

Date	Time	Programme	Venue
30 July 2026	1700-1800	HKU-Research-Grand-Round	NCB211A & B, 2/F, New Clinical Building, Queen Mary Hospital and Zoom
		Topic: Rebuilding Trust: Optimal Trust and the Social and Neural Threats in Paranoia and Conspiracism Brief summary: Traditional models of psychosis link symptoms like persecutory ideation to impairments in brain systems that balance deliberation with affect drives like threat detection. My laboratory has investigated these links using the Minnesota Trust Game in fMRI which allows us to distinguish rational mistrust from more pathological processes like paranoia that manifest as spite sensitivity. While this empirical work points to specific failures in deliberation allowing for overactive threat detection, it also points toward a broader framework: trust as an optimized signal detection task. I will link our empirical work to potential neural distortions that shift trust optima, creating a number of specific paths to distrust and conspiracism. Ultimately, I argue that widespread shifts in trust criteria constitute a public health risk factor with profound consequences for societal well-being. Presented by: Professor Angus MacDonald, III (Distinguished McKnight University Professor; Director, Translational Research in Cognitive & Affective Mechanisms (TRiCAM) Laboratory Department of Psychology University of Minnesota) Chaired by: Professor CHAN Kit Wa, Sherry (Clinical Professor, Department of Psychiatry, SCLinMed, HKU)	