In Memoriam:
Jae Ro, MD, PhD

Beloved department member Jae Ro, MD, PhD, passed away on March 21, 2023. Dr. Ro retired from our Department in early 2023 after 18 years of distinguished service.

A consummate pathologist renowned for his expertise in surgical pathology and his tireless passion for teaching, heartfelt tributes from those whose Dr. Ro's presence touched have poured in from around the world. Here, his colleagues honor a legend.
"Dr. Ro came from humble beginnings and rose to overcome the hardships he faced in his early life ... An indefatigable physician scientist blessed with powerful diagnostic acumen, well-honed observational skills, and a constant thirst for unanswered questions, the list of Dr. Ro’s contributions to the fields of surgical and urologic pathology is boundless."

–Mukul Divatia, MD, and Steven Shen, MD, PhD, to be published by the Genitourinary Pathology Society

"Dr. Ro was a wonderful and truly generous mentor and amazing educator. Pathology has lost a giant. I am so grateful to him for his constant support. May his soul rest in peace."

–Ekene Okoye, MD, via Twitter

Dr. Ro was more than legendary,
He taught us all by his rules of three,
Every day, at the scope, just after one,
He invested his time in our education,
He built our confidence and helped us shine,
Even when we didn’t study all of the time.

–Excerpted from a poem by Lianna Goetz, MD
"Dr. Ro was a treasure to me and countless generations of pathologists. His influence, kindness, and love for pathology and his students is immeasurable. I am fortunate to have known you and will miss you dearly."

–Ziad El-Zaatari, MD, via Twitter

"It’s sometimes said that the right teacher can change a life – and nowhere is this truer than with Jae Y. Ro."

–Haneen Salah, MD, excerpted from The Pathologist

Departmental Microgrants: One Trainee's Perspective

Along with co-investigators Dina Mody, MD; Jim Hsu, MD, PhD; and Jessica Thomas, MD, PhD, MPH, Molecular Genetic Pathology fellow Gloria Sura, MD, was the recipient of microgrant funding arising from the Spring 2022 request for proposals.

Entitled "Precision medicine for salivary gland tumors at HMH: Detection of gene translocation panel to enhance cytopathologic diagnosis and guide patient surgical and therapeutic management," the proposal arose from an idea first proposed by Dr. Thomas and expanded upon by Dr. Mody. Dr. Sura was responsible for the study design and writing of the microgrant, as well as budgeting, assay development, and testing of samples that were identified by Dr. Hsu. The goal of this retrospective study was to enable in-house molecular testing of fine-needle aspiration cytology specimens from salivary gland neoplasms to generate more specific diagnoses and better guide treatment options for patients.

Dr. Sura reports that, with budgets of up to $20,000 and project timeframes from six months to a year, microgrants provide trainees with a chance for "hands-on" involvement in every aspect of the research process.
From start to finish, Dr. Sura found the microgrant process to be revelatory, reporting that, without it, her experience in the Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory would have only "touched the surface" in comparison to her in-depth efforts during the microgrant process. For residents especially, Dr. Sura believes that this could be especially beneficial, and she "encourages highly that trainees become involved," especially to better understand the workings of the laboratories. In her estimation, she is “better prepared now to practice because of this experience.” Dr. Sura counsels that the microgrant process is a unique opportunity that is not to be missed.

After a highly successful first experience with our Department's microgrants, Dr. Sura encourages other trainees, and especially residents, to take advantage of this unique learning opportunity.

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Faculty News

Dr. Tracie Koen Recognized as HMWB Physician of the Month

Tracie Koen, MD, was named Physician of the Month for April 2023 at Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital, where she serves as Medical Director.

In addition to a certificate recognizing this honor, Dr. Koen received a premium parking spot for the month of April, and her colleagues joined in celebrating her via Twitter.

Congratulations, Dr. Koen!

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Department Members Conduct Short Course at USCAP 112th Annual Meeting

Suzanne Crumley, MD; Dina Mody, MD; and Ekene Okoye, MD, served as
instructors for a short course given in March at the 112th Annual Meeting of the United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology (USCAP) in New Orleans, Louisiana. Entitled "Cytology-Histology Correlation in the 2020s: HPV and the New Era," the three-hour workshop presented the experience of our Department's cytopathology section in managing cytology-histology correlation and HPV testing in a gynecologic Pap test laboratory setting.

