



Rebecca A. Bernert, PhD, ABPP, FT

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences (Public Mental Health and Population Sciences)

CLINICAL OFFICE (PRIMARY)

- **Psychiatry Clinic**

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ACADEMIC CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Stanford Medical Center Development**

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Bio

BIO

I am an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and a licensed clinical psychologist in the Stanford University School of Medicine. I am a suicidologist, with subspecialty expertise in clinical trials, epidemiology, and suicide prevention best practices. I have joint specialty in behavioral sleep medicine, treatment development, and thanatology. I am Founding Director of The Stanford Suicide Prevention Research Laboratory, and Co-Chair a number of initiatives to support multidisciplinary efforts in suicide prevention. Our program utilizes cognitive, biological (e.g., fMRI), and behavioral testing paradigms, with an emphasis on translational therapeutics across the lifespan. Our mission is to identify novel therapeutics, including seminal work to establish the subfield of sleep and suicide prevention. A special focus is the development of rapid-action, low-risk interventions for the prevention of suicide. Our mission is to evaluate transdiagnostic risk factors and biomarkers underlying treatment response that may inform etiology, reduce stigma, and advance innovation. Advocating for its utility as a visible, yet non-stigmatizing warning sign of suicide—our earliest work delineated sleep as a risk factor for suicidal behaviors. Funded by NIH and DOD, we subsequently conducted the first suicide prevention clinical trials, testing efficacy of a rapid-action (6 h) insomnia treatment for suicidal behaviors. These use a mechanisms focus to identify central disease processes (eg, underlying neural circuitry, behavioral factors) for anti-suicidal response. An overarching aim is to harness new technologies to aid risk prediction, precision medicine, and intervention opportunity. We are committed to improving national training practices (e.g., national needs-assessment of medical training parameters; AI for suicide prevention), and lead hospital best practices for safety in screening, triage, and postvention.

Regarding translation to policy, I have served as a content expert for nationally-directed health initiatives with NIH, VA, DOD, DARPA, SAMHSA, CDC, and The White House. I recently led development of the CA 2020-25 Statewide Strategy for Suicide Prevention, following invited testimony (CA State Assembly) and a commissioned Policy Brief on suicide prevention best practices. Advisory and advocacy work centers on how research guides public health policy and implementation. I am especially committed to initiatives promising impact to suicide prevention on a broad scale, including universal strategies for lethal means restriction and real-time surveillance of suicidal behaviors. To this end, I have been honored to serve as a content expert to The White House Office of Science and Technology for initiatives focused on technology innovation and led advisory work promoting suicide deterrent systems for private organizations and public sites, such as the Golden Gate Bridge. I have consulted for technology companies, as well as private industry and healthcare partners.

Inspired by maternity leaves coinciding with the above work, I have a separate research line examining organizational development, inclusive practices, sleep and employee wellness. This addresses disparate impact of institutional and federal medical leave practices on recruitment and retention of women. Our program focuses on cost-effective policy for diversity training and reduced attrition of women in medicine, law, STEM and technology fields. As such, I am dedicated to spearheading development of a Stanford Center for Policy, Inclusive Practices, and Equity Education.

To donate or partner with us, please contact Deborah Stinchfield (Stanford Medical Center Development) medicalgiving@stanford.edu or please contact us directly.

CLINICAL FOCUS

- Clinical Psychology
- Best Practices in Suicide Prevention and Postvention
- Evidence-Based Treatments for Suicidal Behaviors
- Behavioral Sleep Medicine, Insomnia and Nightmare Treatments
- Circadian Rhythm Sleep Disorders, Chronotherapy, Shift Work
- CBT for Insomnia (CBTi), Imagery Rehearsal Treatment (IRT) for Nightmares
- Mood Disorders, Depression and Bipolar Treatments
- Grief and Bereavement; Thanatology
- Behavioral Medicine; Behavioral Pain Management
- Suicidology; Military Suicide Prevention; Traumatology

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Assistant Professor, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
- Member, Bio-X
- Member, Wu Tsai Neurosciences Institute

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Instructor, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University School of Medicine, (2011-2015)
- Director, Stanford Suicide Prevention Research Laboratory, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, (2012- present)
- Investigator, Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Centers (MIRECC), VA Palo Alto Health Care System, (2013- present)
- Co-Chair, The Center for Premature Mortality and Suicide Prevention, Stanford University School of Medicine, (2015- present)

BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Board Member, Bridge Rail Foundation (BRF) (2013 - present)
- Co-Chair, Lethal Means Restriction Advisory Workgroup, The City of Palo Alto and Project Safety Net (2016 - present)
- Lead Technical Consultant, CA 2020 State Strategy, California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (CA MHSOAC) (2018 - 2020)

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- PhD Training: Florida State University (2009) FL
- Undergraduate Education, University of Oregon , English and Psychology
- Graduate Education, Florida State University , Clinical Psychology
- Predoctoral Fellowship, NIH/NHGRI , Intramural Research Training Award in Biomedical Sciences
- Predoctoral Fellowship, NIH/NIMH, Florida State University , National Research Service Award (F31)
- Residency, VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) , Clinical Psychology

- Postdoctoral Fellowship, NIH/NIMH, Stanford University , National Research Service Award (T32)
- Faculty Fellowship, Stanford Clayman Institute for Gender Research , Diversity and Inclusive Practices Policy (2019)
- Fellow in Thanatology (FT), Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) , Thanatology: Death, Dying, and Bereavement (2023)

LINKS

- Documentary (APA TV): Novel Therapeutics for Suicide Prevention: <https://youtu.be/zjmbRQODwPQ>
- Bernert Lab (Director): <http://bernertlab.stanford.edu>
- iSleep Treatment Program (Protocol Director): <http://bernertlab.stanford.edu/participate.html>
- Bridge Rail Foundation (Board Member): <http://www.bridgerail.net>
- Striving for Zero: California's Strategic Plan For Suicide Prevention 2020 – 2025: https://mhsoac.ca.gov/sites/default/files/Suicide%20Prevention%20Plan_Final.pdf
- Policy Brief: Emerging Best Practices and Innovation in Suicide Prevention: Toward an Updated Statewide Strategic Plan for California: https://mhsoac.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018-11/Policy%20Brief_Emerging%20best%20practices%20in%20suicide%20prevention_10.17.2018.pdf
- Sleep Enhancement for Returning Veterans (Protocol Director): <http://projectservesleep.com>
- Postdoctoral Fellowship (Faculty Preceptor): <http://med.stanford.edu/psychiatry/education/T32-research-fellowships.html>
- Stanford Health Policy Forum, Stanford Medicine: <https://med.stanford.edu/healthpolicyforum/past-events.html>
- Suicide and Hope: A Podcast Discussion: <https://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2019/06/25/suicide-and-hope-a-podcast-discussion/>
- TIME: Wish Fulfillment? No. But Dreams Do Have Meaning: <http://content.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1904561,00.html>
- JAMA Network: Author Interview Podcast: <https://edhub.ama-assn.org/jn-learning/audio-player/7130454>
- Stanford Clayman Institute for Gender Research Speaker Series: <https://gender.stanford.edu/events/faculty-research-fellows-lunch-rebecca-bernert>
- Stanford T32 BSSR Data and Population Sciences (Faculty Preceptor): <https://grantome.com/grant/NIH/T32-HL151323-01>
- NIMH/NIH 2021 Virtual Workshop: Sleep and Suicide Prevention: Advancing Innovation and Intervention Opportunity (Co-Chair): <https://www.sleepsuicideprevention.org/>

Research & Scholarship

CLINICAL TRIALS

- A Brief Behavioral Sleep Intervention for Depression Among Military Veterans, Not Recruiting
- A Sleep-Oriented Intervention for Suicidal Behaviors, Not Recruiting

PROJECTS

- A Sleep-Oriented Intervention for Suicidal Behaviors - NIH/NIMH
- Developing a Data Monitoring Infrastructure for the Study and Prevention of Local Suicide Clusters - SPECTRUM PHS Pilot Grant
- A Fatality Statistics Database and Monitoring System for Rail Suicide Prevention - SCC Department of Health, Division of Integrated Behavioral Health, Suicide Prevention Oversight Committee
- Suicide Risk Assessment Training Practices in Pediatric Residency Programs: A Nationwide Assessment Survey - John A. Majda, M.D. Memorial Fund (Faculty Sponsor)
- Pediatric Sleep Disturbances as a Proposed Biomarker and Emergency Department Target - Suicide Prevention through Outreach (SPOT) Fund, Stanford University School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences in partnership with Lucile Packard Children's Hospital and the Child Health Research Institute
- Advancing Women in Science: Establishing a Departmental Mentoring Program in Academic Medicine - Stanford University VPFDD, VPTL, VPUE, in partnership with OpenXChange
- Evaluating the Visibility and Use of Family-Friendly Policies to Enhance Faculty Diversity and Inclusion - Jointly funded by the Stanford University Diversity Cabinet, VPFDD, and the Stanford Dean's Office of the School of Medicine

