

# Pedi Press

A Quarterly Publication of the Department of Pediatrics

Vol. 11, Issue 1, Part II

Winter 2022



HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR  
2022



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Catherine M. Gordon, MD, MS, Editor-in-Chief  
B. Lee Ligon, PhD, MA, MAR, Managing Editor/Graphics Designer  
Dr. Gordon Schutze, MD, Consulting Editor  
George Beasley, Technical Editor  
Michelle Hildreth, Proofreader

The background of the entire page is a festive, warm-toned image. It features a dense arrangement of small, five-pointed gold stars and larger, glowing star-shaped lights. The lights have a soft, out-of-focus halo effect, creating a bokeh-like appearance. The overall color palette is dominated by gold, cream, and light brown tones, giving it a holiday or celebratory feel.

# DEPARTMENT NEWS

FACULTY  
STAFF  
FELLOWS  
&  
RESIDENTS





## Drs. Hotez and Bottazzi Nominated for Nobel Prize

"I am honored that Congresswoman Fletcher would nominate us for the Nobel Peace Prize. Dr. Bottazzi and I have worked together for years, and our purpose has never changed – to bring attention to the neglected diseases of poverty and build a new generation of vaccine in the pursuit of global vaccine diplomacy. With our COVID vaccine, which is inexpensive and easy to produce, our intent was to make it available to millions of people in the world who would otherwise not have access to COVID vaccines."

-- Dr. Peter Hotez

"We are so grateful to Congresswoman Fletcher for recognizing our work, and so flattered that she nominated us for this most prestigious award. We have a team of scientists that have worked diligently for years to bring appropriate and affordable health technologies to those who have been overlooked around the world. When the COVID pandemic hit, we wanted to make a difference and had great confidence our coronavirus vaccine technology, previously developed, could lead to a global solution. Hopefully, it will be game changing for many countries."

-- Dr. Maria Elena Bottazzi

Announcement was made on February 1, 2022 that a letter to the Norwegian Nobel Committee, sent by **Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher** nominated **Dr. Peter Hotez** and **Dr. Maria Elena Bottazzi**, Deans of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and Co-Directors of the Center for Vaccine Development at Texas Children's Hospital, for the **2022 Nobel Peace Prize** for their work to develop and distribute a low-cost COVID-19 vaccine to people of the world without patent limitation.

Congresswoman Fletcher noted that, "As people around the world confront the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the effort to develop and distribute a low-cost vaccine to all people in all nations without patent limitation represents the work for fraternity between nations and people that the Nobel Peace Prize embodies and celebrates. "Dr. Hotez and Dr. Bottazzi's effort to develop the CORBEVAX vaccine is truly one of international cooperation and partnership to bring health, security, and peace around the world by creating a COVID-19 vaccine and making it available and accessible to all. It is a contribution that is of the greatest benefit to humankind."

## Dr. Vartabedian Accepts Position at TCH North Austin Campus



**Dr. Bryan Vartabedian**, Asst. Professor, has accepted the position of **Chief Medical Officer** for Texas Children's Hospital North Austin Campus.

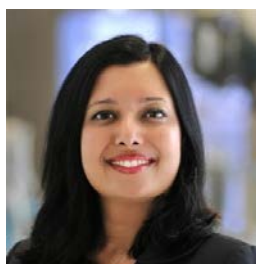
Dr. Vartabedian has proven his talent and skill not only as a physician, but as a leader and an advocate for children. After graduating from undergraduate and medical school at the University of Massachusetts, Dr. Vartabedian completed his residency and fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine and has been practicing for more than 20 years.

Dr. Vartabedian was an instrumental physician leader in the opening of both our West and Woodlands Community Campuses. He brings to the table a broad understanding of ambulatory, surgical and inpatient services in the community. He currently is the Director of Community Medicine for the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition. With our new campus in Austin well underway, Dr. Vartabedian will be able to take his wealth of knowledge and experience of Texas Children's to lead our medical services in Austin and effectively collaborate with teams across the system.

## Executive Vice-Chairs Named

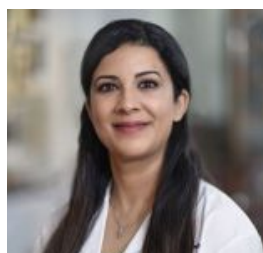


**Dr. Kristina (Kris) Reber**, Professor, was named as a new Executive Vice-Chair, which she will assume in addition to her work as the Division Chief of Newborn Medicine and Chief of Neonatology at TCH. Dr. Reber received her M.D. from The Ohio State University College of Medicine and did her internship, residency, and a fellowship at Columbus Children's Hospital. She is board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics, Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine of American Board of Pediatrics, and the National Board of Examiners



**Dr. Geeta Singhal Das**, Professor, has been named Executive Vice Chair, in addition to her work as Director, Office of Faculty Development at BCM. She received her M.D. from University of Oklahoma College of Medicine and her residency at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. Her interest in medical education and faculty development led to her M.Ed. from the University of Houston. She is board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and is a pediatric hospitalist.

## Dr. Virk Appointed Associate Medical Director



**Dr. Manpreet Virk**, Asst. Professor, is the newly appointed **Associate Medical Director of Respiratory Care** at the Medical Center Campus. Dr. Virk joined the Medical Staff at Texas Children's Hospital as an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine in 2016. She received her MD from Kathmandu University, Manipal College of Medical Sciences, Pokara, Nepal. She completed her Pediatric Critical Care Medicine training at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles in Los Angeles, California. Dr. Virk's clinical and research interests align with her new role. Her research interests are in the characterization of diaphragmatic dysfunction using a translational model. She is also part of the Liver ICU team, which aligns with her clinical interests to improve ventilation practices for children with respiratory failure, particularly those with acute liver failure and post liver transplantation. She is board certified in General Pediatrics and Pediatric Critical Care.

# Dr. Hotez Receives Prestigious American Medical Association Award

"As a celebrated champion of vaccines, Dr. Hotez is a deserving recipient of this honor. His background in developing vaccines for tropical diseases that afflict the world's poorest people proved invaluable as he turned his attention to COVID-19."

-- Dr. Gerald E. Harmon, AMA President

The American Medical Association (AMA) honored Dr. Peter J. Hotez, Professor and Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine, with the Scientific Achievement Award for his work on promoting vaccines and combating vaccine misinformation. This "gold medallion award" is given to individuals on special occasions to recognize their outstanding work in scientific achievement. It was awarded to Dr. Hotez for his efforts in vaccine development and in combating vaccine hesitancy and misinformation.

The award was presented during the 2022 Texas Medical Association Winter Conference.

Authorized in India in December, it is designed for poor countries to help ensure worldwide vaccination.

He has helped to shape policies in global health, leading to the annual treatment of hundreds of millions of people with parasitic and related neglected tropical diseases, and has led vaccine advocacy efforts to counter rising anti-vaccine and anti-science sentiments in the United States, while promoting vaccine diplomacy efforts globally.

Dr. Hotez's personal life also gives him a unique platform as a vaccine champion against the

"It has been an honor for me to work with the AMA throughout this pandemic. Together with Tod Unger, the chief experience officer at the AMA, we've worked to educate physicians and physician-scientists on how to combat vaccine disinformation, and overall, the AMA has been terrific in giving me a voice to explain the scientific basis of COVID-19 vaccine development."

--Dr. Peter Hotez



Dr. Hotez is a renowned physician-scientist recognized for his research in neglected tropical diseases and vaccine development. He has pioneered the molecular science behind neglected tropical disease vaccines and has co-led a team developing vaccines for diseases such as human hookworm, schistosomiasis, chagas disease, and SARS. His lab has focused on developing vaccines not financially viable for pharmaceutical companies and has laid the groundwork for the current new coronavirus vaccines, making possible their seemingly rapid development. His work includes developing a low-cost version of a COVID-19 vaccine, Corbevax, which received Emergency Use

movement to tie vaccines to autism: He has an adult daughter with autism.

He is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has served as a U.S. Science Envoy for the State Department and White House under the Obama administration.

"In addition to hundreds of scientific papers, Dr. Hotez frequently writes for lay audiences and has been an extremely visible and straightforward presence on television, bringing science to the vaccine discussion," Dr. Harmon said. "His affable manner and willingness to speak out for vaccines have made him a man for our times."



