Welcome to the Fall Houston Methodist Hospital Department of Pathology and Genomic Medicine Newsletter: The Laboratory Report. If you have contributions or feedback for upcoming newsletters, please email us.

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Faculty Accomplishments

Dr. Schwartz Receives Prestigious Papanicolaou Award

Mary R. Schwartz, MD, received the American Society of Cytopathology’s (ASC) Papanicolaou Award at the annual scientific meeting of the ASC in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Papanicolaou Award is the highest award given by the ASC, and was established in 1958 to recognize meritorious contributions in the field of cytopathology. The award is named for Dr. George Papanicolaou, whose work birthed the field of cytopathology. It honors the lifesaving contributions that the field has provided to patients around the world. As the recipient of the 2019 Papanicolaou Award, Dr. Schwartz presented the annual Papanicolaou Address on November 15 to attendees of the Association’s Annual Scientific Meeting. Dr. Schwartz stated that she is “deeply honored to receive this award.” Past recipients of the Papanicolaou Award from HMH include Dina R. Mody, MD, and former department member Ibrahim Ramzy, MD—a remarkable achievement for our department.

Thank you, Dr. Schwartz, for your continued contributions to cytopathology, and congratulations on this honor!

Dr. Chévez-Barrios Honored with IAM Award

Patricia Chévez-Barrios, MD, received the Houston Methodist Institute for Academic Medicine (IAM) Award for Excellence in a Peer-Reviewed Publication for the paper “Study of Unilateral Retinoblastoma With and Without Histopathologic High-Risk Features and the Role of AdjuvantChemotherapy: A Children’s...” IAM Award recipients and HMRI leadership (left

The Award for Excellence in a Peer-Reviewed Publication was established to recognize new publications in high-impact journals and to foster innovative research. Dr. Chevéz-Barrios was honored at the October 24 IAM Town Hall. This is the second IAM Award for Excellence in a Peer-Reviewed Publication received by members of our Department in 2019.

Congratulations, Dr. Chévez-Barrios!

Dr. Long and Dr. Olsen Receive System Quality and Patient Award for Teamwork in Infection Prevention

Department members S. Wesley Long, MD, PhD, and Randall Olsen, MD, PhD, were honored at the annual System Quality and Patient Safety Awards on October 29 with the Teamwork Award for their work in infection prevention and control. Dr. Long stated that it was “gratifying to have our long-time collaboration with System Infection Control recognized.”

Congratulations, Dr. Long and Dr. Olsen!

Dr. Mody Receives College of American Pathologists Foundation’s Herbek Award

Dina R. Mody, MD, received the College of American Pathologists (CAP) Foundation’s Gene and Jean Herbek Humanitarian Award for her innovative and unique contributions to the CAP See, Test, and Treat program. Dr. Mody has been involved with See, Test, and Treat since its inception in 2011. In her remarks to the audience at the September 21 awards ceremony in Orlando, Florida, Dr. Mody thanked the CAP Foundation and her colleagues at HMH, and had a special message to the young people in the audience to “get involved, participate, and help the underserved in your locale...you don’t have to go far to change lives.”

Thank you, Dr. Mody, for your dedication to the See, Test, and Treat program, and congratulations on this prestigious award!

Blood Bank and Transfusion Medicine Recognized in Roberta Schwartz Weekly Email
The blood bank and transfusion medicine staff were featured in the “Compliments” section of HMH Executive Vice-President Roberta Schwartz’s September 6 system-wide email. Department members including Christopher Leveque, MD, Eric Salazar, MD, and the nurses and technologists in the blood bank and transfusion medicine service were lauded by a long-time patient for their “compassion, strong work ethics, and teamwork.”

Many thanks to the blood bank and transfusion medicine teams for your dedication to patients!

Dr. Long and Microbiology Laboratory Featured in Houston Chronicle Flu Coverage

S. Wesley Long, MD, PhD, Director of the HMH Microbiology Laboratory, was featured in the Houston Chronicle’s recent coverage of the 2019–20 flu season. The article, entitled “Here’s What’s New with the Flu Shot,” urged Texans to take the flu seriously by making sure that they and their loved ones receive the flu vaccine. In the piece, Dr. Long debunked common misconceptions about the flu vaccine, including the notion that the vaccine can give individuals the flu. Dr. Long stated that this is, “Not physically possible. The flu shot doesn’t use a live virus ... Giving you a hamburger bun isn’t like giving you a hamburger; giving you part of the virus (getting a flu shot) is just [a] portion of it.”

The article also highlighted the flu tracker developed by Dr. Long and Clinical Informatics Fellow Paul Christensen, MD, during the 2017–18 flu season. The goal of the tracker is to make information regarding the flu virus available to clinicians in real time to aid in the diagnosis of potential flu cases.

