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Barbara J Sahakian is Professor of Clinical Neuropsychology at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Cambridge School of Clinical Medicine and Honorary Consultant Clinic Psychologist at Addenbrooke's Hospital. She has an international reputation in the fields of cognitive psychopharmacology, neuroethics, neuropsychology, neuropsychiatry and neuroimaging. She is co-inventor of the CANTAB computerised neuropsychological tests, which are in use world-wide. She is probably best known for her research work on cognition and depression, cognitive enhancement using pharmacological treatments, neuroethics and early detection of Alzheimer's disease. Indeed, she has over 300 publications covering these topics in scientific journals, including *Science*, *Nature*, *Nature Neuroscience*, *The Lancet*, *British Medical Journal*, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *Biological Psychiatry*, *the Journal of Neuroscience*, *Brain*, *Psychopharmacology* and *Psychological Medicine*. Her current programme of research, funded by the Wellcome Trust and Medical Research Council, investigates the neurochemical modulation of impulsive and compulsive behaviour in neuropsychiatric disorders, such as unipolar and bipolar depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. This topic was the focus of her recent papers published in *Science*, (Chamberlain *et al* 2006, Chamberlain *et al* 2008).

Professor Sahakian was one of the first researchers to suggest that attentional dysfunction in Alzheimer's disease could be ameliorated using pharmacotherapy, such as cholinesterase inhibitors. In addition, she was early to highlight the cognitive changes in unipolar and bipolar depression, as well as their significance for functional outcome. In 2003, she was selected to lecture on this topic for the Teaching Day at the annual meeting of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP). Most recently, she has introduced the importance of the concept of cognitive reserve to the field of neuropsychiatry (*Psychological Medicine*, 2006, 36, 1053-1064).

In recognition of her contribution to cognitive neuroscience, she was elected a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences in 2004 and in 2005 she was awarded the Donders Chair in Psychopharmacology at Utrecht University (The Netherlands). Earlier this year, she gave the Deakin Innovation Lectures in Melbourne, Australia and she was the first woman to give a plenary lecture at ECNP (Barcelona). In 2009 to 2010, she will take up the Distinguished International Scholars Award at the University of Pennsylvania (USA).

From November 2005 she began a three-year appointment to the Committee of Women in Neuroscience for the Society for Neuroscience (SFN, USA). In 2006 she began her appointment on the Medical Research Council (MRC) Neurosciences and Mental Health Board and in 2008 she was appointed to the MRC Expert Group for Strategy on Mental Health.. Also recently she was appointed to the Executive Committee of the newly formed Neuroethics Society and is on the Editorial Board of the *American Journal of Bioethics – Neuroscience*

In 2006 she was appointed as a member of the Science Co-ordination Team for the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing (UK Office of Science, Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills). (www.foresight.gov.uk). This project was launched in October 2008 (Beddington *et al* 2008 *Nature*).

Professor Sahakian has also trained over 15 PhD students in the field of cognitive neuroscience, many now with international reputations in their own right (e.g. Adrian M Owen, Rebecca Elliott, Andrew D. Lawrence, Adam Aron) and several prize winners (e.g. Jennifer Coull, Mitul Mehta, Danielle Turner, Samuel Chamberlain). Since 2004 she has been writing and training PhD students in the field of neuroethics. One of her students, Danielle Turner, who completed her PhD on the psychopharmacology of cognitive enhancement in 2005, received an award from the British Psychological Society and was recently selected as one of the top five young UK researchers. Her PhD student, Karen Ersche, was recently appointed Betty Behrens Research Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge.

Professor Sahakian is a Fellow of Clare Hall and Bye-Fellow of Christ's College.