



Weill Cornell Medicine

Joan and Sanford I. Weill Department of Medicine

What's New In Medicine

Newsletter • January 2021



What's New in Medicine, the newsletter of the Joan and Sanford I. Weill Department of Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine, provides the latest updates on the department's research breakthroughs, new faculty recruits, and honors and awards.

To submit information for consideration for future newsletters, please contact Suzanne Ross directly at suross@med.cornell.edu.

Message from the Chair



As we go to press with this edition of our departmental newsletter, we have just completed our interview and recruitment process for the Weill Department of Medicine's residency training program. The process was done entirely via Zoom because of the pandemic. This was a challenging adjustment for all, including our applicants from across the country. However, I think our program was able to convey its unique character and culture thanks to the efforts of everyone involved.

I would like to thank our chief residents and our current house staff for all of their efforts, as well as Margie Daly, Karla Jacome, and Donna Chambers from the educational office who put together a complex schedule and coordinated the distance process. And of course, a big thank you to our educational leadership, including our program directors and faculty who spent considerable effort and time in making the process a success. In thinking about the remote interview process, while some elements added value, this is clearly something that will return to an in-person process when the time is appropriate. Despite the circumstance this time around, I am happy to see that it turned out so well.

Again, thanks to everyone for making our recruitment process such a success.

Tony

Anthony Hollenberg, M.D.
Sanford I. Weill Chair

News



Dr. Mark Reisman – Renowned Leader in Structural Heart Disease – Recruited to Weill Department of Medicine

Dr. Reisman will serve as Director of Structural Heart Disease at NYP/Weill Cornell Medicine and as Co-Director of Structural Heart Disease for NYP/Queens and NYP/Brooklyn Methodist Hospital.

[Read more](#)



Dr. Roboz Publishes Key Finding in *NEJM* on Oral Azacitidine as Maintenance Therapy for AML

Results from an international Phase 3 clinical trial have led to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval of oral azacytidine (Onureg) as a maintenance therapy for AML, which is now being used as part of standard patient care. [Read more](#)



Lisa Rachmuth Appointed to Executive Director of the New York City Elder Abuse Center at Weill Cornell Medicine

In her role as Executive Director of the NYCEA, Ms. Rachmuth will oversee a large staff of experts in the fields of elder abuse research, advocacy, and clinical service. [Read more](#)



Dr. Safford and Colleagues Publish Pivotal Paper in *Circulation*: Social Determinants to Prevent Fatal Heart Attacks

The researchers analyzed data from the REGARDS Study, which tracked cardiovascular-related outcomes in over 20,000 people for a decade, to identify adverse social determinants of health that can lead to a higher likelihood of a fatal heart attack. [Read more](#)



Findings on a Key Genetic Driver of Lymphomas Published in *Nature*

Dr. Ari Melnick and colleagues have published breakthrough findings that show certain histone H1 mutations are drivers of lymphoma. [Read more](#)

Awards & Honors



NAIAD Renews HIV Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) Grant: Advancing Prevention and Treatment Research for HIV

Dr. Roy M. Gulick and colleagues have received a renewal from the NIAID in support of their HIV CTU grant in the amount of \$18.9 million through 2027. The renewal provides funding for the AIDS Clinical Trials Group and HIV Prevention Trials Network. [Read more](#)



Dr. Apostolou Receives 2021 Emerging Leader Award from The Mark Foundation For Cancer Research

The awards are given to “promising early-career projects aimed at addressing unmet needs in cancer research.” [Read more](#)



Dr. Calfee Named Editor-in-Chief of *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*

A clinician and dedicated researcher in healthcare epidemiology, infection prevention, and antibiotic stewardship, Dr. Calfee has served as an associate editor of the journal over the past several years. [Read more](#)



Dr. Czaja Receives M. Powell Lawton Award from the Gerontological Society of America

The prestigious award recognizes outstanding contributions from applied gerontological research that have benefited older people and their care. [Read more](#)



Dr. Iliev Receives Pathogenesis of Infectious Disease Award from Burroughs Wellcome Fund

The award provides early-career scientists with \$500,000 over five years to investigate the interplay between humans and pathogens, and how such encounters can lead to disease. [Read more](#)



Dr. Fins Elected to President-Elect of the International Neuroethics Society

On November 12, 2020, Dr. Joseph J. Fins was elected to serve as President-Elect of the International Neuroethics Society, the world's largest specialty society in neuroethics. [Read more](#)

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that the WDOM must report that Dr. Jose Fernandez passed away over the weekend. Dr. Fernandez, formerly an Assistant Professor of Clinical Emergency Medicine in the WDOM, joined Emergency Medicine at Weill Cornell in 1987. An outstanding and beloved physician, he excelled at the highest level of excellence during his years with the WDOM and throughout his tenure in the Department of Emergency Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine. [Read more](#)

