

Clara Tourino, Ph.D.

Translational Neuroscience Leader | In Vivo Pharmacology Expert | Biopharma Consultant

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Strategic neuroscience leader with over 20+ years advancing CNS therapeutics and 9 years driving biopharma innovation. Proven track record in building high-performing in vivo teams, establishing compliant research infrastructure, and driving cross-functional collaboration in RNA and antibody drug development. Expert in PK/PD strategy, translational model design, and CRO oversight. Founder of NeuroVivo LLC, delivering operational reality-checks and strategic guidance to elevate in vivo research integrity and cross-functional execution.

LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- **Strategic R&D Leadership:** Directed in vivo pharmacology strategies across academic and industry settings, driving programs from mechanistic research to clinical candidate nomination in neurodegenerative and psychiatric disease areas.
- **Organizational Development:** Built and scaled in vivo research capabilities at multiple organizations, establishing teams, facilities, and workflows that enabled efficient, compliant, and high-quality scientific output.
- **Translational Science Expertise:** Designed and implemented PK/PD and efficacy studies integrating in vivo, molecular, and bioanalytical data to inform candidate optimization and IND submissions.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Partnered effectively with Chemistry, Protein Sciences, and In vitro Sciences to align biological insights with therapeutic design and program goals.
- **Ethical and Operational Stewardship:** Chaired IACUC for six years and instituted robust research governance frameworks ensuring regulatory compliance and scientific integrity.
- **Mentorship and Talent Development:** Recruited, coached, and developed scientists at all levels, fostering a collaborative culture of technical excellence, accountability, and growth.
- **Scientific Contributions:** Published 10+ peer-reviewed articles, contributed to four IND filings, and presented at 15+ international conferences.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder & Principal Consultant at NeuroVivo LLC ·

October 2025 – Present

Founded to bridge operational gaps in translational neuroscience, NeuroVivo delivers strategic guidance that strengthens scientific rigor and cross-functional alignment.

- Evaluate AI-generated study designs for biological and operational feasibility, helping sponsors distinguish visionary concepts from executable strategies.
- Provide CRO oversight and liaison services to ensure study quality, regulatory compliance, and sponsor confidence.
- Support strategic planning and troubleshooting for CNS-focused programs, ensuring alignment with institutional goals and scientific integrity.

- Advise academic and industry clients on in vivo research operations, facility design, and regulatory documentation.
 - Translate complex scientific concepts into clear operational strategies for cross-functional teams.
 - Mentor scientific teams and develop customized training programs to elevate technical proficiency and collaborative culture.
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Director, *In Vivo* Biology

Switch Therapeutics - San Francisco Bay Area

May 2023 - August 2025

- Directed the company's in vivo strategy to assess pharmacodynamic (PD) and pharmacokinetic (PK) profiles across two neurodegeneration pipeline programs, guiding candidates from screening to lead selection.
 - Built and led the in vivo biology department, recruiting, mentoring, and managing two Ph.D. scientists and two research associates.
 - Established in-house in vivo capabilities, including animal facility setup, protocol development, training programs, and compliance documentation.
 - Oversaw 50+ PK/PD studies in wild-type and transgenic models, contributing to 2 clinical candidate selections and optimization of the RNA therapeutic platform.
 - Served as Biology Team Lead for a pipeline program, coordinating Chemistry, In Vitro, and In Vivo Biology functions.
 - Managed CRO and vendor collaborations for rodent and NHP studies, ensuring scientific quality, regulatory compliance, and on-time delivery.
 - Led team development initiatives encompassing performance management, goal setting, and professional growth planning.
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Senior Scientist, *In Vivo* Pharmacology

Prothena Corporation plc - San Francisco Bay Area

May 2016 - May 2023

- Led the in vivo pharmacology team supporting CNS programs from target identification through candidate selection for antibody therapeutics.
 - Implemented translational animal models for neurodegenerative disorders; planned, executed, and analyzed proof-of-concept, PK/PD, and efficacy studies.
 - Directed in vivo studies across antibody and vaccine programs, contributing to 4 IND-enabling packages and streamlining antibody candidate selection.
 - Partnered cross-functionally with Protein Sciences, Cell Biology, and Antibody Development to enable IND-enabling research.
 - Oversaw CRO management, budgeting, and contracts in collaboration with Finance and Legal teams.
 - Chaired the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for six years, ensuring ethical compliance and operational excellence.
 - Co-authored scientific publications and presented findings advancing the company's neurodegeneration research portfolio.
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Postdoctoral Research Scholar

Stanford University School of Medicine

September 2009 - May 2016

- Investigated neural circuits underlying psychiatric disorders using optogenetics collaborating with top scientists in the field.
 - Pioneered optogenetic approaches that advanced understanding of reward circuitry and emotional regulation
 - Supervised and mentored graduate students and research staff in experimental design and data analysis.
 - Contributed to clinical research on sleep disorders and authored multiple peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations.
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Graduate Student, Neuropharmacology Universitat Pompeu Fabra |

October 2003-September 2009

Barcelona, Spain

- Conducted doctoral research on cannabinoid receptor function in drug abuse and neurotoxicity.
 - Collaborated with Sanofi-Aventis and Esteve Laboratories on CNS and metabolic drug discovery programs.
 - Published six research articles and presented findings at 10+ international conferences.
 - Served as Teaching Assistant in Psychobiology for three years.
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Visiting Researcher UC Irvine |

Jul 2006 - Dec 2006 (6 months)

- Researched lipid signaling pathways in metabolic regulation using in vivo and bioanalytical methods (LC-MS, plate-based assays).