Teaching

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Advisor (AC)

Shamsi Soltani

GRADUATE AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Biology (School of Humanities and Sciences) (Phd Program)
- Child Psychiatry (Fellowship Program)
- Community Health and Prevention Research (Masters Program)
- Epidemiology (Masters Program)
- Epidemiology (Phd Program)
- Medicine (Masters Program)
- Neurosciences (Phd Program)
- Prevention Research (Scholarly Concentration Application)
- Psychiatry and Behavioral Science (Fellowship Program)
- Sleep Medicine (Fellowship Program)

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Social zeitgeber and sleep loss as risk factors for suicide in American Indian adolescents.** *Transcultural psychiatry*
Ehlers, C. L., Gilder, D. A., Benedict, J., Wills, D. N., Phillips, E., Gonzales, C., Karriker-Jaffe, K. J., Bernert, R. A.
2024: 13634615241227679
- **Genetic factors associated with suicidal behaviors and alcohol use disorders in an American Indian population.** *Molecular psychiatry*
Peng, Q., Gilder, D. A., Bernert, R. A., Karriker-Jaffe, K. J., Ehlers, C. L.
2024
- **Comorbidity of anxiety/affective, conduct/antisocial, attention deficit, and alcohol use disorders with suicidal behaviors in an American Indian community sample of adults and adolescents.** *Journal of psychiatric research*
Ehlers, C. L., Gilder, D. A., Karriker-Jaffe, K. J., Bernert, R.
2023; 167: 63-70
- **Genetic Factors Associated with Suicidal Behaviors and Alcohol Use Disorders in an American Indian Population.** *Research square*
Gilder, D., Bernert, R., Karriker-Jaffe, K., Ehlers, C., Peng, Q.
2023
- **Poor self-reported sleep quality associated with suicide risk in a community sample of American Indian adults.** *Sleep advances : a journal of the Sleep Research Society*
Ehlers, C. L., Karriker-Jaffe, K. J., Bernert, R.
2023; 4 (1): zpad024
- **Using a Safety Planning Mobile App to Address Suicidality in Young People Attending Community Mental Health Services in Ireland: Protocol for a Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial.** *JMIR research protocols*
Melia, R., Francis, K., Duggan, J., Bogue, J., O'Sullivan, M., Young, K., Chambers, D., McInerney, S. J., O'Dea, E., Bernert, R.
2023; 12: e44205
- **Trauma, historical trauma, PTSD and suicide in an American Indian community sample.** *Journal of psychiatric research*
Ehlers, C. L., Yehuda, R., Gilder, D. A., Bernert, R., Karriker-Jaffe, K. J.
2022; 156: 214-220

