

# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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## SECTION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY AND HEPATOLOGY



SECTION CHIEF

*Fasiha Kanwal, MD,  
MSHS, AGAF, FAASLD*

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## SECTION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- We ranked among the top Gastroenterology and Hepatology divisions nationally in 2021 according to [U.S News & World Report – Best Universities for Gastroenterology and Hepatology](#). We are **#1 in Texas**. These rankings are based on performance across a set of widely accepted indicators measuring excellence in research, publications, and scientific reputation overall. This recognition is a testimonial to the quality of scientific research and scholarly contributions from our Section members.
- The Section remains a leader in research in gastrointestinal and liver diseases. Our members published over **216** papers in scientific journals. We had over **\$16 million** in research funding in 2021 (\$9 million from the NIH and \$3 million from State); this is up from \$10.1 million in 2020 and \$7.6 million in 2019.
- The Section continues to be the clinical home for the NIH funded Digestive Disease Center, one of 17 federally funded centers focusing on research in GI diseases. We also serve as the coordinating center for the Texas Collaborative Center for Hepatocellular Cancer (TeCH), which is a platform to promote collaboration among scientists, clinicians, community leaders, and policymakers to reduce liver cancer mortality in Texas.
- Our top-notch faculty provides high-quality, compassionate healthcare at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center (BSLMC), Ben Taub General Hospital and the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center. BSLMC Gastroenterology and GI Surgery Service has been ranked number 24 in [U.S News & World Report – Best Hospital Ranking](#).
- We expanded our footprint outside of the Texas Medical Center by growing general GI

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practice at St. Luke's Hospital, Sugarland. We continue to introduce several innovations in our practices, including cutting edge advanced endoscopic procedures and multidisciplinary treatment of complex GI disorders. We play an important role in training future clinicians and researchers.

- Several new faculty members joined the Section last year. Section members also received special accolades for their contributions, including 6 excellence in clinical care and 2 teaching awards.
  - We hosted two successful Baylor College of Medicine GI and Hepatology Courses in September 2021 and March 2022.
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## FACULTY

### ***Section Leadership***

- Fasiha Kanwal, MD, MSHS, AGAF, FAASLD, Chief
  - Jason Mills, MD, PhD, Chief of Research & Vice Chief for Section
  - John Vierling, MD, FACP, Chief of Transplant Hepatology
  - Fred Sutton, MD, Service Chief, Ben Taub
  - Jason Hou, MD, MS, FACP, Service Chief, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center
  - Mohamed Othman, MD, Chief of GI, Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center
  - Kalpesh Patel, MD, Medical Director, Baylor College of Medicine
  - Rise Stribling, MD, Medical Director for Liver Transplantation, Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center
  - Milena Suarez, MD, Program Director of Gastroenterology Fellowship, Baylor College of Medicine
  - Avegail Flores, MD, Medical Director for Liver Transplantation, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center and Program Director, Transplant Hepatology Fellowship, Baylor College of Medicine
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## FACULTY

### ***Baylor Medicine***

#### **Professor**

- Sharmila Anandasabapathy, MD
- Hashem El-Serag, MD, MSHS, AGAF, FAASLD
- Fasiha Kanwal, MD, MSHS, AGAF, FAASLD
- Mohamed Othman, MD
- Waqar Qureshi, MD, FACP, FACP, FACP, FACP

#### **Associate Professor**

- Suneal Agarwal, MD
- Jason Hou, MD, MS, FACP

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- Manreet Kaur, MD
- Kalpesh Patel, MD

## **Assistant Professor**

- Wasif Abidi, MD, PhD
- Jessica Bernica, MD
- Andrea Bradford, PhD
- Reena Chokshi, MD
- Maria-Ellionore Jarbrink-Sehgal, MD
- Salmaan Jawaaid, MD
- Tara Keihanian, MD
- Lukasz Kwapisz, MD, FRCPC
- Nabil Mansour, MD
- Rehman Sheikh, MD
- Richa Shukla, MD

## **Dietitian**

- Courtney Cary, MS, RD, LD

## ***Ben Taub***

### **Professor**

- Hemant Roy, MD

### **Associate Professor**

- Chris Pappas, MD, JD, FCLM
- Melina Gould Suarez, MD
- Fred Milton Sutton Jr, MD

### **Assistant Professor**

- Maya Balakrishnan, MD
- RJ Sealock, MD
- Richa Shukla, MD
- Jordan Sparkman, MD
- Mimi Chang Tan, MD