The short course provided attendees the opportunity to review individual cases to enable more effective communication of test results by those in daily sign-out, especially in cases where discrepancies may arise. Additionally, attendees were provided a framework for incorporating results into the correlation process to satisfy legally mandated requirements and improve laboratory quality and patient care.

Congratulations, Drs. Crumley, Mody, and Okoye!

Community News

Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital

Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital is pleased to announce Amanda Gorena, MD, as their new Medical Director, and thanks outgoing Medical Director Andrea Diaz De Vivar, MD, for her dedicated service to HMB.

Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital

Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital (HMCL) Medical Director David
Alrahwan, MD, reports:

The HMCL laboratory has implemented ParX ordering for non-technical supplies and consumables. This has resulted in cost savings, including reducing labor hours dedicated to ordering supplies.

HMCL recently held its annual Skills Fair. Sherry Hagood, LaKesha Stewart, LaToya Thompson, Jennifer Crucian, and Maegan Benbrook participated in validating attendees’ competency on point-of-care testing and blood bank processes. Thanks to all for making this year’s schedule a success!

Plans for the new League City Emergency Care Center are on schedule, with a planned opening date of May 24, 2023.

**Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital**

Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital (HMSL) reports:

In January, HMSL went live with the new Roche Cobas analyzers that are being introduced systemwide.

HMSL began performing lactic acid tests in February along with testing for arterial blood gases from cardiovascular surgeries to provide rapid turnaround times during these surgeries.

The new Beckman Coulter urinalysis analyzers will be delivered on April 25. HMSL is the first community hospital to receive these new analyzers.

**Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital**

Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital Medical Director Byron Moore, MD, is happy to report that Benjamin (Ben) Hofilena has become their new laboratory manager.

**HMLS News**

Houston Methodist Laboratory Services/Lone Star Pathology (HMLS) is now in network with Cigna and Medicaid and will be in network with Blue Cross Blue
Shield as of mid-May.

HMLS continues to expand its services in the community with three new sites going live in May: Houston Methodist El Camino Primary Care Group (PCG), Houston Methodist Friendswood PCG, and the Houston Methodist Clear Lake Medical Office Building 1.

**Laboratory News**

**Houston Methodist Hospital Core Laboratory Unveils New Automated Chemistry Platform**

On April 11, the Department of Pathology and Genomic Medicine and Houston Methodist Hospital Clinical Laboratories went live with the Roche Cobas Pro automated chemistry and immunochemistry platform. The Cobas Pro system replaces the current Roche Cobas 8000 which has been the primary chemistry platform in the Core Laboratory since 2014. The Roche Cobas instruments are based on a modular design that allows individual systems to be optimally configured based on work volume and test menu. The analyzers were delivered to Houston Methodist Hospital (HMH) in January and have been undergoing validation studies to ensure their proper function. HMH is the final site in the Houston Methodist system to install the Cobas Pro analyzer. The same system has been live in our community hospitals and the Houston Methodist Laboratory Services/Lone Star Pathology laboratory for several months. This upgrade represents an enormous step toward improving the technology of our automated chemistry platform and provides the opportunity to standardize practices throughout all Houston Methodist laboratories.
The transition process is not yet finished. Patient testing has been transferred to the two Cobas Pro lines located in the former send-out and point-of-care areas of the Core Laboratory, where the validation studies were conducted. An additional Cobas Pro system is currently being validated in the Outpatient Laboratory, and when the Cobas 8000 is removed, the Cobas Pro will be relocated to the area currently occupied by the 8000, along with the other two validated units. Finally, in August, the entire system will be upgraded to include an automated specimen processing line, a newer version of the Modular Preanalytics automation line currently serving the Cobas 8000 system.

Congratulations to everyone involved in this successful transition!