## Dr. Saxena Among 45 Honored Worldwide for Research

**Dr. Kirti Saxena**, Assoc. Professor, was one of 45 scientist recognized worldwide to receive funding from the Baszucki Brain Research Fund and the Milken Institute's Center for Strategic Philanthropy to advance research for bipolar disorder. Her project uses a behavioral health avatar for analysis of nonverbal behavior to personalize treatment for the disorder.



Dr. Saxena earned her M.D. at Albert Szent-Gyorgyi Medical University and completed a residency in psychiatry at University of Southern California/LAC+USC Medical Center. She did fellowships at Stanford University School of Medicine in Child & Adolescent Psychiatry.

The awards to 45 individuals at 31 distinct organizations were for "\$200,000 per award to support pilot research in therapeutic discovery and translational efforts . . . The founder and CEO of Roblox, David Baszucki, and his wife, author Jan Ellison, established the Baszucki Brain Research Fund in 2019 to invest philanthropically in breakthrough science for mental health conditions." (<https://milkeninstitute.org/article/baszucki-brain-research-fund-and-milken-institute-announce-grant-recipients-bipolar>).

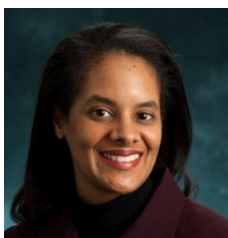
## Dr. Raphael Elected to American Pediatric Society & President-elect of the Ambulatory Pediatric Association



**Dr. Jean L. Raphael**, Professor and Division Chief, was elected to the American Pediatric Society. He will concentrate his efforts towards advocacy to advance child health and pediatric research, member career advancement, and expansion of mentorship and sponsorship for those underrepresented in medicine. He also was elected President-elect of the Ambulatory Pediatric Association.



## Dr. Davis Completes Appointment



**Dr. Carla Davis**, Professor and Division Chief, completed her one-year appointment as the Chair of the Diversity Task Force for the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology in February 2022.



## Dr. Satter Elected to Leadership Role



**Dr. Lisa Forbes Satter**, Asst. Professor, has been elected by her peers to serve as an elected Clinical Immunology Society Leadership as a Councilor. The Clinical Immunology Society is an international inter-disciplinary organization for the field of clinical immunology devoted to fostering developments in the science and practice of clinical immunology which includes clinicians, investigators, and trainees.



## Drs. King and Gramatges Elected to American Society for Clinical Investigation

"It is a tremendous honor to join the many distinguished physician-scientists who comprise ASCI. Research, advocacy, and clinical practice are the three pillars of medicine. It is a huge privilege for me to be involved in all three pursuits and to gain inspiration from each aspect to support the others. I am grateful for the mentors, teachers, colleagues, students and patients who make each day's work a joy."

--Dr. Katherine King

"Election to the ASCI is an incredible honor and a major milestone in a physician-scientist's career. I am looking forward to participating in the scientific mission of the organization, opportunities to mentor future generations of physician-scientists, as well as to supporting ASCI goals related to advocacy and diversity, equity and inclusion."

-- Dr. Monica Gramatges

The American Society for Clinical Investigation elected two members of the Baylor College of Medicine Department of Pediatrics Faculty to its new class of members. **Dr. Katherine King**, Assoc. Professor, and **Dr. Monica Gramatges**, Assoc. Professor, are among the 95 new members. The ASCI, founded in 1908, is one of the nation's oldest and most respected nonprofit medical honor societies. It focuses on the special role of physician-scientists in research, clinical care, and medical education. It is composed of more than 3,000 physician-scientist from all medical specialties, who are committed to mentoring future generations of physician-scientists of diverse backgrounds and biomedical disciplines.



Dr. King's review on the topic of inflammatory modulation of hematopoietic stem cells altered the way the field views the interactions between systemic inflammation and stem cells, with continuing repercussions in the fields of malignant and nonmalignant hematology, aging, and immunology.



Dr. Gramatges is a national leader in childhood cancer survivorship research and the development of long-term follow-up guidelines and a member of the leadership team for Passport for Care, a clinical decision support tool that uses evidence-based guidelines to generate personalized Survivorship Care Plans for survivors worldwide.

Drs. King and Gramatges have independent research programs, but it is also notable that they also are friends and close colleagues, and they have enjoyed engaging in peer mentorship in the DoP through a group called the MidCareer Advancement and Promotion (MIDCAPS) peer mentoring group. MIDCAPS is a small group of extramurally funded investigators who gather monthly to share and seek advice about research life, including recruitment and lab personnel management, budgeting, grant renewals, setting research priorities, and career advancement. Members of this group enjoy mutual support and an opportunity to learn from the experiences of our colleagues.



## Dr. Bottazzi Honored on International Women's Day



**Maria Bottazzi: the scientist creating a vaccine for the world**

**Dr. Maria Elena Bottazzi**, Professor, was one of four women recognized by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, on March 8, 2022, International Women's Day. The website ([gavi.org](https://gavi.org)) included the following description (excerpts):

"The daughter of a Honduran diplomat, Bottazzi was born in Italy and moved back to Honduras at age eight. She went on to train as a microbiologist at the National Autonomous University of Honduras in Tegucigalpa. She relocated to the US to complete her doctoral training in 1995, and currently co-manages the Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine alongside [Dr. Peter] Hotez, and is a professor of paediatrics and molecular virology and microbiology at Baylor College in Houston.

"Her commitment to empowering partners in poorer countries to protect their populations' health is partly driven by the mantra that no one is protected until everyone is protected, but it is also powered by a desire to give back a little of what her home country has given her. This includes a can-do mindset, bent on trying to achieve more with less. 'In countries such as Honduras, we are quite resilient to being hit by adversity at all levels, but we always look to find solutions that don't require a lot of investment, and are sustainable – so we often come up with some really creative ways of how to advance research,' she said.

....  
"This mindset wasn't necessarily shared by most of those allocating funding to COVID-19 vaccine development at the start of the pandemic. Rather than prioritising older vaccine technologies, such



**Dr. Margaret Agama-Antyetei:** "the African Union boss shaping a continent's response to the pandemic"



**Dr. Shazia Zeb:** "the hospital head saving lives in Pakistan"



**Aurelia Nguyen:** "the COVAX chief aiming to lead us out of the pandemic"

as protein-subunit and whole virus vaccines, mRNA and viral vector vaccines attracted the lion's share of the funding at a global level.

....  
"That's not to say there should have been no investment in mRNA or viral vector vaccines. "The problem is that protein-based vaccine approaches received zero interest," Bottazzi said. 'This focus on the newer technologies has left a lot of people and countries behind, and that has provided the breeding ground of how this virus was able to mutate and evolve.'

....  
"Bottazzi's wasn't the only group working on such a vaccine, but they were unusual in their commitment to developing one patent-free, meaning any manufacturer with experience of this technology could potentially recreate it. If successful, this would reduce countries' reliance on the Global North to manufacture and supply it.

"It is always these high-income countries dictating what is needed for the low-income countries, from clinical design, through to product development and regulation,' said Bottazzi. 'Our aspiration is that we really need to break this paradigm and have them take ownership of these things.'

"That's why when we gave that technology to BioE, Corbevax is BioE's vaccine – it is not Baylor's or Texas Children's vaccine. Of course, they were powered by our technology, but they co-developed it with us, and it is India's vaccine – for the world, hopefully."



## Drs. Hotez and Bottazzi Named Social Work Persons of the Year

In an unprecedented move, the University of Houston-Downtown Center for Public Service & Community Research named two individuals as **Social Work Persons of the Year**. The Center named top vaccine experts **Dr. Peter J Hotez**, Professor, and **Dr. Maria Elena Bottazzi**, Professor, and Dean and Associate Dean, respectively, of the Baylor College of Medicine National School of Tropical Medicine. They both also are nominees for the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize (see page 4).

Dr. Dawn McCarty, Professor and Director of the Social Work Program noted that, "Now in our 11<sup>th</sup> year, the UHD Social Work Person of the Year celebration is about creating opportunities for our students to learn, grow, and most importantly be inspired by examples of transformative public service." She went on to say that during the difficult COVID-19 times, Drs. Bottazzi and Hotez had made extraordinary contributions for the common good in

their development of a vaccine that is patent-free and, thus, accessible and affordable worldwide. She noted that they were "excited to hear more about the story of their historic accomplishment and to honor this achievement."

