



Jair Soares, M.D., Ph.D.

An Interview with ACNP Fellow, Jair Soares, M.D., Ph.D.

Q. Could you tell me a bit about yourself?

A. I have been at University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston for 12 years. I am a Professor and Pat R. Rutherford, Jr. Chair in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at McGovern Medical School, and the Executive Director of UTHealth Harris County Psychiatric Center. I obtained my M.D., Ph.D. from Brazil and completed my Psychiatry residency at the University of Pittsburgh, where I worked under the mentorship of Matcheri Keshavan (ACNP Member), Allan Mallinger, Ellen Frank (ACNP Fellow Emeritus), and David Kupfer (ACNP Fellow Emeritus). I completed my postdoc at Yale to work with Robert Innis (ACNP member).

Q. When did you join the ACNP?

A. I first attended the meeting as a postdoc. Subsequently, I received a Travel Award and later became an Associate Member when I was in the faculty at University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. I became a Member when I was tenured full professor at UNC Chapel Hill working in David Rubinow's department (ACNP Fellow Emeritus), who supported my full membership. Just a few years ago, I became an ACNP Fellow. Since 1998, when I first came to ACNP, I have never missed one meeting!

Q. As a member of the ACNP, have you had the opportunity to interact with innovative thought leaders in the field of neuroscience?

A. There are many examples. It is really a great group of scientists. Among several very impressive people that I have met over the years, John Csernansky (ACNP Fellow) is one to mention. Another one is Alan Frazer, an ACNP Fellow Emeritus. Stanley Rapoport (ACNP Fellow) is another.

Q. How has your membership in the ACNP put you in touch with the professionals who have shaped the field as it currently exists - and will enable you to be one of those who shape the various neuroscientific disciplines in the future?

A. It is a very distinct group, very accomplished people. You go to their sessions, and they come to yours. The same is true for the poster sessions. It is hard to name just a few among so many outstanding people. But I have found that attending the meeting is extremely rewarding. It is my favorite meeting to attend. John Rush (ACNP Fellow Emeritus), who is a very influential clinical scientist and was PI of the landmark STAR-D NIMH-supported study, has become a collaborator and mentor through our many interactions at the ACNP meeting.

Q. *The primary functions of the College are research and education. Do you feel the College offers investigators the opportunity for cross-disciplinary communication?*

A. Oh, very much so, through the way the meeting is organized. There is an outstanding program in clinical and translational research focused on brain and behavior interactions. It is a great opportunity to meet outstanding people and learn about the latest research in our field.

Q. *How about the opportunity to promote the application of various neuroscientific disciplines to the study of all forms of mental illness and their treatment? If so, how have these experiences helped your career.*

A. You have the opportunity to interact with a very diverse group; neuroscientists, pharmacologists, molecular biologists, neuro-imaging and clinical trials. Many of the scientists serve on NIH study sections. The people you meet at the meeting can become research collaborators and in many cases, life-long friends. As I department chair, I also use the College as a place to meet and recruit outstanding new faculty and trainees to UT Houston.

Q. *Anything else to the say to the readers? I know you have been involved in the Diversity efforts of the College, can you tell us about that?*

A. ACNP is an amazing organization. I am always impressed by the high caliber of science. I have developed a great network of friends over time. I see all of the novel ideas presented at the annual meeting. We are on a nice path to address the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) issue in the College. I appreciate the things that have been done, efforts to bring the issues to the study group panels. Sure, there are more things to come. Last year, I served as the co-chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. The task force suggested a theme for their annual meeting events called, ***Celebration of Diversity*** and hosted virtual events for the LGBTQIA and BIPOC communities, hosted sessions on diversity related issues as well as an under-represented minority women's breakfast to discuss the challenges that under-represented minority women face in academia. We created a disabilities statement for the annual meeting registration page for those that may need special accommodations. This year, I am serving as the chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. We are off to a great start to continue the momentum from last year. We plan to host several events at this year's annual meeting. We have recently updated the annual meeting registration page to include a gender statement and a more inclusive list of gender selections and the opportunity to provide a gender if not listed and some of the task force members have submitted two study group proposals for consideration on very important topics related to the LGBTQIA2S+ and BIPOC communities.