerability) in children ages 6-12 with autism, Asperger's d/o and PDD-NOS. Memantine blocks NMDA receptors and is also an antagonist of the 5HT3 receptor, agonist at D2 receptor, ? Effects at NctACH receptors
- Prior research has shown some benefits for language function, social interactions and self stimulatory behaviors in autism, but the effect on self stimulatory behaviors was not as robust, and work so far has mostly been in more severely impaired patients.

My own research interests for Collaboration

- My own interests are in the HPA axis and the programming of the epigenetic determinants of autistic spectrum disorders
- I have no current studies of these ideas but would like to briefly share them in hopes that some of you may have similar interests and want to collaborate

Possible Maternal HPA risks for Autism Spectrum D/O

- Low CRH or High ACTH/Low Cortisol as seen in atypical depression, fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, celiac dz
- Fetal programming male > female of HPA axis to be similar to mom high ACTH/low cortisol which is what some studies show in autism
- ACTH is neurotrophic/cortisol neurotoxic
- Cortisol contributes to lung/gut maturity and timing of labor so moms lower in this may have longer pregnancy, greater use of Pitocin, babies with immature gut.