Last year, Dr. Hotez participated in a virtual discussion with UHD President Loren J. Blanchard as part of the University's COVID-19 Vaccine Information Forums.

Drs. Hotez and Bottazzi join an elite group of Houstonians who have earned the honor of being named Social Work Person of the Year, among whom are Harris County Clerk Chris Hollins; restaurateur Russell Ybarra; Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg; Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale; Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner; Pulitzer Prize-winning Houston Chronicle columnist Lisa Falkenberg; and Baker Ripley President Emerita Angela Blanchard.



## Dr. Hotez Named to STATUS List 2022

The most definitive accounting of  
leaders and influencers in the life sciences



“There’s never been a better time to recognize standout individuals in health, medicine, and science. And although there are countless contenders to choose from, we’ve selected just 46 — an homage to the number of chromosomes in human DNA. Many on the STATUS List are well-known as changemakers; others are largely unheralded heroes. But all have compelling stories to tell. There is no easy prescription for assembling this kind of list. As part of a months-long process, STAT leaned on its seasoned editorial team, along with a panel of external experts, to research and identify hundreds of finalists. Then the list was winnowed down. Judges placed special emphasis on people who have sought to help others and build community in these often-divisive times.”\*



“Even as major pharmaceutical and biotech companies battled to protect patent rights for their Covid-19 vaccines, Hotez was working on another approach: give the recipe away. The result, CORBEVAX, developed with scientist Maria Elena Bottazzi, was authorized for use in India in December 2021 and licensed to Indian biopharmaceutical company Biological E. The non-

mRNA vaccine is inexpensive, effective, straightforward to make, and easy to store. Patent-free, CORBEVAX represents a major step toward accelerating worldwide access to vaccines. Hotez is also working on vaccines for hookworm, leishmaniasis, and other overlooked illnesses.”\*

\*[https://www.statnews.com/status-list/2022/?utm\\_source=statnews.com&utm\\_campaign=hp\\_widget&utm\\_medium=alert](https://www.statnews.com/status-list/2022/?utm_source=statnews.com&utm_campaign=hp_widget&utm_medium=alert)

## Recipients of 2022 Star Faculty Award for Excellence Announced



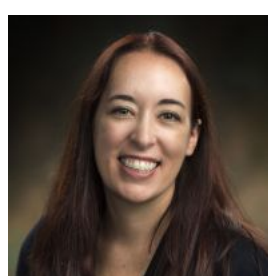
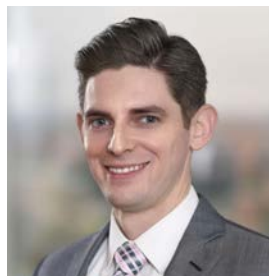
The following faculty in the DoP are recipients of the **2022 Star Faculty Award for Excellence in Patient Care**. They will be honored at the 2022 Virtual Faculty Award Day in May. Details to follow.

Ms. Megan Arnold  
Dr. Manish Bansal  
Dr. Joseph Allen  
Dr. Joseph Angelo  
Dr. Patricia Baxter  
Dr. Maria Buheis  
Dr. Kasey Davis  
Dr. Stephanie Deal  
Dr. Adel El-Hennaway  
Dr. Catherine Joseph

Dr. Mona Karimullah  
Ms. Susan Kirk  
Dr. Fatema Malbari  
Ms. Kate Mazur  
Dr. Aderonke Ojo  
Dr. Nino Rainusso  
Mr. Mark Riccioni  
Dr. Eric Schafer  
Dr. Sarah Swartz  
Ms. Jenilea Thomas  
Ms. Fatima Westry

## Baylor College of Medicine 2021 Young Investigator Awardees Named

**Dr. Eveline Barbieri, Dr. Austin Brown, Dr. Jane Montealegre, Dr. Jacquelyn Powers, and Dr. Rayne Rouse,** Assoc. Professors (pictured below, left-to-right), were awarded the **2021 Young Investigator Award** from Baylor College of Medicine. The committee based their decision on the following metrics: H-index greater than 10, 20 or more publications in peer-reviewed journals, evidence of research independence through extramural funding support as a PI (\$150k or more per year with R01 or equivalent competitive funding), and at least 5 years as a faculty member.



## Faculty on Stanford List of Most Cited Scientists Worldwide

Stanford University recently released an updated list of the top 2% of the most cited scientists in various disciplines world wide (<https://ecebm.com/2021/10/26/stanford-university-names-worlds-top-2-scientists-2021/>). Dr. Klotman, President of Baylor College of Medicine, also mentioned it in one of his weekly videos. The data was last updated on 8/1/21. A brief search indicates that some 159,684 people were listed, and according to Dr Klotman, 250 people from BCM were on the list. Several pediatric faculty perused the list to identify members of the department, some of whom have retired, moved on, or are deceased. The list of those identified who have contributed to the DoP is below:

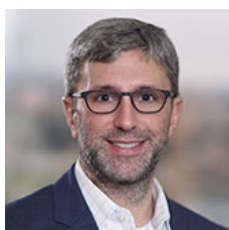
Catherine M. Gordon (Chair)  
Malcom Brenner  
Douglas Burrin  
Morven Edwards  
Daniel Glaze  
Margaret Goodell

Gail Demmler  
Harrison  
Al Hergenroeder  
Helen Heslop  
Peter Hotez  
Sheldon Kaplan

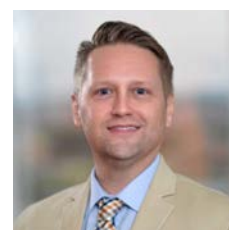
Kenneth McClain  
Denise Metry  
Bhagavatula Moorthy  
Flor Munoz  
Will Parsons  
Pedro "Tony" Piedra

Sharon Plon  
Gordon Schutze  
Lara Shekerdeman  
Ben Shneider  
Jeff Starke  
Huda Zoghbi

## Drs. Lupo and Scheurer Receive Special Recognition from ACCR



**Dr. Philip Lupo**, Professor, and **Dr. Michael Scheurer**, Professor, were notified that their abstracts submitted to the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research were selected for a press conference. ACCR is one of the largest cancer research meetings in the world, emphasizing the importance that a pediatric abstract was highlighted and that their work was recognized at a meeting of this

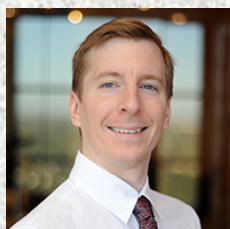


magnitude. One of the abstracts, "Disparities in Relapse Among a Large Multi-ethnic Population of Children Diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL): A Report from the Reducing Ethnic Disparities in Acute Leukemia (REDIAL) Consortium" was selected for a press conference held on April 12.



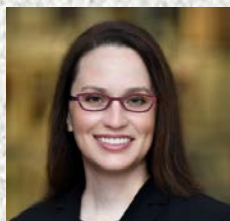


## FIRST AUTHOR HIGH IMPACT AWARDEES



### **Dr. Craig Rusin (Cardiology)**

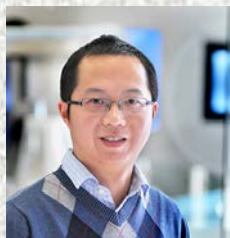
Rusin CG, Acosta SI, Vu EL, Ahmed M, Brady KM, Penny DJ. Automated Prediction of Cardiorespiratory Deterioration in Patients With Single Ventricle, in *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.



### **Dr. Tiphanie Vogel (Rheumatology)**

Vogel TP, Top KA, Karatzios C, Hilmers DC, Tapia LI, Mocerri P, Giovannini-Chami L, Wood N, Chandler RE, Klein NP, Schlaudecker EP, Poli MC, Muscal E, Munoz FM. Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children and adults (MIS-C/A): Case definition & guidelines for data collection, analysis, and presentation of immunization safety data, in *Vaccine*.