### **Instructor**

- Jean Davis, NP
- Loan Ho, NP
- Phuong Tran, NP

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## *Hepatology*

### **Professor**

- F. Blaine Hollinger, MD
- John Vierling, MD, FACP

### **Associate Professor**

- Ayse Leyla Mindikoglu, MD, MPH
- Gagan Sood, MD
- Rise Stribling, MD

### **Assistant Professor**

- George Cholankeril, MD
- Avegail Flores, MD
- Prasun Jalal, MD
- Saira Khaderi, MD, MPH
- Tzu-Hao (Howard) Lee, MD

## *Research*

### **Professor**

- Jason Mills, MD, PhD

### **Associate Professor**

- Ru Chen, PhD
- Loning Fu, PhD
- Antone Opekun, PA-C
- Noah Shroyer, PhD

### **Assistant Professor**

- Bingning Dong, PhD
- Yan Liu, PhD

### **Instructor**

- Sumimasa Arimura, PhD
- Charles Cho, MD, PhD
- Ramon Jin, MD, PhD

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## *Michael E DeBakey VA Medical Center*

### **Professor**

- Hashem El-Serag, MD, MPH
- David Graham, MD, MACG
- Fasiha Kanwal, MD, MSHS, AGAF, FAASLD

### **Associate Professor**

- Rhonda Cole, MD
- Jason Hou, MD, MS, FACG

### **Assistant Professor**

- Avegail Flores, MD
- Rollin George, MD
- Clark Hair, MD
- Ruben Hernaez, MD
- Natalia Khalaf, MD
- Ned Snyder, MD
- Hoda Malaty, MD, MPH, PhD, FACG
- Theresa Nguyen, MD
- Larson Scott, MD

### **Instructor**

- Julie Weatherly, NP

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## **HONORS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Wasif Abidi, MD**

- Early Career Award for Excellence in Patient Care

### **Sharmila Anandasabapathy, MD**

- Global Impact

### **Maya Balakrishnan, MD**

- Top 0.26% by Expertscape's PubMed-based algorithm

### **Andrea Bradford, MD**

- Editor-in-Chief for Journal of Psychology in Medical Settings

### **Charles Cho, MD, PhD**

- Selected as Part of 2021 – 2022 Cohort for BCM Career Advancement Series

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## **George Cholankeril, MD**

- AASLD Early Career Investigator Award

## **Reena Chokshi, MD**

- Department of Medicine Scholarly Award

## **Hashem El-Serag, MD, MPH**

- Top 0.1% by Expertscape's PubMed-based Algorithm
- Top 3 most cited researchers
- Top Ranking Scientist according to Reseach.com

## **David Y. Graham, MD**

- American Gastroenterological Association William Beaumont Prize
- Top 0.1% by Expertscape's PubMed-based Algorithm
- Top 3 most cited researchers
- Expertscape as being in the top1% - considered World Expert
- Top Ranking Scientist according to Reseach.com

## **Ruben Hernaez, MD**

- Norton Rose Fulbright Faculty Excellence Award for Teaching and Evaluation
- Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology Top Reviewer
- Selected as Part of 2021 – 2022 Cohort for BCM Career Advancement
- Early Career Award for Excellence in Patient Care

## **Fasiha Kanwal, MD, MSHS, AGAF, FAASLD**

- Michael E. DeBakey Excellence in Research Award
- Top Ranking Scientist according to Reseach.com

## **Jason Mills, MD, PhD**

- Herman Brown Endowed Professor in Medicine
- Association of American Physicians Induction
- 2022 AGA Research Mentor Award

## **Ayse Mindikoglu, MD**

- Women of Excellence Award

## **Kalpesh Patel, MD**

- Techniques and Innovations in Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Top Reviewer
- Texas Society for Gastroenterology and Endoscopy Nomination to join Professional Association

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## **Hemant Roy, MD**

- Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Ben Taub Hospital

## **RJ Sealock, MD**

- American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Mentor
- Norton Rose Fulbright Faculty Excellence Award for Teaching and Evaluation

## **Noah Shroyer, PhD**

- Expertscape as being in the top 1% - considered World Experts

## **Richa Shukla, MD**

- Early Career Award for Excellence in Patient Care

## **Milena Gould Suarez, MD**

- Women of Excellence Award

## **Fred Sutton, MD**

- BCM Office of Admissions Faculty Co-Chair

## **Mimi Tan, MD**

- BCM Admissions Interviewing Subcommittee
- Harris Health's Physician Champion of the Quarter

