

The Friedman Brain Institute

2026 FBI Research Scholars

On behalf of the Philanthropic Leadership Council of The Friedman Brain Institute, we are pleased to announce the 2026 recipients of The FBI Research Scholars Awards.

Fascitelli Research Scholar Award



Jinye Dai, PhD

Assistant Professor,
Neuroscience



Scott Russo, PhD

Assistant Professor, Genetics
& Genomic Sciences

Unraveling the Mechanisms of Social Approach–Withdrawal Conflict Induced by Adolescent Isolation Stress

Social connection is essential for health, yet isolation during adolescence can produce lasting brain changes and increase the risk of mental illness. In a mouse model of adolescent isolation stress, animals initially approach a social partner but rapidly shift to freezing and withdrawal, revealing a conflict between social drive and threat avoidance. We hypothesize that this behavior is driven by stress-induced remodeling of social circuit communication and serotonin signaling. We will integrate activity-based cell labeling, real-time serotonin monitoring, synaptic physiology, single-cell profiling, and targeted pharmacology to define causal mechanisms and test rescue strategies. This work will identify actionable targets for treating stress-related disorders.



Icahn
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Sinai