## SENIOR AUTHOR HIGH IMPACT AWARDEES



### **Dr. Yong Xu (Nutrition)**

He Y, Cai X, Liu H, Conde KM, Xu P, Li Y, Wang C, Yu M, He Y, Liu H, Liang C, Yang T, Yang Y, Yu K, Wang J, Zheng R, Liu F, Sun Z, Heisler L, Wu Q, Tong Q, Zhu C, Shu G, Xu Y. 5-HT recruits distinct neurocircuits to inhibit hunger-driven and non-hunger-driven feeding, in *Nature Molecular Psychiatry*.



### **Dr. Eveline Barbieri (Hematology-Oncology)**

Moreno-Smith M, Milazzo G, Tao L, Fekry B, Zhu B, Mohammad MA, Di Giacomo S, Borkar R, Reddy KRK, Capasso M, Vasudevan SA, Sumazin P, Hicks J, Putluri N, Perini G, Eckel-Mahan K, Burris TP, Barbieri E. Restoration of the molecular clock is tumor suppressive in neuroblastoma, in *Nature Communications*.

## Education Awards



### The Arnold J. Rudolph Baylor Pediatric Award Lifetime Excellence in Teaching



**Robert G. Voigt, MD**  
Professor  
Division of Developmental Pediatrics



**Deborah Callan, MD**  
Professor  
Division of Pediatric Emergency Medicine  
Children's Hospital of San Antonio

### Baylor Pediatric Award of Achievement in Educational Innovation



**Daniel S. Lemke, MD**  
Associate Professor  
Division of Pediatric Emergency Medicine  
Innovation: Rapid Cycle Debrief

### Baylor Pediatric Award for Excellence in Teaching By Non-Pediatric Faculty Member



**Nilesh K. Desai, MD**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Radiology



## Baylor Pediatric Award of Excellence in Teaching



**Michelle A. Lopez, MD, MPH**  
Associate Professor  
Division of Hospital Medicine



**Elizabeth Elliott, MS, PA-C**  
Associate Professor  
Division of Critical Care

## Pediatric Grand Rounds



**Adiaha A. Franklin, MD**  
Associate Professor  
Division of Developmental Pediatrics  
Presentation: Racism as a Social Pathogen

## Award of Excellence for Panel Presentation at Pediatric Grand Rounds



**Moderator: Petra Duran, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
Division of Psychology



**Roger K Nicome, MD**  
Associate Professor  
Division of Hospital Medicine



**Jasmine Pendergrass, MD**  
2022-2023 Chief Resident  
Division of House Staff Education



**Julieana Nichols, MD, MPH**  
Associate Professor  
Division of Academic General Pediatrics



**Maria I Castellanos, M.D.**  
(former fellow in Division of Hematology-Oncology)  
Clinical Instructor at the University of California, San Francisco

**Presentation: What Does Inclusion Mean to Me**

## Chief Residents Announced

These individuals will bring their combined experiences, commitment, and passion to these leadership positions. I look forward to working closely with each of them. Many thanks also to Dr. Elaine Fielder and our outstanding House Staff Office Leadership Team (including all of our Associate Program Directors, Chief Residents, administrative support staff) and the DOP faculty who serve as mentors, coaches, and educational champions. Today's announcement is a celebration of you all!

--Dr. Catherine Gordon, Chair

The following individuals were selected as  
**2023-2024 Pediatric Chief Residents:**



**Dr. Erika Chaconas**



**Dr. Hafsah Hameed**



**Dr. Sarah Ho**



**Dr. Arjun Patel**



**Dr. Camille Scott**



2022-2023 Global Health  
Program Chief Resident  
**Dr. Shenila Lallani**



2022-2023 Primary  
Care/LEAD Program  
Chief Resident  
**Dr. Michael Petrus-Jones**



2022-2023 Pediatrician-  
Scientist Program  
Chief Resident  
**Dr. Ian Francis**



## Faculty briefs....

**Manish Bansal, MBBS**, received the Star Faculty Award for Excellence in Patient Care on January 2022.

**Dr. Brooke Bernhardt**, Asst. Professor, has been selected as the first recipient of an NIH P20 Developmental Research Program Pilot Award to investigate outcome disparities in Hispanic children and adolescents with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Bernhardt's project is titled, "Clinical implications and predictors of delayed clearance of high-dose methotrexate in pediatric patients with acute lymphoblastic leukemia."

**Dr. Maria Buheis**, Asst. Professor, West Campus Allergy and Immunology Clinic Chief, received a Star Faculty Award for Excellence in Patient Care which will be awarded during Baylor's Virtual Awards Day celebration in May, 2022.

**Dr. Javier Chinen**, Sr. Faculty, Woodlands Allergy and Immunology Clinic Chief, is serving as the President of the Greater Houston Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Society.

**Dr. Carla Davis**, Assoc. Professor, Division Chief of Immunology, Allergy and Retrovirology, is serving as the President of the Texas Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Society.

**Dr. Olivia Ginnard**, Fellow, received the Rising Star Award from the Pediatric Endocrine Society for her research contributions.

**Dr. Maria Monica Gramatges**, Assoc. Professor, was elected a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation. New members will be officially inducted into the Society at the ASCI Dinner and New Member Induction Ceremony on April 8, 2022.

**Dr. Joud Hajjar**, Asst. Professor

- was awarded a 2021/2022 Texas Medical Center Digestive Diseases Center Pilot Feasibility Award for her project entitled, "Microbiome in Common Variable Immunodeficiency" for \$37,500 from January 1- December 31, 2022
- was awarded a c.h.i.l.d.r.e.n! Research Program grant award for her application entitled, "The Multiplexed Opsonophagocytic Killing Assay (MOPA) in Evaluating Specific Antibody Responses in Patients with Recurrent Infections.

**Dr. Peter Hotez**, Professor and Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor

- received the Scientific Achievement Award from the American Medical Association for his work promoting vaccines and combating vaccine disinformation (see page 8).
- received the 2021 Milton S. Popkin Award from the Southwest Region of the Anti-Defamation League during its Jan. 19 virtual board meeting. The award is presented to one recipient each year who furthers the ADL's mission to promote respect for all. He was cited for his work to make vaccines accessible to all.
- was honored by the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston at its 32nd annual Children's Scholarship Ball on February 26, 2022, benefiting the Irvin Kaplan Children's Scholarship Fund.
- was nominated for the Nobel Prize (see page 4).

**Dr. Shani Johnson**, Clinical Fellow, has been named a Jeanne Marie Lusher Diversity Fellowship recipient by the National Hemophilia Foundation. This fellowship aims to increase diversity among benign hematologists by fostering a career-long interest in inherited bleeding/blood disorders.

**Dr. Madhavi Lakkaraja**, Fellow, was awarded \$100,000 in the Clinical Fellow category.

**Dr. Philip Lupo**, Professor, was awarded the 2021 Research Mentor Award from Baylor College of Medicine.

**Bailey Martin-Giacalone**, Graduate Student in Dr. Philip Lupo's lab, was awarded the 2022 Women in Cancer Research Scholar Award. The awards are given annually to American Association for Cancer Research members who are scientists-in-training and presenters of meritorious scientific papers at the AACR Annual Meeting.

**Dr. Danitza Nebor**, Instructor, was awarded \$125,000 in the Basic/Translational Fellow to Faculty category of the 2022 Scholar Awards by the American Society of Hematology.

**Dr. Rayne Rouce, Asst. Professor**, was recently selected as digital commissioning editor for the journal *Blood Advances*, a peer-reviewed, open access medical journal published by the American Society of Hematology.

**Dr. Kirti Saxena**, Assoc. Professor, was one of 45 scientists worldwide to receive funding from the Baszucki Brain Research Fund and the Milken Institute's Center for Strategic Philanthropy to advance research for bipolar disorder. Her project focuses on using a behavioral health avatar for nonverbal behavior analysis to personalize treatment for the disorder. (see page 7)

**Dr. Andrea Tatem**, Asst. Professor, was chosen as a 2022 Fostering UIM Education Leadership (FUEL) Scholar, given by the Association of Pediatric Program Directors.

**Dr. Robert Voigt**, Professor, was invited to serve as an ABP (American Board of Pediatrics) representative to help provide insight and perspective on the Patient Care and Medical Knowledge Milestones for the ACGME.





