



Octavio Choi, MD, PhD

Clinical Professor, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

CLINICAL OFFICE (PRIMARY)

- **Stanford Dept of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences**

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Bio

BIO

Dr. Choi is an interventional and forensic neuropsychiatrist on the Stanford faculty. He received his MD/PhD at UC-San Diego as part of NIH's Medical Scientist Training Program. He received his PhD degree in Neuroscience for work done at the Salk Institute on neural development.

Dr Choi is the founder of Stanford's Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship Program. As a forensic psychiatrist, Dr. Choi specializes in neurolaw, an emerging interdisciplinary field that studies the use and misuse of neuroscience-based evidence in the courtroom. His research interests include the use of functional brain imaging to discern mental states (e.g. lie detection, pain assessment), and the neural basis for moral decision making (e.g. defects in moral reasoning brain centers giving rise to psychopathy). A central question he considers is: how do advances in our knowledge of the neural basis of behavior change perceptions of how offenders should be punished? And when are advanced research-level neuroimaging technologies "ready" for use in the courtroom? He has testified as a court-appointed expert, as well as for the prosecution and defense, in many high-profile and complex cases involving psychiatric, neurologic, medical, and medication-related legal claims.

Dr. Choi is an active educator, providing seminars to students, attorneys, judges, neuroscientists and clinicians on the importance and relevance of neuroscience and the law. He is co-instructor of the popular Stanford undergraduate course "The Brain and the Law," and host of the KZSU radio program "Ask Dr. Choi," focusing on issues around student wellness, such as toxic perfectionism.

Dr. Choi's clinical interests include neuromodulatory approaches to treat psychiatric illness, such as the use of transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) to treat major depression. He is part of the interventional psychiatry group of Stanford Medicine, conducting clinical work and research to advance the power, precision, and scope of neuromodulation.

CLINICAL FOCUS

- Psychiatry
- Neuropsychiatry

- Forensic Psychiatry
- Interventional Psychiatry

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Clinical Professor, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Founding Director, Stanford Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship, (2019-2023)
- Affiliate Faculty, Wu Tsai Neurosciences Institute, (2019- present)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Fellowship award, Stanford Medical Humanities program (2025)
- Recipient of Innovator Grant award, Stanford University (2020)
- Medical Scientist Training Program, NIH (federally-funded MD/PhD award) (1994 - 2004)
- Summer Research Scholar, Mind and Life Institute (2006)

BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Member, AAPL (American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law) (2012 - present)
- Chair, Forensic Neuropsychiatry Committee, American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (2015 - 2018)
- Appointed member, Special Committee on Fellowship Recruitment and Selection Process (2021 - 2022)
- Associate Editor, Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (2018 - 2023)
- Member, ANPA (American Neuropsychiatric Association) (2024 - present)

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- BS, Stanford University , Symbolic Systems (Computational Neuroscience) (1992)
- Medical Education: University of California San Diego School of Medicine (2004) CA
- MD, University of California, San Diego (2004)
- PhD, University of California, San Diego , Neuroscience (2004)
- Residency: UCLA Medical Center (2008)
- Psychiatry residency, UCLA-Neuropsychiatric Institute , Psychiatry (2008)
- Fellowship: University of Pennsylvania Health System (2012) PA
- Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania , Forensic Psychiatry, Neurolaw (2012)
- Board Certification: Psychiatry, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (2010)
- Board Certification: Forensic Psychiatry, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (2013)

LINKS

- Stanford Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship: <https://med.stanford.edu/psychiatry/education/forensic.html>
- Stanford Interventional Psychiatry Group: https://med.stanford.edu/psychiatry/patient_care/intvpsych.html
- TEDx talk: Can Neuroscience Eradicate Psychopathy?: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RB-qhZl_qLo
- Science on Tap talk: Discoveries in Neuroscience: New treatments for mental illness (TMS and interventional psychiatry): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJlffMq_AbcE&t=5279s
- MacArthur talk: Introduction to Forensic Neuroscience: <https://med.stanford.edu/psychiatry/special-initiatives/forensicpsychiatry.html>
- OHSU BRAIN talk: The Criminal Brain: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4irfcgFpoE&t=510s>

Research & Scholarship

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Adolescence
- Brain and Learning Sciences
- Child Development
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Early Childhood
- Legal Issues
- Lifelong Learning
- Philosophy
- Poverty and Inequality
- Science Education
- Technology and Education

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

Neurolaw: Criminal responsibility and brain damage; brain-activity based mind reading; reliability of advanced neuroimaging technologies; normative databases

Teaching

COURSES

2022-23

- The Brain and the Law: PSYC 125 (Spr)

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Attitudes of Forensic Fellowship Psychiatry Directors towards an Applicant Match.** *The journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*
Gupta, D. R., Candilis, P. J., Choi, O., Abi Zeid Daou, M., Kapoor, R., Cleary, S. D., Binder, R., Ash, P.
2024
- **Neuroinnovation in Medicine: History and Future** Choi, Octavio. "Neuroinnovation in Medicine: History and Future." *Ethics and Clinical Neuroinnovation: Fundamentals, Stakeholders, Case Studies, and Emerging Issues*.
Octavio, C.
Springer International.2023: 13-55
- **The Fellowship Application Process Must Be Reformed.** *The journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*
Choi, O.
2021; 49 (3): 300-310
- **Belonging, Therapeutic Landscapes, and Networks: Implications for Mental Health Practice** *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*
Tacker, K., Choi, O.
2019; 47 (3): 388-390
- **What Neuroscience Can and Cannot Answer.** *The journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*
Choi, O. S.

2017; 45 (3): 278-285

- **Neuroimaging and lie detection: ready for court?** *Psychiatric Expert Testimony*

Choi, O.

Oxford University Press.2015; 1: 84–96

- **Adjudicating Dangerous and Incompetent Defendants: Civil or Criminal?** *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*

Choi, O., Weiss, K.

2012; 40 (2): 279-281