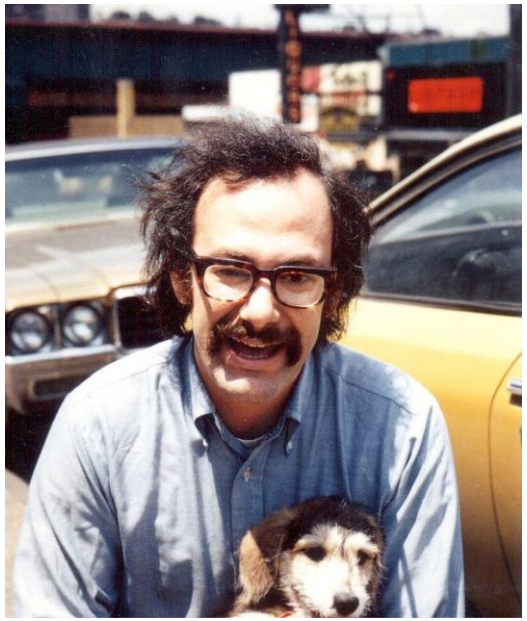
2026 Lewis A. Opler Prize Presentation

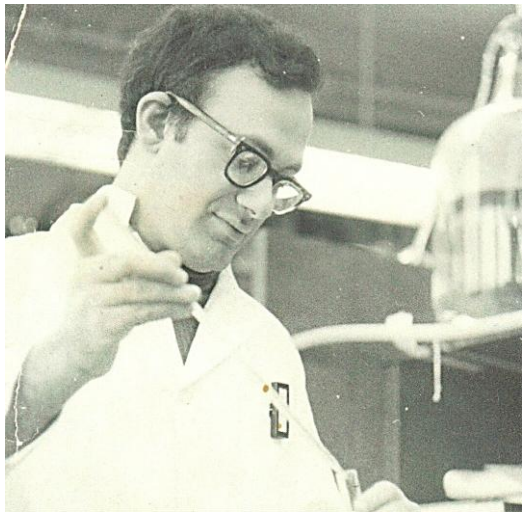
ISCTM Past President: Gary Sachs, MD

Mark Opler, PhD

Lewis A. Opler Prize:

- **In honor of Lewis A. Opler, MD, PhD**
- Clinician and scientist, father of four, lived and worked in the Bronx, NYC
- Developed the PANSS as a tool to promote better outcomes for persons with schizophrenia and other brain disorders
- The Prize is intended to recognize contributions to innovation in measurement and promote treatment and recovery for underserved populations
- Winner selected by ISCTM





Cecilia Bergeria, PhD

2026
Lewis A. Opler
Prize Recipient

Cecilia Bergeria, PhD

- Dr. Bergeria was the first addiction-focused researcher to initiate the process of developing a formal COA with the FDA and as a result she is serving as a trailblazer for the rest of the field.
    - Dr. Bergeria has been extensively funded by the NIH and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to develop a clinical outcome assessment (COA) of opioid craving.
    - Dr. Bergeria has nearly 60 published or in press peer reviewed manuscripts, which have appeared in top journals in the field like Drug and Alcohol Dependence, The American Journal of Psychiatry and Pain.
- Dr. Bergeria's systematic research approach adheres to the FDA required drug development tool process as she works to elucidate craving, identify patient-reported preferences for how craving is measured and described, develop a prototype tool, and conduct a large-scale validation study.

Sunny Tang, MD

2026
Lewis A. Opler
Prize Recipient

Sunny Tang, MD

- Dr. Tang's program focuses on transforming speech and language into scalable, objective markers for neuropsychiatric illness—particularly psychosis, depression, and delirium—using advanced natural language processing (NLP), machine learning, and large language models (LLMs).
    - Dr. Tang has successfully demonstrated that automated speech- and language-derived features can outperform "gold standard" clinical ratings for classifying schizophrenia spectrum disorder.
    - Dr. Tang's methodological contributions include combining semantic information with graph theory to quantify the size, connectedness, and organization of speech by modeling action–predication relationships.
- Dr. Tang holds a patent application on semantic speech analytics and serves on the steering and program committees of the international DISCOURSE in Psychosis consortium, helping shape global standards for speech-based CNS measurement.