HMRI Biorepository Core Participates in First External Proficiency Testing Program

The Houston Methodist Research Institute Biorepository recently participated in its first external proficiency testing program, “Cell Viability via Image-based Cell Counting,” conducted by the Integrated Biobank of Luxembourg in association with the International Society of Biological and Environmental Repositories, USA.
Conducted in November 2022, this cell viability assessment proficiency testing program included 24 biobanks across the globe as participants. The HMRI Biorepository performed exceptionally well, with a z-score designated as "Accurate/Very Satisfactory" for each of the three cell viability testing tubes received. The HMRI Biorepository’s results for the three testing tubes showed a consensus score of "0," which translates to the highest z-score value of <1 standard deviation from the assigned value.

Congratulations and well done, Team Biorepository!

Cindy Prouty Recognized as Pathologists' Assistant Preceptor of the Year

Congratulations to Cindy Prouty for her selection as the Pathologists’ Assistant Preceptor of the Year by the Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science College of Health Professions (CHP).

Given to one preceptor or instructor in each CHP program or department, this award recognizes individuals who have "significantly impacted students' clinical education in ways such as providing valuable and challenging clinical experiences, assisting students to exceed expected learning outcomes, and acting as a positive role model."

Congratulations, Ms. Prouty!
Houston Methodist Launches New Partnership with Weber State University

The Houston Methodist Microbiology Laboratory is pleased to announce a new initiative in conjunction with Weber State University (WSU) wherein medical laboratory assistants (MLAs) who hold a bachelor's degree can qualify to take the Technologist in Microbiology M(ASCP) certification examination from the American Society for Clinical Pathology through classes taken at WSU online and clinical hours performed in the HMH Microbiology Laboratory.

Sponsored by the American Society of Microbiology, the program is open to MLAs throughout our system who already hold a bachelor's degree and have completed the requisite scientific coursework. For more information on this exciting opportunity, please contact program coordinator Tatia Feltman.

Laboratories Participate in HMH Adopt-a-Family Holiday Program

Members of the laboratories of Houston Methodist Hospital (HMH) participated in the annual Adopt-Family holiday gift drive in December 2022. Spearheaded by Tissue Typing and Cytometry Manager Narah Lian Francis, six large families were sponsored by members of our HMH laboratories, with each family receiving all of the items on their holiday wishlists.
Thank you, all, for giving back to our community!
Trainee News

Dr. Sarrah Lahorewala Recognized by ACLPS

Sarrah Lahorewala, PhD, was chosen to present her abstract, "Assessing the Reliability of Creatine-Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate in Living Kidney Donor Candidates: Does it Measure up to the Measured Rate," at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Academy of Clinical Laboratory Physicians and Scientists (ACLPS), to be held in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Dr. Lahorewalla's work was judged also to be one of the top-scoring abstracts reviewed by the ACLPS, earning her the Paul R. Strandjord Young Investigator Award. Designed to encourage young investigators to consider a career in academic laboratory medicine, this highly competitive award is open to trainees and doctoral students from across the nation.

Congratulations, Dr. Lahorewallah!
Dr. Sylvia Jang Selected as 2023 APC Society of ’67 Kinney Scholar

Sylvia Jang, MD, has been selected as a 2023 Society of ’67 Kinney Scholar.

Established by the Association of Pathology Chairs (APC) to foster programs encouraging the development of academic pathology and to enable future leaders in their academic practice, education, and research, the name of the Society marks the founding of the APC in 1967.

As a Kinney Scholar, Dr. Jang will attend the APC 2023 Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois, and participate in special sessions intended solely for Kinney Scholar recipients.

Congratulations, Dr. Jang!

Welcome, Class of 2023–2024 Residents!

Nadwa Bustami, MD
University of Jordan
Faculty of Medicine

Katherine Anne DiScipio, MD, PhD
University of Connecticut

Neil Karan Goel, MD
University of Alabama
School of Medicine
2023–2024 Chief Residents and Chief Fellow Announced

Congratulations to our 2023–2024 Chief Residents, Neesha Siriwardane, MD, and Daniel Taylor, MD, and 2023–2024 Chief Fellow, Michelle Lin, MD!
Many thanks to outgoing Chief Residents, Sylvia Jang, MD, and John Rogers, MD, and outgoing Chief Fellow, Gloria Sura, MD, for their service to our Department in 2022–2023.
@HMPathology Reaches 900 Followers!

