RUTGERS–NEW BRUNSWICK
School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

# The Department of Nutritional Sciences
# Fall 2026 Seminar Series

## "Intestinal Epithelial Oxytocin as a Novel Link Between the Gut and Brain"


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**Wednesday, December 2, 2026 @ 2:15 PM**
**FSNS Building, 65 Dudley Road, New Brunswick, Room 120**

Zoom option: https://go.rutgers.edu/dirienzi-seminar


How psychiatric and neurological conditions are linked to diseases of the gastrointestinal system is an emerging area of research, with recent discoveries of gut-brain connections relevant to the development of depression, anxiety, autism spectrum disorder, and Parkinson's disease. The hormone oxytocin is a potential candidate linking brain and gut functions: it is well understood to regulate normal social, stress, and anxiety responses, while in the gut, it mitigates inflammation and epithelial damage. Although oxytocin is predominantly produced and studied in the hypothalamus, it is also produced in numerous peripheral organs, though peripheral oxytocin is virtually unstudied. We recently reported that oxytocin is produced in the intestinal epithelium and is responsive to intestinal microbes. Our ongoing investigations are characterizing the gut-brain functions of this intestinal epithelial oxytocin.


For parking permits, please contact Christina Duffy, Department of Nutritional Sciences, cduffy@sebs.rutgers.edu , 848-932-5425