## **John M. Vierling, MD, FACP, FAASLD, AGAF**

- 2021 AASLD Distinguished Service Award

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## **RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

### ***Grants & Awards***

#### **Sharmila Anandasabapathy, MD**

- NIH; Low cost tethered capsule endoscope with high-resolution digital chromoscopy for Barrett's screening; \$1,855,655

#### **Sumimasa Arimura, PhD**

- TMC DDC; DDC Pilot Feasibility Award; \$50,000

#### **Maya Balakrishnan, MD**

- ACG Health Equity Research Award; Improving outcomes among Mexican and Central American Patients with NAFLD; \$47,022

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- Novo Nordisk; The effect of semaglutide in subjects with non-cirrhotic non-alcoholic steatohepatitis; \$178,807

## **Ru Chen, PhD**

- NIH DLDC; Role of mucosa-adherent microbiota in colitis-associated colorectal cancer; \$50,000
- UTHSC CPRIT Subaward; Single-cell proteomics to dissect intra-tumor heterogeneity; \$66,875

## **Charles Cho, MD, PhD**

- DoD; The Role of Key Paligenosis Gene IFRD1 in Gastric Carcinogenesis; \$639,998

## **Bingning Dong, MD**

- CPRIT; Targeting fatty acid synthesis in NALFD related HCC; \$124,999
- NIH; Lipid metabolism in liver cancer; \$2,000,000

## **Hashem El-Serag, MD, MPH**

- CPRIT; Novel Metabolomics and Radiomics for Predicting HCC Risk; \$1,995,127
- NIH P01; Prevention of Hepatocellular Carcinoma Related to Metabolic Syndrome; \$9,249,156

## **Jason Hou, MD, MS, FACP**

- PCORI; Treat-to-Target of Endoscopic Remission in Patients with Inflammatory Bowel Diseases in Symptomatic Remission: A Pragmatic Randomized Controlled Trial; \$1,380,602
- Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America; IBD QORUS: Treat-to-target of Endoscopic remission in patients with inflammatory bowel disease in symptomatic remission a pragmatic randomized controlled trial; \$58,050
- Arena Pharmaceuticals; Multicenter, randomized, double-blind, parallel-group study to assess the efficacy and safety of oral etrasimod as induction and maintenance therapy for moderately to severely active crohn's disease; \$65,948

## **Prasun Jalal, MD**

- Axcella Healthy INC; Multicenter Randomized, Double Blind, Placebo-Controlled Trial to Evaluate the efficacy and safety of AXA1665 in subjects with liver cirrhosis and prior overt hepatic encephalopathy; \$46,760
- University of Michigan; Noninvasive assessment of esophageal varices in patients with unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma; \$10,500
- European foundation for the study of chronic liver failure; Chance Study; \$105,980
- Alexion Pharmaceuticals, INC; A phase 2, single-arm, pathologist-blinded study using liver biopsy specimens to assess copper concentration and histopathologic changes in patients with wilson disease who are treated with alxn1840 for 48 weeks followed by an extension treatment period with alxn1840 for up to an additional 48 weeks; \$17,000



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## **Fasiha Kanwal, MD, MSHS, AGAF, FAASLD**

- VA HSR&D Merit IIR; Integrating Veteran-Centered Care for Advanced Liver Disease (I-VCALD); \$1,513,109
- BCM; 2021 Michael E. DeBakey, M.D., Excellence in Research Award; \$5,000

## **Manreet Kaur, MD**

- Arena Pharmaceuticals; A multicenter, randomized, double-blind, parallel-group study to assess the efficacy and safety of oral etrasimod as induction and maintenance therapy for moderately to severely active crohn's disease (cultivate); \$124,408

## **Natalia Khalaf, MD**

- VA HSR&D Career Development Award; Health informatics approaches to reduce missed opportunities in diagnosis of pancreatic cancer; \$1,100,000
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation; Measuring Missed Opportunities in the Diagnosis of Gastrointestinal Cancers; \$500,000
- IQUEST; SWIFT Program Award; \$50,000

## **Lukasz Kwapisz, MD**

- Eli Lilly & Company; A phase 3, multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo- and active-controlled, treat-through study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of mirikizumab in patients with moderately to severely active crohn's disease; \$64,062