@HMPathology, our departmental Twitter account, has reached another milestone, with over 950 followers worldwide!

Follow @HMPathology to keep up with all of the most exciting Department-related happenings, including trainee spotlights, departmental announcements, stunning pathology photos, and challenging unknowns!

Highlights from @HMPathology

Please share your exciting news regarding publications, accomplishments, article interviews, and technology or equipment updates with us so that we may feature it. Any news or content suggestions should be sent to Dr. Heather McConnell or the Pathology Office of Academic Development.
Our Department welcomed Lan Zhou, MD, PhD, as Vice-Chair of Research. Dr. Zhou earned her MD from the University of Shanghai and her PhD in Molecular and Cell Biology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She completed her post-doctoral fellowship, clinical pathology residency, and transfusion medicine fellowship at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Zhou joined the faculty of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio, having most recently served as Professor of Pathology, CLIA Laboratory Director, and Scientific Director of the Case Western Reserve Hematopoietic Biorepository and Cellular Therapy Shared Resource.

Welcome, Dr. Zhou!

Faculty Appointments & Promotions

Weill Cornell Appointments

Shuhua Ma, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor of Clinical Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Featured Department Members

Byron Moore, MD

Hometown: San Antonio, Texas

Education: BS, Biology from Texas A&M University; MD from University of Texas Southwestern Medical School

Current Role: Medical Director, Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital

Advice for Trainees: "While you're training, learn from your mistakes so that you don't make them again later."

Fun Facts: Licensed pilot who owns his own plane; plays hockey, a hobby that he took up in adulthood after attending Dallas Stars' games

Dr. Moore is seen back row, ninth from the left with other weekend hockey warriors

As someone who enjoys solving puzzles and understanding how things work, Dr. Moore was first drawn to pathology after taking a histology class as an undergraduate at Texas A&M University. Following medical school at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, Dr. Moore completed his
residency and fellowships in blood banking/transfusion medicine and surgical pathology at Houston Methodist Hospital.

Upon completion of his fellowship training, Dr. Moore joined the faculty of Baylor College of Medicine as an assistant professor and staff pathologist. He served also as the medical director of anatomic pathology at a Baylor-affiliated hospital in Conroe, Texas.

Dr. Moore joined our Department in 2017 as a staff pathologist and medical director of Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital (HMWB). Following three years at HMWB, Dr. Moore became the medical director at Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital, a position he holds to this day.

After six years on the faculty of our Department, Dr. Moore says that what he most enjoys about our Department is the people. He is especially grateful for the mentors that he has found during his time here. He appreciates also that he has been able to see many types of cases because of his experience at multiple locations.

Sasha Pejerrey, PhD

**Hometown:** San Antonio, Texas

**Education:**
- BS, Biology from the University of St. Thomas in Houston;
- PhD, Biomedical Sciences: Molecular and Cellular Biology from Baylor College of Medicine

**Current Role:** Lead Scientific Writer and Manager, Office of Academic Development

**Advice for Trainees:** "Enjoy the process of learning, especially how the rigor of science can help us get to what we know and don't know."

**Fun Facts:** Loves baking and is known for her chocolate chip cookies; when pressed for the recipe, Dr. Pejerrey will divulge only that all her ingredients are from HEB.
Dr. Pejerrey came to Houston from San Antonio to study at the University of St. Thomas. First drawn to science when very young, Dr. Pejerrey recalled that her favorite word as a child was "why?", a question to which "cell and molecular biology are the ultimate answer."

Following the completion of her doctoral studies, Dr. Pejerrey decided to pursue a career in writing. As a graduate student, she had offered writing and editorial services to her lab mates, many of whom spoke English as a second or third language and had experienced rejection by journals because of this. Vowing that no one should be judged based on the technical quality of their writing, Dr. Pejerrey joined the staff of a Houston-based scientific writing organization.

