



Early Career Awards for Ethnic Minority Psychologists in Trauma Psychology

This award recognizes those ethnic/racial minority psychologists who have made outstanding contributions in the study and practice of trauma psychology within seven years of graduating from doctoral programs.

Nominees' contributions may be in the areas of clinical/practice, research/writing, basic/applied research, or other professional contributions (e.g., governance/leadership) and are more heavily weighted toward nominees who have made contributions in traumas affecting or are associated with ethnic minority status/issues.

The 2014 Award goes to Betty S. Lai, Ph.D.

She is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics within the School of Public Health at Georgia State University. She is also a 2014 National Scholar for the Academy on Violence & Abuse.

Her research focuses on how children and families respond to trauma and violence. In her work, she has examined child and family responses to a number of forms of community and family violence, as well as reactions to more subtle forms of victimization (e.g., peer victimization, cyber victimization). This spring she won an award to examine and describe patterns in barriers to treatment enrollment and engagement among parents of children exposed to abuse and trauma. This is the latest of many studies that have been reported in more than 21 refereed journal articles and 7 book chapters, with more in the works.

The special relevance to this award is Dr. Lai's tireless work in trauma response. The poor and indigenous people are always at great risk of inadequate resilience to disasters, which may lead to mental and physical illness. They often have no insurance to pay for the consequences of trauma in terms of mental health services. She is editing a special issue in the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* that focuses on the youth and trauma.

John Lutzker, Distinguished University Professor at Georgia State University, made special note in his nomination letter of Dr. Lai's innovation in reaching poor youth affected by disasters through the Internet. With Drs. Mary Lou Kelley and Shannon Self-Brown, she is helping to develop a web-based intervention for children after disasters. Dr. Lutzker wrote:

"This web-based intervention for disaster-affected youth is critically needed. This project has the potential to help millions of youth with psychological distress symptoms after disasters, especially children of ethnic minority status, who may have more limited access to treatment in the post-disaster recovery environment."

And later he notes,

"In sum, Dr. Betty Lai has truly made outstanding early career contributions to the study of psychological trauma. I am very proud to nominate her for this award, and I hope you will seriously consider recognizing her with the award."

We did. Congratulations Dr. Lai.

Charles R. Figley, PhD, Chair, 2014 Division 56 Awards Committee

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