Great work, Dr. Long!

Laboratory News

HMH Cytology Staff Participate in Liberty/Dayton CAP See, Test, and Treat Event

Ten members of the HMH cytology staff, including processors, cytotechnologists, and pathologists from our HMH-TMC hospital participated in the latest See, Test, and Treat event held on October 5 at Liberty-Dayton Regional Medical Center in Liberty, Texas. They tested 60 patients for cervical cancer screening, 11 of which were found to be abnormal and will be followed-up. The event was a success, and all look forward to the next one. We greatly appreciate the work you are doing for the community!
HMH Laboratory Management Team Take Part in I CARE in Action Day of Service

Members of the HMH Laboratory Management Team took part in HMH’s annual I CARE in Action Day of Service on November 1. The team’s project was facilitated by Rebuilding Together Houston, a local nonprofit organization that focuses on supporting those most in need by helping to revitalize and repair the homes of low-income Houstonians, especially those who are veterans or senior-citizens. The Laboratory Management Team helped to replace worn siding and paint the house of an elderly local woman who had lost her husband in recent years. Many thanks to the Laboratory Management Team for taking part in the Day of Service and for sharing our I CARE values with the community!
HM The Woodlands Hospital Continues to Experience Growth

Hazel Awalt, MD, Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital Laboratory Medical Director, reports that Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital continues to grow at a fast pace. In September, additional ICU beds were opened; in October another 32 acute care beds were opened, and the hospital’s occupancy was at capacity many days.

On September 27, ground was broken for the new second patient tower. Scheduled for completion in 2022, this expansion will include another 100 beds, ten ORs, expanded services for endoscopy and the emergency department, and a new home for the outpatient laboratory. Parts of the main laboratory have expanded, and planning for additional expansion continues. Outpatient laboratory blood draws are also steadily increasing; Mondays and Tuesdays consistently have between 60 and 80 patients per day.

Ms. Erika Walker Presents at AMP Annual Meeting

Erika Walker, a developmental technologist in the Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory, presented data at the Association for Molecular Pathology Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, in early November. The poster, entitled “Alternative Method of DNA Fragment Analysis for the Detection of CALR and FLT3-ITD Mutations,” highlighted her innovative design of two new assays that support hematology testing at Houston Methodist.

Great work, Erika!

Trainee News

Residents and Fellows Escape!

Pathology residents Dyron
Allen, MD, Renee Eng, MD, John Rogers, MD, Fernando Zazueta, MD, Donghwa Baek, MD, Michelle Lin, MD, and Ahmed Shehabeldin, MD, along with Department Education Director Suzanne Z. Powell, MD, participated in a team-building exercise on October 20 at Escape the Room Houston. The group, better known as “Felix the Corgi Mitosis,” escaped the room after using only one of six clues available, with a remarkable 10 minutes, 32 seconds remaining on the clock! Their success at escaping the room ensures that Felix the Corgi Mitosis will never have to worry about being trapped in an HMH laboratory.

Great job, Felix the Corgi Mitosis!

**Trainee Candidates Currently Being Interviewed**

With five PGY1 residency spots to fill, our Department has begun the process of interviewing candidates for the 2020–21 academic year. Over the course of 17 interview dates between October and January, 74 candidates will be interviewed. The intense day-long interview process includes an overview of our residency program, meetings with faculty members, the noon conference, Dr. Ro’s 2:15 conference, and dinner with current residents at a local restaurant. We look forward to once again recruiting a stellar group of residents.

**Trainees Present at CAP 19**

Pathology residents **Drs. Lukas Cara, Jim Hsu, Moon Joo Kim, Michelle Lin, Paloma Monroig-Bosque, and Ahmed Shehabeldin**, as well as Texas A&M medical student **Lacey Durham**, presented at the College of American Pathologists’ 2019 Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida. The College of American Pathologists is the largest organization of board-certified pathologists in the country, and our trainees enjoyed the opportunity to present their research to CAP 19 attendees from across the country.
Congratulations to all of our trainees for their outstanding work!

New Faculty

Our department welcomed Brian Castillo, MD, to HMH as a staff
pathologist and Assistant Professor of Clinical Pathology and Genomic Medicine Institute for Academic Medicine (IAM). Dr. Castillo earned his MD from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHSC). He completed a general surgery internship and a postdoctoral fellowship in nephrology at the University of Texas Long School of Medicine in San Antonio. Dr. Castillo’s AP/CP residency was at UTHSC, and he completed a blood banking/transfusion medicine fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Castillo was an Assistant Professor with the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at UTHSC for four years before joining our department in September. Dr. Castillo states that he is “excited about my new career path with HMH and looking forward to contributing to the team.”