- **Examining subjective sleep quality in adults with hoarding disorder.** *Journal of psychiatric research*
Mahnke, A. R., Linkovski, O., Timpano, K., van Roessel, P., Sanchez, C., Varias, A. D., Mukunda, P., Filippou-Frye, M., Lombardi, A., Raila, H., Anderson, K., Sandhu, T., Wright, et al
2020
- **Delta Event-Related Oscillations Are Related to a History of Extreme Binge Drinking in Adolescence and Lifetime Suicide Risk.** *Behavioral sciences (Basel, Switzerland)*
Ehlers, C. L., Wills, D. N., Karriker-Jaffe, K. J., Gilder, D. A., Phillips, E., Bernert, R. A.
2020; 10 (10)
- **Artificial Intelligence and Suicide Prevention: A Systematic Review of Machine Learning Investigations.** *International journal of environmental research and public health*
Bernert, R. A., Hilberg, A. M., Melia, R., Kim, J. P., Shah, N. H., Abnoui, F.
2020; 17 (16)
- **Suicide Risk Assessment and Management Training Practices in Pediatric Residency Programs: A Nationwide Needs Assessment Survey.** *The Journal of adolescent health : official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine*
Schoen, L. E., Bogetz, A. L., Hom, M. A., Bernert, R. A.
2019
- **NIGHTMARES PREDICT CROSS-SECTIONAL RISK FOR SUICIDAL IDEATION, BUT NOT PERCEIVED STIGMA IN A HIGH-RISK SAMPLE OF US MILITARY VETERANS**
Hilberg, A. M., Murphy, L., Pham, S., Bernert, R. A.
OXFORD UNIV PRESS INC.2019
- **The Validity of Google Trends Search Volumes for Behavioral Forecasting of National Suicide Rates in Ireland.** *International journal of environmental research and public health*
Barros, J. M., Melia, R. n., Francis, K. n., Bogue, J. n., O'Sullivan, M. n., Young, K. n., Bernert, R. A., Rebholz-Schuhmann, D. n., Duggan, J. n.
2019; 16 (17)
- **Cross-cultural relevance of the Interpersonal Theory of suicide across Korean and U.S. undergraduate students.** *Psychiatry research*
Suh, S., Ebesutani, C. K., Hagan, C. R., Rogers, M. L., Hom, M. A., Ringer, F. B., Bernert, R. A., Kim, S., Joiner, T. E.
2017; 251: 244-252
- **Sleep architecture parameters as a putative biomarker of suicidal ideation in treatment-resistant depression** *JOURNAL OF AFFECTIVE DISORDERS*
Bernert, R. A., Luckenbaugh, D. A., Duncan, W. C., Iwata, N. G., Ballard, E. D., Zarate, C. A.
2017; 208: 309-315
- **Objectively Assessed Sleep Variability as an Acute Warning Sign of Suicidal Ideation in a Longitudinal Evaluation of Young Adults at High Suicide Risk.** *The Journal of clinical psychiatry*
Bernert, R. A., Hom, M. A., Iwata, N. G., Joiner, T. E.
2017; 78 (6): e678-e687
- **Antisuicidal Response Following Ketamine Infusion Is Associated With Decreased Nighttime Wakefulness in Major Depressive Disorder and Bipolar Disorder.** *journal of clinical psychiatry*
Vande Voort, J. L., Ballard, E. D., Luckenbaugh, D. A., Bernert, R. A., Richards, E. M., Niciu, M. J., Park, L. T., Machado-Vieira, R., Duncan, W. C., Zarate, C. A.
2016
- **Sleep architecture parameters as a putative biomarker of suicidal ideation in treatment-resistant depression.** *Journal of affective disorders*
Bernert, R. A., Luckenbaugh, D. A., Duncan, W. C., Iwata, N. G., Ballard, E. D., Zarate, C. A.
2016; 208: 309-315
- **Suicide and sleep: Is it a bad thing to be awake when reason sleeps?** *Sleep medicine reviews*
Perlis, M. L., Grandner, M. A., Chakravorty, S., Bernert, R. A., Brown, G. K., Thase, M. E.
2016; 29: 101-107
- **Limitations of a single-item assessment of suicide attempt history: Implications for standardized suicide risk assessment.** *Psychological assessment*
Hom, M. A., Joiner, T. E., Bernert, R. A.
2016; 28 (8): 1026-1030