# DEPARTMENT NEWS

## HEALTH & RESEARCH

## Dealing with Increased Incidence of Mental Health Issues and Eating Disorders Related to COVID-19 Pandemic

- Watch for signs of children tuning out or not wanting to engage in family activities.
- Ask open-ended questions to engage your child in conversation such as “How are you doing?”
- Address the behavior you see. For example: “You seem anxious to me. Did something upset you? Can you tell me about it?”
- Contact your pediatrician or school counselor if you’re concerned.



Children and adolescents have experienced increased pressures leading to dramatically increased mental health challenges and eating disorders as one of the numerous results of the COVID-19 pandemic.

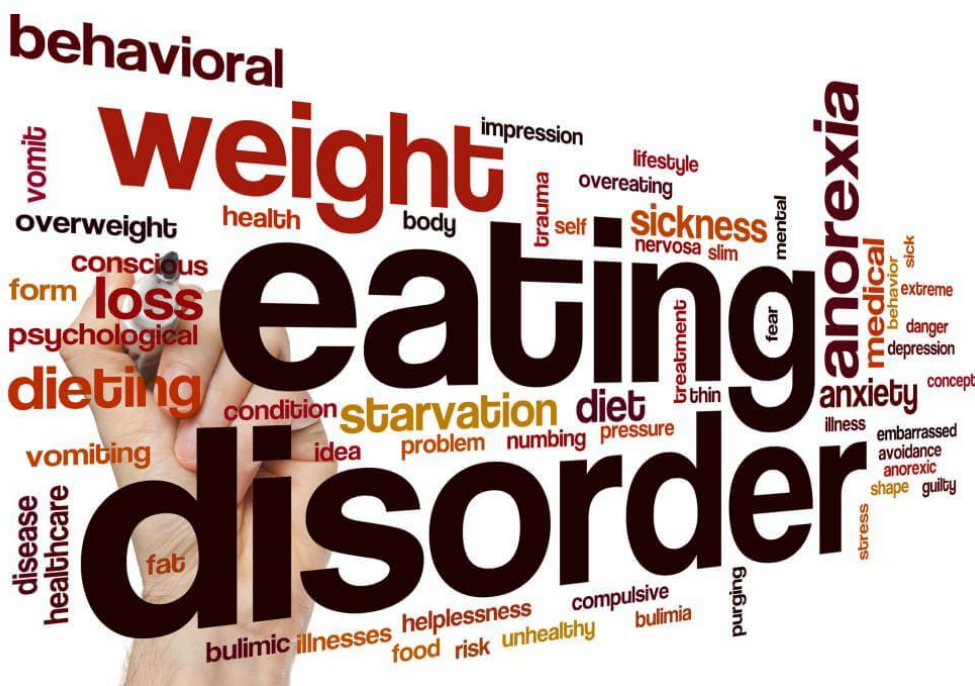
**Dr. Catherine Gordon**, Chair, explained ways that parents, family members, and teachers can be more alert to signs of distress and know when and how to take action. Stress at home increased tremendously for most families, often due to a parent losing a job or a relative dying of COVID-19 or exacerbated family relational challenges. Dr. Gordon explained the importance of in-person education, as well, noting that it “is important for socialization as well as academic enrichment. We

know that it’s hard for students to receive consistent education at home, and it hasn’t been the same for them as being in a classroom and interacting with a teacher and peers. They have also missed out on extracurricular activities that are critical for their development.”

Dr. Gordon provided tips for parents concerned about anxiety and depression in their children (see list above) and advised them to allow their children to share their feelings and let them know that feeling upset is OK. She explained that, “Expressing feelings is a way to help them process something that may be troubling them and can ward off depression in the long term.”



Eating disorders are complex and often require a multidisciplinary approach that includes a physician or nurse practitioner, a dietician, and a mental health professional. They do not respond to “quick fixes,” and often months of multidisciplinary care are needed, especially for eating disorders that are diseases of denial and difficult to diagnose, such as anorexia nervosa. Dr. Gordon encourages parents and others who are concerned about an adolescent to seek guidance from a primary care provider, as a delayed diagnosis can lead to more severe presentation and even require hospitalization, whereas an early diagnosis may require only outpatient care and usually has the patient on the road to recovery more quickly.



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## New Findings in Testing for Peanut Allergies Reported



**Dr. Jessica M. Palmieri**, a second-year fellow in the Division of Allergy, Immunology, and Retrovirology, and her work on Ara h 6 were featured in an article published in March by the American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology Annual Meeting.

She and other researchers presented their findings at the Annual Meeting, noting that theirs is the first study in the United States to evaluate Ara h 6 as a relevant component for diagnosing peanut allergies among children in the U.S. Dr. Palmieri explained that, although Ara h 6 has been studied as an indicator of peanut allergy in Europe, it has not been found to be evaluated in the U.S. Ara h 2 is the most elevated and most significant compound in individuals with peanut allergies, and Ara h 2 and Ara h 6 share 60% of their sequence identify and numerous epitopes, according to the researchers.

The study involved 46 patients, ranging in age from 6 months to 18 years (male, n=30; Black, n=14). They were evaluated for peanut allergy using standard testing, including skin-prick testing, specific IgE, and components of ARA h 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9. The patients were divided into three cohorts, based on the test results: allergic (n=31), indeterminate (n=3), and nonallergic (n=12). The patients in the indeterminate cohort all tested negative in food challenges.

Ara h 2 was the dominant component in 48% of the patients who tested positive for peanut allergies, as expected. Ara h 6 was dominant in 23% and Ara h 1 in 19%; Ara h 3, 8, and 9 were not dominant in any of the study subjects.

In sensitivity and specificity, Ara h 2 was “perfect,” at 1.0 for both, whereas Ara h 6 showed 0.97 for sensitivity and 1.0 for specificity. The latter had the greatest correlation with Ara h 2 (0.96;  $P < .0001$ ), as well as a strong correlation with Ara h 1 (0.82;  $P < .0001$ ) and Ara h 3 (0.86;  $P < .0001$ ). Dr. Palmieri noted that the researchers were surprised by the Ara h 6 mono-sensitization that they encountered. She noted that, “Sometimes you have kids or people in general who have a specific IgE, and you have seen testing where they’re fully appropriate to challenge, where you have less than 50% chance of them reacting. But then they react, and you ask why they reacted. You just don’t know.”

Their conclusion is that Ara h 2 is more sensitive than is Ara h 6 for diagnosing peanut allergies, although Ara h 6 remains relevant in the pediatric population in the U.S. and can help physicians decide if they want to perform an oral food challenge in indeterminate cases. Because food challenge is always a risk, the new findings may “be a guiding post for whether you want to challenge some of those indeterminate patients,” Dr. Palmieri explained.



# Faculty Members Lead Effort to Reduce Vaping Among Teens



Two faculty members, **Dr. Lindy McGee**, Asst. Professor (pictured top), and **Dr. Jane Montealegre**, Asst. Professor (pictured bottom), are leading efforts to curb vaping among adolescents. Although the

numbers of teenagers who are vaping appeared to peak in 2019, the impact of COVID-19 remains to be



determined. The decreased numbers reported in a 2021 survey conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse may be skewed because so many teens have been

unable to leave their homes during the pandemic. Further, Dr. McGee has expressed concern that adolescents who are vaping may be more addicted than previously.

The CDC's National Youth Tobacco Survey reported that 2 of 5 students used e-cigarettes more than 20 days each month, indicating they have a strong dependence on nicotine. In 2019, Drs. McGee and Montealegre received a grant from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to engage and educate pediatric healthcare providers concerning the prevalence and dangers of vaping. The grant was to improve tobacco and e-cigarette prevention clinical services in Harris County.

They have initiated a healthcare provider education program that currently serves 13 clinics. The program includes training pediatricians and nurses to ask patients about vaping in addition to smoking. The questions are integrated into the electronic medical record to assist with access and reporting.



**Dr. McGee shares these five messages with her patients:**

- Vapes use nicotine, and nicotine is very addictive.
- Big Tobacco is trying to manipulate you through vaping.
- It's important to protect your lungs from harmful chemicals in vapes, especially during the pandemic.
- Vaping is bad for your mental health.
- Vaping is bad for the environment.