## **Jason Mills, MD**

- NSF; National science foundation graduate research fellowship; \$46,000
- NIH; The Role of Inflammation in regulating Gastritis and Gastric Carcinogenesis; \$763,158
- NIH; Gene therapy for GERD-associated esophageal epithelial barrier dysfunction; \$15,899
- NIH; Mechanisms and biomarkers in aberrant paligenesis-induced stomach tumorigenesis; \$803,252
- NIH; Mechanisms governing expansion of embryonic progenitor cells in metaplasia; \$415,854
- NIH; Mechanisms of Chief cell dedifferentiation; \$1,296,648
- NIH; Regulation of atrophy-induced progenitor cells in the gastric corpus; \$838,508

## **Theresa Nguyen, MD**

- Inaugural Department of Medicine Physician-Scientist/Investigator Faculty Development award; An Electronic Trigger Tool to Detect Missed Opportunities for Barrett's Esophagus Screening; \$207,906

## **Mohamed Othman, MD**

- University of Colorado Denver; Pancreatoscopy-guided lithotripsy vs extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy for treating symptomatic main pancreatic duct stones in chronic pancreatitis; a multicenter randomized clinical trial; \$27,400
- Abbvie Inc; Observational study assessing for effect of creon on symptoms of exocrine pancreatic insufficiency (epi) in patients with epi due to chronic pancreatitis (cp); \$148,500

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- Abbvie Inc; Phase 4 study to assess symptoms of exocrine pancreatic insufficiency in subjects with cystic fibrosis or chronic pancreatitis treated with creon® (pancrelipase) with an alternate source of active pharmaceutical ingredient; \$35,000
- Alexza pharmaceuticals; Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study to evaluate the safety and efficacy of staccato® granisetron (az-010) for the acute treatment of moderate to severe cyclic vomiting syndrome; \$98,000

## **Hemant Roy, MD**

- NIH; MPI Unraveling racial disparities in portal hypertension: a clinical, spectroscopic and SNP Approach; \$243,823
- NIH; Microvasculature in colon field carcinogenesis: clinical-biological implications; \$625,676

## **RJ Sealock, MD and Jordan Sparkman, MD**

- American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE), Medtronic, and Amazon Web Services: three GI Genius Artificial Intelligence Modules designed to enhance the detection of neoplastic lesions during colonoscopy. (Program Period: 3 years)

## **Richa Shukla**

- Takeda Pharmaceuticals; Phase 4 study evaluating real-world use of cdpath a crohn's disease risk prediction tool compass-cd study ( vedolizumab-4015) compass-cd; \$36,932

## **Rise Stribling, MD**

- Durect; A Randomized, double-blind placebo-controlled phase 2B study to evaluate safety and efficacy of DUR-928 in Subjects with Alcoholic Hepatitis; \$77,015

## **Mimi Tan, MD**

- NIH K23; Development and Validation of an Automated Algorithm for Real-time Detection of Neoplasia in Barrett's Esophagus using a Low-cost, Portable Microendoscope; \$1,000,276

## **John Vierling, MD**

- Cymabay therapeutics INC; A open label long-term study to evaluate the safety and tolerability of Seladelpar in subjects with primary biliary cholangitis; \$81,732
- Galectin therapeutics INC; A seamless, adaptive phase 2B/3, Double Blind, Randomized, placebo-controlled, multicenter, international study evaluating the efficacy and safety of Belaepectin for the prevention of esophageal varices in NASH cirrhosis; \$948,361
- MERCK Sharpe & Dohme CORP; A phase 2A randomized, active-comparator-controlled, open-label study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of Efinopegdutide in individuals with nonalcoholic fatty liver disease; \$102,313
- Sagiment Biosciences, INC; A phase 2B, Multicenter, double-blind randomized, placebo-controlled study of the safety and efficacy of TVB-2640 in Subjects with Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis; \$98,202