News Flashes

- Congratulations to WDOM faculty who recently received a promotion:
Dr. Lukas Dow, Associate Professor of Biochemistry in Medicine, Division of Hematology and Medical Oncology
Dr. Renuka Gupta, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, Division of General Internal Medicine
Dr. Gabriel Sayer, Adjunct Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Cardiology
- The WDOM congratulates **Dr. Darshana M. Dadhania**, Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Nephrology and Hypertension, WDOM, on her new appointment as Medical Director of the Adult Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Program at NYP/WCM. Dr. Dadhania has made significant contributions to the Transplant Program as a leader, investigator, and mentor to trainees and junior faculty. As Medical Director she will ensure the operation and compliance of the transplant program in accordance with the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) Bylaws in collaboration with the Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation Division within the Department of Surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine.
- **Dr. Mark S. Lachs**, co-Chief, Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, has authored a timely article – “COVID-19 and aging, a tale of two pandemics” – in *Nature Aging*. The insightful commentary reflects Dr. Lachs’ experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and his observations on resource availability at hospitals and nursing homes, as well as scientific opportunities and challenges for aging research. [Read more](#)
- The WDOM congratulates **Dr. Daniel Fitzgerald**, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Center for Global Health, on receiving a \$493K research grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for “Tuberculosis Trials Consortium (TBTC) Clinical Research Services.”
- The WDOM congratulates two of its faculty on receiving grant funding from the Starr Cancer Consortium. These awards fund WCM-led multi-institutional teams for the advancement of groundbreaking cancer research projects. The awardees are: **Dr. Lewis Cantley**, Meyer Director of the Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center and Professor of Cancer Biology in Medicine, for “The Effects of Radiotherapy on the Presentation of Phosphorylated Antigens by Cancer Cells” and **Dr. Bishoy M. Faltas**, Gellert Family-John P. Leonard, M.D. Research Scholar, Assistant Professor of Medicine and of Cell and Developmental Biology, Director of Bladder Cancer Research at the Englander Institute for Precision Medicine, and a member of the Meyer Cancer Center, for “Defining the Functional Impact of Composite Mutations in Oncogene-driven Urothelial Cancer Using Circulating-tumor DNA and Single-cell Sequencing.” [Read more](#)

Research Paper Highlights

Endocrinology, Diabetes & Metabolism

Baer HJ, Rozenblum R, De La Cruz BA, Orav EJ, Wien M, Nolido NV, Metzler K, McManus KD, Halperin F, Aronne LJ, Minero G, Block JP, Bates DW. Effect of an Online Weight Management Program Integrated With Population Health Management on Weight Change: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA*. 2020 Nov 3;324(17):1737-1746. doi: 10.1001/jama.2020.18977. PMID: 33141209; PMCID: PMC7610192.

Goncalves MD, Maddocks OD. Engineered diets to improve cancer outcomes. *Curr Opin Biotechnol*. 2020 Nov 21;70:29-35. doi: 10.1016/j.copbio.2020.10.007. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33232844.

Chukir T, Mandel L, Tchang BG, Al-Mulla NA, Igel LI, Kumar RB, Waitman J, Aronne LJ, Shukla AP. Metformin-induced weight loss in patients with or without type 2 diabetes/prediabetes: A retrospective cohort study. *Obes Res Clin Pract*. 2020 Dec 29:S1871-403X(20)30624-4. doi: 10.1016/j.orcp.2020.12.005. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33386253.

Gastroenterology & Hepatology

Mahadev S, Aroniadis OC, Barraza LH, Agarunov E, Smith MS, Goodman AJ, Benias PC, Buscaglia JM, Gross SA, Kasmin F, Cohen J, Carr-Locke DL, Greenwald D, Mendelsohn R, Sethi A, Gonda TA; (on behalf of NYSGE research committee). Gastrointestinal endoscopy during the coronavirus pandemic in the New York area: results from a multi-institutional survey. *Endosc Int Open*. 2020 Dec;8(12):E1865-E1871. doi: 10.1055/a-1264-7599. Epub 2020 Nov 27. PMID: 33269322; PMCID: PMC7695511.

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General Internal Medicine

Safford MM, Reshetnyak E, Sterling MR, Richman JS, Muntner PM, Durant RW, Booth J, Pinheiro LC. Number of Social Determinants of Health and Fatal and Nonfatal Incident Coronary Heart Disease in the REGARDS Study. *Circulation*. 2021 Jan 19;143(3):244-253. doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.120.048026. Epub 2020 Dec 3. PMID: 33269599.

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Contractor J, Choi JJ. Disrupting Common Practice: Retiring Stress Tests for Acute Chest Pain Presentations. *Mayo Clin Proc*. 2020 Nov;95(11):2356-2359. doi: 10.1016/j.mayocp.2020.03.009. PMID: 33153627.

Geriatrics & Palliative Medicine

Epstein AS, Kakarala SE, Reyna VF, Saxena A, Maciejewski PK, Shah MA, Prigerson HG. Development of the Oncolo-GIST ("Giving Information Strategically & Transparently") Intervention Manual for Oncologist Skills Training in Advanced Cancer Prognostic Information Communication. *J Pain Symptom Manage*. 2020 Nov 27;S0885-3924(20)30892-7. doi: 10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2020.11.023. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33253786.

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Hematology & Medical Oncology

Brar G, Pinheiro LC, Shusterman M, Swed B, Reshetnyak E, Soroka O, Chen F, Yamshon S, Vaughn J, Martin P, Paul D, Hidalgo M, Shah MA. COVID-19 Severity and Outcomes in Patients With Cancer: A Matched Cohort Study. *J Clin Oncol*. 2020 Nov 20;38(33):3914-3924. doi: 10.1200/JCO.20.01580. Epub 2020 Sep 28. PMID: 32986528; PMCID: PMC7676890.

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Infectious Diseases

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Nephrology & Hypertension

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Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine

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Regenerative Medicine

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Rheumatology

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