The program also provides educational materials about vaping that physicians can share with patients and their parents. Dr. McGee noted that, "Every adolescent who comes in for a well-child visit gets screening and brief counseling. It doesn't require a long conversation. It can be as simple as one sentence of evidence-based messaging, and that has a big impact on prevention at a public health level." Dr. McGee added that, "We know that we're much better at preventing kids from vaping than at stopping them once they have already started. It's about teaching providers to say those few extra words of encouragement. The positive reinforcement seems so little, but it has been proven to prevent kids from vaping and using tobacco products."

Dr. McGee shares five messages with her patients (see box, above), and adds that she has seen success with these techniques in her own practice. She has found that many patients are unaware of the dangers of vaping, including the levels of nicotine and other harmful chemicals that are in vape products.

One aspect of the grant-funded initiative is a student advisory group to run an Instagram page designed to show teenagers how they can prevent cancer. The group is composed of students ranging from high-school age to current medical school students who work together on messaging for their peers. Dr. McGee said that her goal is "to get these teenagers thinking, 'I am the type of person who doesn't do this' It needs to be part of their identity. The Instagram page is @BCMTeenCancerEd.

# Memory Recall in Rett Syndrome Mice Achieved in Recent Study

"This is the first study to demonstrate that upregulating the activity of SOM neurons can improve memory recall and retrieval capacity in Rett mice. It opens exciting areas of research to explore therapeutic possibilities that could improve contextual memory recall in individuals affected by Rett syndrome. These findings have a much broader implication and are also applicable to other neurological disorders in which the development and function of inhibitory circuits are altered."

--Dr. Huda Zoghbi



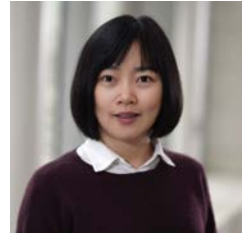
**Dr. Huda Zoghbi**, Professor, and researchers in her lab recently published in *Neuron* their discovery that activating specific inhibitory cells in the hippocampus and restore diminished memory recall in Rett syndrome mice.

The syndrome, for which Dr. Zoghbi is recognized as having identified the causative gene, is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by loss of acquired cognitive, motor, language, and social skills as the first year of life. Patient with the syndrome also have profound learning and memory impairments.

Contextual memories, which encode an event and the circumstances in which it occurs, are diminished in mouse models of Rett syndrome. The diminished memories are thought to result from disruptions of finely tuned balance between excitatory and inhibitory synaptic inputs that are constantly bombarding the hippocampal neurons.

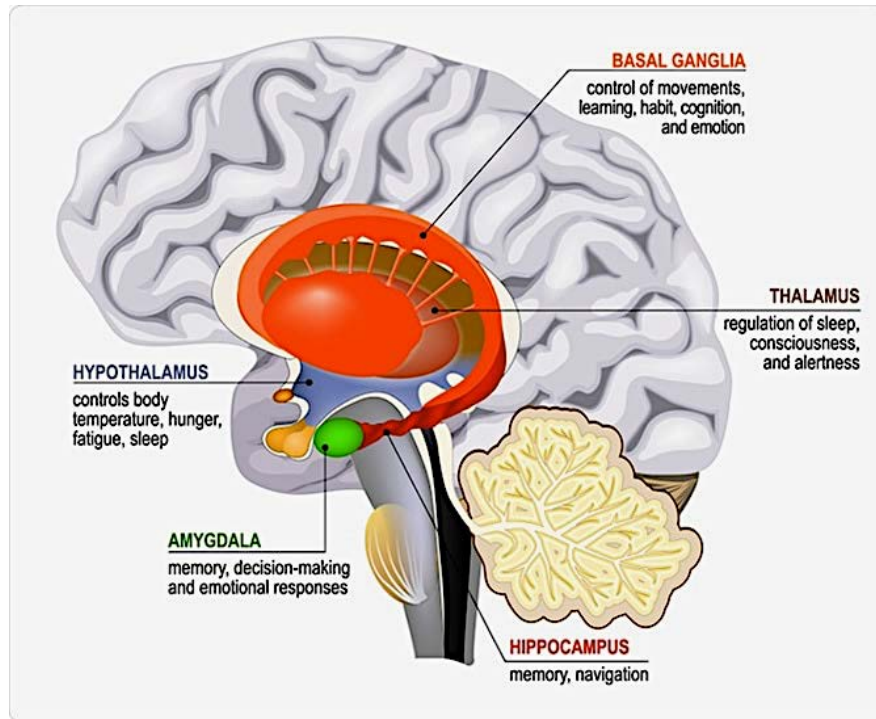
To study their hypothesis that disruptions in this balance may alter the size and composition of ensembles of the hippocampal neurons needed to encode a contextual memory, Dr. Zoghbi's team used a miniature microscope to directly monitor these ensembles as mice recalled a fearful experience. The Rett mice had larger and more correlated ensembles

of neurons than did wild-type mice, suggesting that hippocampal pyramidal neurons in the Rett mice are not receiving sufficient inhibition. **Dr. Lingjie He**, postdoctoral associate in the lab and first author of the article, noted that, "An



optimal balance between excitatory and inhibitory input is critical for the proper formation and retrieval of contextual memories.

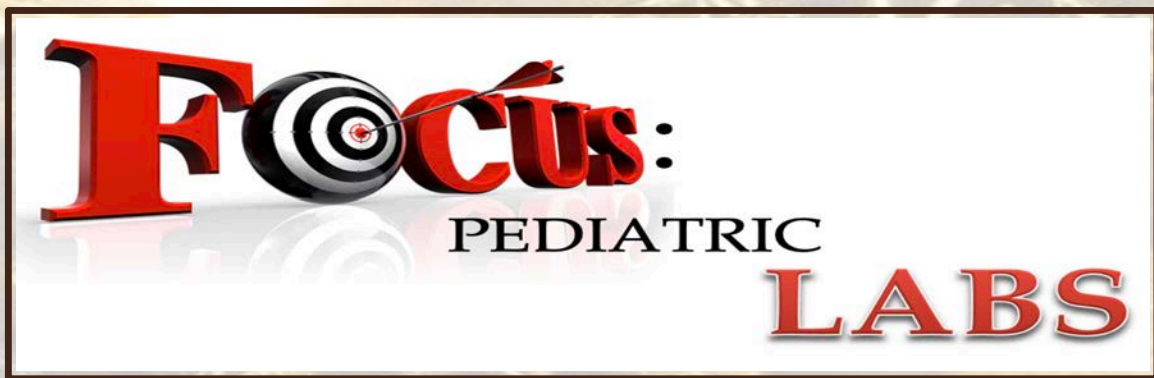
The researchers next sought to determine which neuron is not providing the inhibition by recording neuronal activity from identified cell types in brain slices. The study showed a significant reduction



in connectivity between pyramidal cells and a subset of somatostatin-expressing (SOM) OLM cells, which are inhibitory neurons. These cells, which normally are recruited by hippocampal pyramidal neurons in healthy mice during memory recall, were poorly engaged in the Rett mice. This finding led them to ask if activating these inhibitory neurons during memory recall would help the Rett mice with memory. To find answers, they used a chemical-genetic approach that allows for the activation of a specific cell type to selectively enhance the activity of somatostatin cells in the hippocampus. Their incredible finding was that activating the somatostatin expressing cells in the Rett mice restored contextual memory recall.



# DEPARTMENT NEWS



## VISION FOR RESEARCH

**To provide high-quality training of pediatric basic and clinical scientists and engage in cutting-edge research that advances care**

## GOAL

**To become the preeminent pediatric research department in the country**



# Pediatric Researchers Receive Support from RRO

By Dr. Lisa Bomgaars

The Research Resources Office (RRO) supports Department of Pediatrics research activities and as a unified source of research expertise and resources. The unit is comprised of the following components:

## Clinical Trial Support

The RRO supports clinical research studies across the spectrum of investigator initiated to pharmaceutical industry studies. Resources are available in the areas listed below.

**Research Coordination-** the research coordination team has experience supporting non-therapeutic studies such as survey and registry trials as well as therapeutic studies across the spectrum from pilot to phase 1-4 trials. All studies undergo a feasibility review as part of the initial intake and have a study specific manual of operations and workflow developed as part of the coordination activities.

**Regulatory Coordination-** the regulatory group is experienced in BCM and central IRB submissions, as well as reliance IRB processes. The group also assists investigators with the IND/IDE submission process and reporting.