Dr. Pejerrey joined our Department in October of 2018 as a scientific writer in the Office of Academic Development (OAD). Dr. Pejerrey was instrumental in supporting the efforts of our Department to deploy convalescent plasma therapy during the early days of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic through her vital role in the completion of the OAD's first FDA protocol.

After four-plus years with our Department, Dr. Pejerrey is most happy that she has been given the opportunity to support our faculty and move forward the mission of Houston Methodist to be truly unparalleled.

Suzanne Z. Powell, MD

Hometown: Galveston, Texas

Education: Bachelor of Music Education, Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa; MD, West Virginia University College of Medicine

Current Positions: Program Director, AP/CP residency program and Neuropathology fellowship; Vice Chair for Education; Endowed Chair for Pathology Education; Professor of Pathology and Genomic
Advice for Trainees: "There is no time more valuable than as a resident; the time to make mistakes is now! Work hard, and develop relationships with colleagues that will last a lifetime."

Fun Facts: Enjoys needlepoint and stitch work in her free time; played clarinet with orchestras in Austria and the Rhone while an undergraduate.

A piece of Dr. Powell's own creation hangs in her office

After having earned a degree in music education, Dr. Powell pivoted her career ambitions and completed the coursework necessary to enter medical school. She was drawn to pathology after first considering neurology. Dr. Powell completed her residency and fellowship training at the University of Florida Health Science Center (UFHSC). During the first year of Dr. Powell's residency, her daughter Laura was born, leading her to take a year off while still volunteering as a resident for the second half of the year. She was the first fellow called to the new neuropathology fellowship at UFHSC and, 30 years later, she still counts the other fellows in the program as colleagues. Dr. Powell became a member of the faculty of the University of Florida Jacksonville before coming to Houston in 1998 to join the faculty of Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Powell's passion is for education, and she was the key driver in the establishment of the pathology residency program at Houston Methodist. She was an integral part of the development of several of our Department's fellowship programs. She considers herself very fortunate to have had the chance to administer these programs and she is grateful especially to all of her colleagues who have been active in the teaching and training of medical students, residents, and fellows since 2005.
Conferences & Events

**ACLPS 2023**: June 8–10, 2023 in Charlottesville, Virginia

**AACC**: July 23–27, 2023 in Anaheim, California

**TSP Young Pathologists' Section Retreat**: August 26–27, 2023 in San Antonio, Texas

**CAP 23**: October 7–10, 2023 in Chicago, Illinois

**ASCP**: October 18–20, 2023 in Long Beach, California

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**2023 Grand Rounds Schedule**

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<th>May 2, 2023</th>
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<th>September 6, 2023</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin F. Bieniek, PhD</td>
<td>Alain Borczuk, MD</td>
<td>Keyur P. Patel, MD, PhD, FCAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glenn Biggs Institute for Alzheimer’s and Neurodegenerative Diseases, University of Texas at San Antonio</td>
<td>Northwell Health, New York</td>
<td>Department of Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory, Division of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, MD Anderson Cancer Center</td>
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<th>October 3, 2023</th>
<th>November 7, 2023</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peter T. Nelson, MD, PhD</td>
<td>Mina Xu, MD</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Pathology, University of Kentucky</td>
<td>Department of Pathology, Yale School of Medicine</td>
<td>Department of Pathology and Genomic Medicine, Houston Methodist Hospital</td>
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OAD News

The Office of Academic Development (OAD) of the Department of Pathology and Genomic Medicine is always available to assist department members with editing manuscripts, grants, posters, presentations, and more. We are available to meet, in person or virtually, to assess how we might assist you. Please contact our general email, pathologyoad@houstonmethodist.org or one of our scientific writers:

Sasha Pejerrey at spejerrey@houstonmethodist.org or 713.441.5889

Adrienne Winston at awinston@houstonmethodist.org or 713.441.3395

Heather McConnell at hmcconnell@houstonmethodist.org or 346.238.4346

There is no charge for the OAD’s services, and no project is too big or too small!

If you need help reducing percent overlap within a document for a specific journal requirement or reviewer feedback, please let us know! We have access to iThenticate and expertise in reducing overlap to whatever percent a particular journal may require.

Departmental Publications


https://doi.org/10.5858/arpa.2021-0223-CP