Our department welcomed Jian Chen, BM, PhD, to HMH as a staff pathologist and Co-Director of Transfusion Medicine Service. Following his pathology residency and transfusion medicine fellowship at HMH, Dr. Chen became an attending physician at Ohio State University and then Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. His areas of interest include hematopoietic stem cell mobilization and collection, therapeutic apheresis, and transfusion complications. As a former trainee, Dr. Chen is thrilled to be back in Houston and to join the wonderful team at Houston Methodist Hospital.

Faculty Appointments & Promotions

Andrea Diaz de Vivar, MD, was promoted to Medical Director of Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital. Dr. Diaz de Vivar joined our Department as a staff pathologist in March of this year after having previously served as a staff pathologist and Assistant Professor of Pathology at Houston Methodist Hospital.

Yimin Ge, MD, PhD, was promoted to Professor of Clinical Pathology and Genomic Medicine at the Houston Methodist Institute for Academic Medicine (IAM). Dr. Ge joined our department in as an Assistant Professor in 2015 and has contributed significantly to our research and education programs.
pathologist at Texas Children's Hospital, an anatomic pathologist at St. Luke's Medical Center, and an associate for Brown and Associates Medical Laboratories. Dr. Diaz de Vivar's clinical interests involve both anatomic and clinical pathology, including surgical, gynecologic, and oncologic pathology.

Michael Greenwood, MD, received his faculty appointment as Assistant Professor of Clinical Pathology and Genomic Medicine at the Houston Methodist Institute for Academic Medicine (IAM). Dr. Greenwood joined our department in July 2019 after completing fellowships in Molecular Genetic Pathology and HLA at HMH. Dr. Greenwood's areas of clinical interest include informatics and testing related to HLA and transplant immunology.

Elizabeth Jacobi, MD, received her faculty appointment as Assistant Professor of Clinical Pathology and Genomic Medicine at the Houston Methodist Institute for Academic Medicine (IAM). Dr. Jacobi joined our Department in July 2019 after completing a surgical pathology fellowship at HMH and a cytopathology fellowship at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Dr. Jacobi’s clinical focus is in the areas of general surgical pathology and cytopathology, and she plans to conduct research in the areas of cytopathology and breast pathology.
Haijun “Steve” Zhou, MD, PhD, received his faculty appointment as Assistant Professor of Clinical Pathology and Genomic Medicine at the Houston Methodist Institute for Academic Medicine (IAM). Dr. Zhou completed his pathology residency at HMH and his cytopathology fellowship at MD Anderson Cancer Center before joining Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine as an Assistant Professor of Pathology. Dr. Zhou returned to HMH in September 2018, and he is active in our department in both cytopathology and surgical pathology. Dr. Zhou has previously received three of our department’s microgrants, and is currently the PI on an HMSPG-funded project grant on the development and use of tumor-specific aptamer therapies.

Conferences & Events

Texas Society of Pathologists: January 24–26, 2020, in Plano, Texas. Learn more here.

United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology: February 29–March 5, 2020, in Los Angeles, California. Learn more here.


Final Grand Rounds of 2019

Steve Zhou, MD, PhD, will present at the next departmental Grand Rounds on December 3 at 8 AM.

Schedule for 2020 Grand Rounds

| January 1 | Susan L. Haley, MD  
Houston Methodist Hospital  
Surgical Pathology and Cytopathology |
| April 7 | Robert Folberg, MD  
Michigan State University  
Ophthalmic Pathology |
| May 5 | Andrew L. Feldman, MD  
Mayo Clinic College of Medicine  
Hematopathology |
| June 2 | Daniel J. Brat, MD, PhD  
Northwestern University Feinberg |

Office of Academic Development News

The Office of Academic Development within the pathology department is available to assist department members with editing manuscripts, grants, posters, and presentations. Please contact Sasha Pejerrey at spejerrey@houstonmethodist.org or 713.441.5889, or Adrienne Winston at awinston@houstonmethodist.org or 713.441.3395. There is no charge for these editing services.

If you need help reducing percent overlap within a document for a specific journal requirement, please let us know! We have access to iThenticate and expertise in reducing overlap to whatever percent a
Faculty Publications

Featured Article

Dr. Adriana Rosato


Varela, PhD, and Adriana Rosato, PhD, were recognized by mSphere as the authors of a “top cited and downloaded article.” The article provides new insights into both the role of the VraSR protein in the regulation of virulence in daptomycin-resistant MRSA and the host-pathogen interactions that encourage the persistence of daptomycin-resistant MRSA strains within the infected host.

Congratulations, all!


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