TECHNICAL & STRATEGIC EXPERTISE

- **In Vivo Techniques:** Small- and large-molecule dosing, rodent surgical models (stereotaxic, vessel cannulation, nerve ligation).
- **Bioanalytical Methods:** PK/PD assays, tissue and biofluid collection, ELISA, MSD, qPCR, microdialysis
- **Histological & Molecular:** Immunohistochemistry, immunofluorescence, RNAScope, microscopy, image analysis.
- **Behavioral Models:** Neurological and neurodegenerative disease assessments in rodents
- **Software:** GraphPad Prism, SPSS, Phoenix WinNonlin.
- **Strategic Skills:** CRO oversight, IND-enabling study design, regulatory documentation, scientific team leadership, vendor management.

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Neuropharmacology · Pompeu Fabra University · Barcelona, Spain · 2003–2009
- B.S. in Human Biology · Pompeu Fabra University · Barcelona, Spain · 1998–2003

CERTIFICATIONS

- **IACUC 101, 201, and 301 Series** (Completed 2019)
Comprehensive training in ethical oversight, protocol review, and regulatory compliance for animal research, supporting six years of IACUC chairmanship.
- **Introduction to the Principles and Practice of Clinical Research** – NIH (Completed 2025)
Formal coursework in clinical trial design, regulatory frameworks, and Good Clinical Practice (GCP), reinforcing translational alignment from preclinical to clinical phases.
- **Principles of Clinical Pharmacology** – NIH (Completed 2026)
Advanced training in pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and therapeutic decision-making, strengthening translational strategy and dose rationale across development stages.

PUBLICATIONS

1. Barbour R, **Tourino C**, Trumble A, Louie L, Kinney G, Zago W, and Campbell B. Dual Amyloid Beta/Tau Vaccine PRX123 Surrogate Results in Robust Clearance of Amyloid Plaques in Brains of Aggressive APP/PS1 Mouse Model (P7-9.015). *Neurology*. **102** (17_supplement_1), (2024).
2. **Tourino C**, Murphy K, Li S, Hayton S, Li P, Malenka R, de Lecea L. Dorsomedial Medullary Catecholaminergic Neurons Couple Hypoxia to Emotional and Hormonal State, *Cell reports*.
3. **Tourino C**, Eban-Rothschild A, de Lecea L. Optogenetics in psychiatric diseases. *Curr Opin Neurobiol*. **23**(3), 430-52013 (2013).
4. Kempadoo K, **Tourino C**, Cho S, Magnani F, Leininger G, Stuber G, Zhang F, Myers M, Deisseroth K, de Lecea L, and Bonci A. Hypothalamic neurotensin projections promote reward by enhancing glutamate transmission in the VTA. *J Neurosci*. **33**(18), 7618-26 (2013).
5. **Tourino C**, Valjent E, Ruiz-Medina J, Herve D, Ledent C, Valverde O. The orphan receptor GPR3 modulates early phases of cocaine reinforcement. *Br J Pharmacol*. **167**(4), 892-904 (2012).
6. Adamantidis AR, Tsai HC, Boutrel B, Zhang F, Stuber GD, Budygin EA, **Tourino C**, Bonci A, Deisseroth K, de Lecea L. Optogenetic interrogation of dopaminergic modulation of the multiple phases of reward-seeking behavior. *J Neurosci*. **201**(31), 10829-35 (2011).
7. **Tourino C**, Zimmer A, Valverde O. THC prevents MDMA neurotoxicity in mice. *PLoS One*. **5**(2), e9143 (2010).
8. **Tourino C**, Oveisi F, Lockney J, Piomelli D, Maldonado R. FAAH deficiency promotes energy storage and enhances the motivation for food. *Int J Obes (Lond)*. **34**(3), 557-68 (2010).
9. **Tourino C**, Ledent C, Maldonado R, Valverde O. CB1 cannabinoid receptor modulates 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine acute responses and reinforcement. *Biol Psychiatry*. **63**(11), 1030-8 (2008).
10. **Tourino C**, Maldonado R, Valverde O. MDMA attenuates THC withdrawal syndrome in mice. *Psychopharmacology*. **193**(1), 75-84 (2007).
11. Soria G, Mendizábal V, **Tourino C**, Robledo P, Ledent C, Parmentier M, Maldonado R, Valverde O. Lack of CB1 cannabinoid receptor impairs cocaine-seeking behaviour. *Neuropsychopharmacology*. **30**(9), 1670-80 (2005).