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FRANCE INVESTS IN UCI SEARCH FOR WAYS TO TREAT PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

By Gary Robbins

The French government — which is seeking to increase its international profile in science — is investing in a UC Irvine study that's basically a search for clues on how to treat a variety of psychiatric disorders.

Inserm, the French equivalent of this country's National Institutes of Health, has awarded the money to UCI microbiologist Emiliana Borrelli, who is examining the neurotransmitter dopamine. Borrelli studies how dopamine affects circadian rhythm, which is broadly defined as the biological activity that humans experience in a 24 hour period.

People with such afflictions as depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia tend to have sleep disorders, which are often a reflection of problems in their circadian rhythm.

Borrelli will carry out the new study with her husband, UCI pharmacology chairman Paolo Sassone-Corsi, a pioneering figure in the study of circadian rhythm.

France will get a close look at the work next Wednesday when André Syrota, the executive director of Inserm, visits UCI.