- **Nocturnal Wakefulness Is Associated With Next-Day Suicidal Ideation in Major Depressive Disorder and Bipolar Disorder** *JOURNAL OF CLINICAL PSYCHIATRY*
Ballard, E. D., Voort, J. L., Bernert, R. A., Luckenbaugh, D. A., Richards, E. M., Niciu, M. J., Furey, M. L., Duncan, W. C., Zarate, C. A.
2016; 77 (6): 825-831
- **The Association between Sleep Disturbances and Depression among Firefighters: Emotion Dysregulation as an Explanatory Factor** *JOURNAL OF CLINICAL SLEEP MEDICINE*
Hom, M. A., Stanley, I. H., Rogers, M. L., Tzoneva, M., Bernert, R. A., Joiner, T. E.
2016; 12 (2): 235-245
- **Sleep disturbances as an evidence-based suicide risk factor.** *Current psychiatry reports*
Bernert, R. A., Kim, J. S., Iwata, N. G., Perlis, M. L.
2015; 17 (3): 554-?
- **Sleep Disturbances and Suicide Risk.** *Sleep medicine clinics*
Bernert, R. A., Nadorff, M. R.
2015; 10 (1): 35-39
- **The Association between Sleep Disturbances and Depression among Firefighters: Emotion Dysregulation as an Explanatory Factor.** *Journal of clinical sleep medicine*
Hom, M. A., Stanley, I. H., Rogers, M. L., Tzoneva, M., Bernert, R. A., Joiner, T. E.
2015; 12 (2): 235-245
- **The prediction of study-emergent suicidal ideation in bipolar disorder: a pilot study using ecological momentary assessment data** *BIPOLAR DISORDERS*
Thompson, W. K., Gershon, A., O'Hara, R., Bernert, R. A., Depp, C. A.
2014; 16 (7): 669-677
- **Obsessive compulsive symptoms and sleep difficulties: Exploring the unique relationship between insomnia and obsessions.** *Journal of psychiatric research*
Timpano, K. R., Carbonella, J. Y., Bernert, R. A., Schmidt, N. B.
2014; 57: 101-107
- **A review of multidisciplinary clinical practice guidelines in suicide prevention: toward an emerging standard in suicide risk assessment and management, training and practice.** *Academic psychiatry*
Bernert, R. A., Hom, M. A., Roberts, L. W.
2014; 38 (5): 585-592
- **Association of poor subjective sleep quality with risk for death by suicide during a 10-year period: a longitudinal, population-based study of late life.** *JAMA psychiatry*
Bernert, R. A., Turvey, C. L., Conwell, Y., Joiner, T. E.
2014; 71 (10): 1129-1137
- **A Review of Multidisciplinary Clinical Practice Guidelines in Suicide Prevention: Toward an Emerging Standard in Suicide Risk Assessment and Management, Training and Practice** *ACADEMIC PSYCHIATRY*
Bernert, R. A., Hom, M. A., Roberts, L. W.
2014; 38 (5): 585-592
- **Association of Poor Subjective Sleep Quality With Risk for Death by Suicide During a 10-Year Period A Longitudinal, Population-Based Study of Late Life** *JAMA PSYCHIATRY*
Bernert, R. A., Turvey, C. L., Conwell, Y., Joiner, T. E.
2014; 71 (10): 1129-1137
- **Sleep Architecture Abnormalities as a Risk Factor for Elevated Suicidal Ideation: A Polysomnographic Investigation of Sleep in Treatment Resistant Unipolar and Bipolar Depression**
Bernert, R., Luckenbaugh, D., Duncan, W. C., Zarate, C. A.
NATURE PUBLISHING GROUP.2013: S388-S389
- **Suicide Risk and Mood Regulation Deficits: Emotional Reactivity as an Exploratory Pathway**
Bernert, R., Hom, M., Goodkind, M., Peng, K., Oathes, D., Primeau, M., Etkin, A.
NATURE PUBLISHING GROUP.2013: S210

- **Eating disorder and obsessive-compulsive symptoms in a sample of bulimic women: Perfectionism as a mediating factor** *PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES*
Bernert, R. A., Timpano, K. R., Peterson, C. B., Crow, S. J., Bardone-Cone, A. M., Le Grange, D., Klein, M., Crosby, R. D., Mitchell, J. E., Wonderlich, S. A., Joiner, T. E.
2013; 54 (2): 231-235
- **Clinical significance of night-to-night sleep variability in insomnia** *SLEEP MEDICINE*
Suh, S., Nowakowski, S., Bernert, R. A., Ong, J. C., Siebern, A. T., Dowdle, C. L., Manber, R.
2012; 13 (5): 469-475
- **Sleep problems outperform depression and hopelessness as cross-sectional and longitudinal predictors of suicidal ideation and behavior in young adults in the military** *JOURNAL OF AFFECTIVE DISORDERS*
Ribeiro, J. D., Pease, J. L., Gutierrez, P. M., Silva, C., Bernert, R. A., Rudd, M. D., Joiner, T. E.
2012; 136 (3): 743-750
- **CBT for Insomnia in Patients with High and Low Depressive Symptom Severity: Adherence and Clinical Outcomes** *JOURNAL OF CLINICAL SLEEP MEDICINE*
Manber, R., Bernert, R. A., Suh, S., Nowakowski, S., Siebern, A. T., Ong, J. C.
2011; 7 (6): 645-652