**Finance and Contracting-** the finance core has expertise in the development of study cost assessments, budget development and required contracting and BCM process including data transfer agreements.

**Quality Assurance-** the quality team performs ongoing study monitoring and study audits. Services may be requested for issues of concern or in preparation for potential external audits such as FDA.

**Research Informatics-** the informatics team has expertise in the development of clinical trial management tools, study specific databases, and automated functionality to support clinical trial needs.

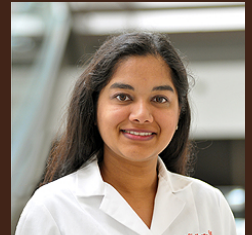
## Meet the Leadership Team

Lisa Bomgaars MD, MS  
Medical Director



Lisa Bomgaars is a Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Hematology-Oncology. She has a Master's Degree in Clinical Investigation and more than 20 years' experience in clinical trial study design, regulatory affairs, and research operations. Her research is in the areas of clinical pharmacology and new drug development in pediatric oncology, the evaluation of anticoagulation agents in pediatrics, and the pharmacokinetics and pharmacogenomics of drugs in children. She is the Medical Director for Quality Assurance and Regulatory Affairs for the Children's Oncology Group where she led a re-structuring of the monitoring program and developed group wide clinical research education. She also developed and leads the American Board of Clinical Pharmacology accredited Clinical Pharmacology Training Pathway at BCM.

Sowdhamini Wallace DO, MS  
Assistant Medical Director



Sowdhamini Wallace is an Associate Professor of Pediatrics and has been a member of the Division of Pediatric Hospital Medicine since 2008. She holds a Master degree in clinical research and has been the Director of Research for her division for the last 9 years. In this role, she has created educational initiatives and developed an infrastructure to support research within her division. Additionally, she has mentored trainees and junior faculty and was the recipient of the departmental assistant professor research mentorship award in 2020. Her research focuses on the management of fever and urinary tract infections in young infants alongside newer multicenter work to evaluate effective strategies to treat urinary tract infections in children with congenital anomalies of the kidney and urinary tract. She has led several prospective studies here at BCM/TCH along with serving as the site primary investigator for multiple multicenter trials.

## Grants and Sponsors Assistance

The RRO also serves as the grants pre- and post-award core for many divisions within the Department and has expertise in NIH, CDC and foundation grant process. The RRO grants group reviews all grants submitted by Department of Pediatrics faculty and staff and performs important quality checks prior to routing to BCM Office of Research for institutional submission. The grants team also administers all Department of Pediatrics Pilot and Educational awards.

## Education

The monthly RRO seminar series covers clinical research topics of interest to investigators and study staff. The seminar is held the third Wednesday of the month at noon. This year a new seminar series - biostatistics for Busy clinicians, was added for clinicians and researchers who want to improve their understanding of statistical methods. This 6 part seminar is held on the first Wednesday of the month at noon.

The RRO also has process and procedures for best practice in clinical research as well as tools including protocol and study document templates available on the RRO website.

RRO resources may be accessed through the RRO website

<https://orit.research.bcm.edu/rro/> and requested using the RRO



## Research Resources Office

The goal of the Research Resources Office (RRO) at Feigin Tower is to provide unified, coordinated and comprehensive researcher-focused support and education for all regulatory aspects of both investigator initiated, NIH cooperative group, and pharmaceutical industry studies, as well as provide centralized resources for the pre- and post-award processes involved in developing and implementing the wide range of basic, translational or clinical studies performed by Pediatrics investigators.

### Miki Gillis BBA

Executive Director

Miki Gillis has more than 28 years of experience in various aspects of clinical research and grants and contracts administration at BCM and has been in the Department of Pediatrics since 1998. In prior roles, she served as the administrative manager for the General Clinical Research Center, served as project coordinator on a large industry-sponsored clinical trial, and processed financial reports for federal, state and local granting agencies. She has been part of the RRO since its inception in 2011, when she collaborated with the Institute of Clinical and Translational Research to develop a Medicare Coverage Analysis system/process for BCM, and a comprehensive web-based Clinical Trial Management System that includes regulatory, patient registration, study visit, and financial modules. She has extensive experience related to pre- and post-award grants and contracts administration.

### Serpil Tutan MBA

Director of Clinical Research

Serpil Tutan has been a member of the BCM research family in the DoP since 2005. In her current role, she leads the clinical trial regulatory, finance, and quality assurance teams. She successfully led Clinical Trial Management System financial module implementation for the DoP, launched the RRO education series, and authored many of the RRO SOPs. Her passion is workforce development/training, protocol development for investigator initiated studies, workflow/SOP development for new or updated processes.

### Lori Malone MBA, MA

Director of Research Administration

Lori Malone oversees the pre- and post-award functions for the Department of Pediatrics. Lori has over 29 years of financial, managerial, and administrative experience in the non-profit arena, with the last 18 years in the DoP. She has been solely dedicated to grants administration since joining RRO in 2011 and serves a resource for faculty and staff. Lori serves as the Department's primary liaison with the Sponsored Programs Office. Lori and her team provide direct pre- and post-award support for a number of divisions. She manages the NIH Loan Repayment Program certification process for the Department and administers the TCH Pediatric Pilot Awards and the TCH Educational Scholarship Awards.

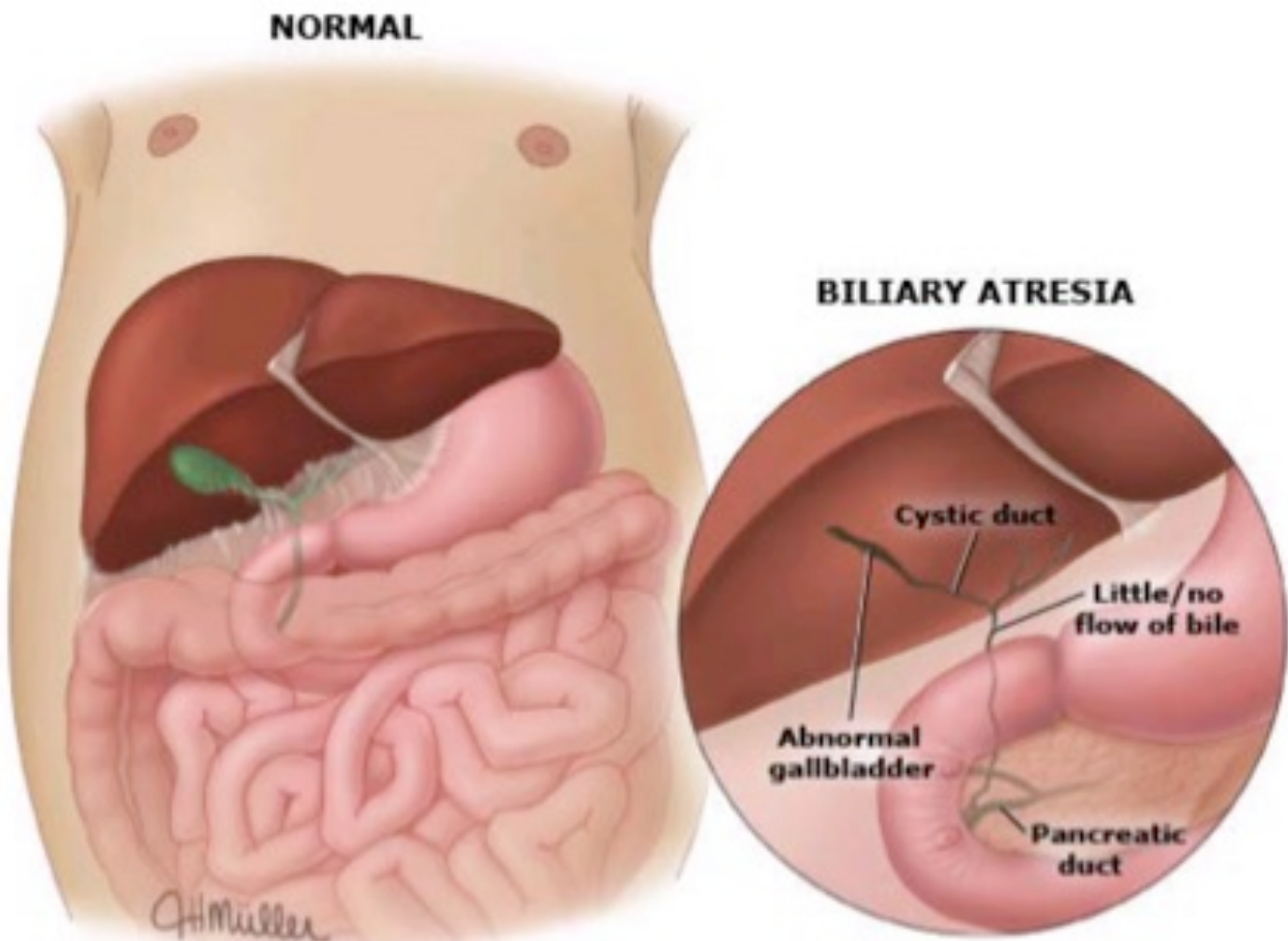
## Focus on Lab: Dr. Sanjay Harpavat & Biliary Atresia

**Dr. Sanjiv ("Sonny") Harpavat**, Assoc. Professor, focuses both his research and clinical practice on the liver condition biliary atresia (BA). He has received numerous awards, including a 2019 Young Investigator Award, won a steady stream of grants, and his work has been widely published and recognized.

