"Biological embedding of early life experience and its behavioral consequences"

Friday, October 26, 2018
12:00 p.m.
13-105 CHS

Abstract: Developmental progression is a combination of programmed maturation and the accumulation of experience. These factors intersect in a meaningful way in the zebra finch songbird, a species in which males need to learn a song structure from social interactions with a "tutor" bird. Juvenile males (females cannot sing) can only use tutor experience to shape their own behavior during a restricted Critical Period phase. We use a combination of epigenetic, genomic, molecular, and behavioral measures and manipulations to identify neural properties that promote and limit the ability to learn, with particular attention on how an individual's sex, age, and prior experience converge. These studies contribute to our broad goal: to understand how maturational neurobiology gets transformed into specific, individual patterns of behavior as a consequence of experience.

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