

Chris Evans Ph.D.



Dr. Evans is a Professor in the departments of Psychiatry and Psychology at UCLA and holds the Stefan Hatos Chair for Neuropharmacology in the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior. He received his Ph.D. in peptide chemistry from the Medical Research Council institute and Imperial College in the UK working on enkephalin analogues and endogenous opioid precursor processing. Dr. Evans completed his postdoctoral training at Stanford University with Dr. Jack Barchas and then moved to UCLA where he has continued his research on the opioid system.

Dr. Evans is currently director of the Center for Opioid Receptors and Drugs of Abuse (CSORDA) at UCLA. Prior research from CSORDA has included the identification and characterization of novel endogenous opioids, the cloning of the first opioid receptor and the early studies demonstrating opioid agonist bias. Recent research has focused on the circuits that sustain opioid reward-related behaviors including place preference and opiate self-administration using a combination of mouse genetics, cell biology and pharmacology. In the light of the high co-morbidity of opioid use disorders with psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety and PTSD, his current research is focusing on the pathways and allostatic changes that are mediating the negative affect induced both during opioid abstinence and chronic pain states. The premise of the research is that a learned relief of negative affect by opioid drugs plays a key role in both drug craving and relapse which is articulated in a recent review published in Faculty 1000 (PMC4955026).