Biliary atresia (BA) is a serious disease and is the #1 cause of pediatric liver transplants, as well as responsible for 60% of surgeries performed on children younger than 12 months. His intended focus was basic-science related to metabolism and childhood obesity, for which he remains a passionate advocate, but when he realized the huge problem with children have liver disease, he began investigating other ways of treating biliary atresia, realizing that he was not on the cutting-edge of advancements.

When he recognized that basic science would not work for BA, Dr. Harpavat turned to clinical and translational research that improving BA outcomes requires. He challenged the nation that babies develop BA months after birth, and with his team poured over the newborn-test records of babies who later developed BA. They discovered that almost all of these babies had high modified bilirubin levels shortly after birth. The hard work that followed led to a pilot study that currently screens many of the newborns in Houston; if they have high modified bilirubin, they are screened for BA and treated accordingly.

We include herein his comments about his work and interactions with the RRO.



*Extracted from UpToDate / presentation by Dr. Harpavat*



# #1 Reason for all transplants

| Liver (age 0-17 years)            |       | All organs (age 0-17 years)     |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Biliary Atresia                | 35.7% | 1. Biliary Atresia              | 11.5% |
| 2. Idiopathic ALF                 | 6.9%  | 2. Congenital Heart Disease     | 7.8%  |
| 3. TPN-Associated Liver Disease   | 4.9%  | 3. Dilated Cardiomyopathy       | 6.9%  |
| 4. Hepatoblastoma                 | 3.6%  | 4. Renal Dysgenesis/Agenesis    | 5.4%  |
| 5. Alpha-1-Antitrypsin Deficiency | 3.4%  | 5. Focal Glomerular Sclerosis   | 4.5%  |
| Liver (age <1 year)               |       | All organs (age <1 year)        |       |
| 1. Biliary Atresia                | 59.4% | 1. Biliary Atresia              | 33.8% |
| 2. TPN-Associated Liver Disease   | 5.4%  | 2. Congenital Heart Disease     | 22.8% |
| 3. Idiopathic ALF                 | 3.6%  | 3. Dilated Cardiomyopathy       | 8.5%  |
| 4. Alpha-1-Antitrypsin Deficiency | 1.8%  | 4. TPN-Associated Liver Disease | 3.1%  |
| 5. Alagille Syndrome              | 1.4%  | 5. Idiopathic ALF               | 2.1%  |

*Extracted from United Network for Organ Sharing / presentation by Dr. Harpavat*



My long term goal is to improve outcomes in the serious liver disease biliary atresia (BA). BA is the leading cause for pediatric liver transplantation, yet no proven medical therapies exist. My research activities focus on developing a novel newborn screen for BA.

The screening project has funding through the NIH (NIH K23DK109207, R03DK128535), and currently screens ~30,000 infants per year in 14 birth hospital located throughout Houston and south Texas. While screening has the potential to advance the field by providing a reliable way for earlier diagnoses, a gap still remains in optimizing treatment after infants are identified. To address this gap I am investigating the role of N-acetylcysteine (NAC) in BA, based on NAC's underappreciated role in increasing bile flow.

Concerning his interaction with the RRO, Dr. Harpavat had this to say:

I have found the RRO instrumental in helping design and conduct investigator-initiated clinical trials. Recently I proposed a single-site clinical trial testing N-acetylcysteine therapy for infants with the serious liver disease biliary atresia. At the outset, I was at a major disadvantage because I lacked the clinical trial infrastructure commonplace in pharmaceutical companies. Fortunately, the RRO more than compensated. The RRO first performed a detailed review of the protocol and provided thorough feedback.

The input not only improved the trial design but also helped me secure grant funding. Then the RRO helped prepare a budget, plan with pharmacy, and work with the FDA to secure an investigational new drug permit. During the course of the trial, the RRO staff were instrumental in ensuring protocol compliance and monitoring for adverse events. Based on my experience, I think the RRO is a "secret weapon" for investigators at TCH, allowing us to efficiently translate ideas and observations into rigorous, safe clinical trials for patients.



Baylor College of Medicine released a position paper describing strategies to better understand mental health needs and improve mental healthcare. It can be accessed here (as of 3/15/2022):

<https://www.bcm.edu/about-us/leadership/office-of-the-president/position-statements/baylor-college-of-medicine-highlights-importance-of-mental-health-and-opportunities-to-build-systems-and-cultures-that-improve-care-and-reduce-disparities>

## **Nominations Open for DoP Chair's Outstanding Clinician Awards, 2022**

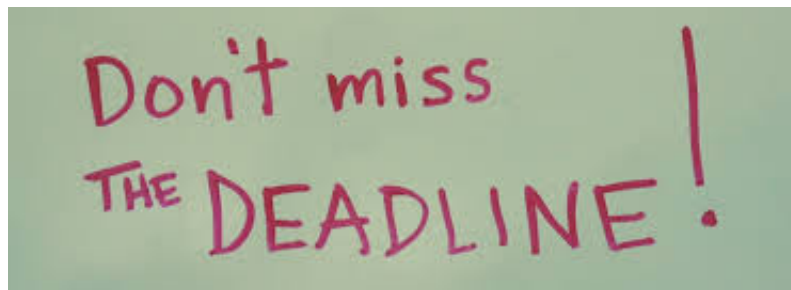
The Outstanding Clinician Awards recognize outstanding contributions to clinical care by Physician / Advance Practice Provider Faculty member of the Department of Pediatrics. Awards are granted to Physicians or APPs who have been nominated by their peers for their contributions to clinical care and/or for outstanding division citizenship, according to three categories: 1) outstanding patient care (inpatient), 2) outstanding patient care (ambulatory) and 3) outstanding contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nominating packet should be sent by email as a single pdf document to Dr. Lara Shekerdeman ([lsheker@texaschildrens.org](mailto:lsheker@texaschildrens.org)) by **April 30, 2022**.



## **2021-2022 Nominations are Open for Baylor's Equity Trailblazer Awards**

Don't forget to nominate the JEDI champions in the DoP for the BCM Equity Trailblazer award. Students, trainees, staff, and faculty in any mission area who meet the award criteria and have been an employee or trainee for at least one year are eligible. The nominee must also be in good standing with the College. **The Equity Trailblazer Award** has been established to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions and accomplishments in moving Baylor toward being a more diverse and inclusive community above and beyond their generally anticipated scope of responsibilities as a staff, faculty, trainee or student. Deadline for nominations is **April 30, 2022**.

**Academic Medicine and Science**  
**2022 Early Career Women Faculty Leadership Development Seminar**  
July 19-22, 2022  
Hyatt Regency Minneapolis  
Minneapolis, MN



**Pedi Press**

**June 10, 2022**



# **"End with Good Stuff."**

-- Dr. Gordon Schutze

## **Some Therapy Comes on Four Paws**



**Omri Cadenhead, THDD, CGC, TKE**

Owned and Handled by Karen Cadenhead, MEd

**Hood'N'Borden's Lady Heather Prancin' the Liffey, CGC, THDN**

Owned and Handled by Dr. Lee Ligon-Borden and Rev. Gordon Borden, MEd, MAR