## **Yongji Zeng, MD, PhD**

- NCC; The role and regulation of the Hippo pathway in paligenosis; \$50,000

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## ***Publications***

- Acta Biomaterialia (IF **8.947**): 1
- Advances in Nutrition (IF **6.853**): 1
- Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics (IF **7.731**): 3
- American Journal of Gastroenterology (IF **10.38**): 12
- American Journal of Medicine (IF **5.928**): 1
- Annual Review of Medicine (IF **16.08**): 1
- Annual Review of Physiology (IF **22.16**): 1
- Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology (IF **10.51**): 2
- Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology (IF **11.38**): 30
- Clinical Infectious Diseases (IF **9.079**): 1
- Clinical and Translational Medicine (IF **8.554**): 1
- Diabetes Care (IF **19.11**): 3
- EMBO Journal (IF **11.6**): 1
- Endoscopy (IF **7.341**): 2
- Gastroenterology (IF **22.68**): 19
- Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (IF **5.369**): 7
- Gut (IF **23.06**): 6
- Hepatology (IF **17.42**): 17
- JAMA Internal Medicine (IF **44.41**): 1
- JMIR Formative Research (IF **7.08**): 1
- Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association (IF **7.942**): 2
- Journal of Biological Chemistry (IF **5.486**): 1
- Journal of Ecology (IF **5.175**): 1
- Journal of General Internal Medicine (IF **5.128**): 2
- Journal of Hepatology (IF **30.08**): 3
- Journal of the National Cancer Institute (IF **13.51**): 1
- Korean Journal of Radiology (IF **5.96**): 1
- Liver International (IF **6.94**): 1
- Liver Transplantation (IF **5.799**): 6
- Metabolism: Clinical and Experimental (IF **13.93**): 2
- Molecular Aspects of Medicine (IF **14.235**): 1
- Molecular Oncology (IF **7.449**): 1
- Nature Communications (IF **17.69**): 1
- Nature Reviews Diseases Primers (IF **65.04**): 1
- Nature Reviews Gastroenterology & Hepatology (IF **73.08**): 2
- National Academy of Sciences (IF **12.78**): 1
- Nutrients (IF **5.717**): 1
- Obesity (IF **5.002**): 1

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- Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (IF 12.78): 1
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## CENTERS

### ***Center for Gastrointestinal Development, Infection and Injury***

This Center is a National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases P30 funded Center (DK 56338) that supports four scientific cores, conferences, and a pilot project program to facilitate on-going Digestive Disease research of center members, promote interactions and translational research between basic and clinical areas, develop new projects, nurture new investigators, and provide GI educational activities. The Center was established in 1999.

### ***The Texas Collaborative Center for Hepatocellular Cancer (TeCH)***

This Center is funding by CPRIT (RP190641) to promote collaboration among Texas Scientists, clinicians, community workers, health care administrators and policy makers. This Center helps researchers who study liver cancer work faster and better, team up with other researchers; and share discoveries with doctors, the community, and general public to change healthcare.

### ***Baylor College of Medicine Translational Research Center (TRC) for Liver Cancer***

The TRC is one of the five federally funded U01 funded TRC supported by the National Cancer Institute (CA230997-01). The TRC is a consortium that includes partnerships with MD Anderson, Baylor Scott and White, UT Southwestern and MEDVAMC. The overarching goal of Baylor TRC is to reduce the mortality of hepatocellular cancer (HCC) by developing personalized indices that combine novel and existing biomarkers with clinical, behavioral and genetic data to improve clinical risk stratification and increase early detection of HCC.

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This photo contains the Gastroenterology and Hepatology faculty and fellows.



Gastroenterology and Hepatology held their two annual courses. Over 165 participants attended the 2021 Annual Gastroenterology & Hepatology Board Review Course in October 2021. Additionally, the section hosted the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Gastroenterology and Liver Course at the Houston Marriott on March 26 – 27, 2022. This was the first time hosting it externally, outside of a BCM facility. The event was a success with over 220 attendees (including hybrid format) and 20 exhibitors. The picture provided is of Dr.

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Jessica Bernica and Dr. Andrea Bradford’s presentation entitled, “Therapies for Disorders of Gut Brain Interaction” moderated by Dr. Natalia Khalaf.



We had a big presence at DDW this year with over 75 presentations, including 20 invited presentations, 22 oral presentations, and multiple posters of distinction. This picture exhibits Dr. Mohamad Othman and Dr. Salmaan Jawaid at a hands-on session at DDW.



Pictured above from left to right is Stuart Spechler, MD Baylor Scott & White Research Institute, Dallas, TX; Robert Odze, MD, Department of Pathology, Tufts Medical Center; Jason Mills, MD, PhD, Department of Medicine – Gastroenterology, Baylor College of Medicine; and Rhonda Souza, MD, Baylor Scott & White Research Institute, Dallas, TX. Dr. Jason Mills runs a strong team of researchers. The team investigates how functional cells could be called back into operation as stem cells. This picture exhibits our collaborations with other institutions for greater accomplishments.