Faculty Accomplishments

Dr. Chévez-Barrios Honored with Zimmerman Medal from American Academy of Ophthalmology

On November 13, 2020, Patricia Chévez-Barrios, MD, was awarded the Zimmerman Medal for her outstanding career accomplishments in ophthalmic pathology at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. In conjunction with the award, Dr. Chévez-Barrios presented the 2020 Zimmerman Lecture, titled “Outcomes of Two Prospective Clinical Trials: The Impact on Current Management of Children With Retinoblastoma.”

Recently recognized as a “Super Doctor” in the State of Texas, Dr. Chévez-Barrios has been a member of our Department since 1996 and was honored with the named chair of Ocular Pathology. In addition to the Zimmerman Lecture, Dr. Chévez-Barrios has recently given invited lectures and presented grand rounds at Penn Medicine’s
Scheie Eye Institute and George Washington University. Dr. Chévez-Barrios edited and wrote five chapters in “Tumors of the Eye and Ocular Adnexa;” wrote and served as the main editor for the retinoblastoma and familiar retinoblastoma syndrome chapters for the latest edition of the World Health Organization’s book on pediatric tumors; wrote the section on ocular pathology for the College of American Pathologists’ manual on grossing and reporting; and recently finished a chapter on the pathology of uveal melanoma for Houston Methodist oncologist Dr. Eric Bernicker’s book on the same topic.

Congratulations, Dr. Chévez-Barrios, on your outstanding achievements in Ocular Pathology!

**Dr. Salazar Selected for Prestigious Clinical Scholar Awards Program**

**Eric Salazar, MD, PhD,** has been selected as the recipient of a Houston Methodist Academic Institute (HMAI) Clinical Scholars Award: the Clinician Trialist Award. This highly competitive institutional award provides support for faculty with outstanding records of accomplishments and a commitment to pursuing careers in alignment with the academic pillars of the Houston Methodist Vision for the Second Century.

Dr. Salazar’s award application proposed a randomized controlled trial to assess the efficacy of therapeutic plasma exchange for treating antibody-mediated rejection in liver transplant patients. The award provides three years of funding for Dr. Salazar’s research into a therapy that, to date, has not yet had a randomized controlled trial to test its efficacy. Of this honor, Dr. Salazar said: “I am deeply grateful to have received this award, which will facilitate diligent work with my mentors, colleagues, and collaborators in the Department and beyond, toward the HMAI’s mission for excellence in research and patient care.”

Congratulations, Dr. Salazar!
Department Members Recognized at 2020 System Quality and Patient Safety Awards

A record number of Department members were recognized at the 2020 System Quality and Patient Safety Awards. Announced virtually in November of last year because of the pandemic, the System Quality and Patient Safety Awards were established five years ago in order to recognize individuals and teams that embrace the Houston Methodist pillars of safety, quality, and innovation and who foster a culture of excellence. Chosen from over 500 nominees from across the Houston Methodist system, these award winners embody the ideals that make our system great. In lieu of an in-person ceremony, a video honoring awardees featuring Houston Methodist President and CEO Marc Boom, MD, and Houston Methodist Chief Physician Robert Phillips, MD, PhD, was made available to the entire Houston Methodist community.

2020 Awardees from our Department included:

Peer-nominated Team Awards: Team Agile

HMRI Biorepository Core: Rajeev Singh, MD, Pamela McShane, Nathan Garcia, Keonna Kesee, Timothy Delao, Rana Ibrahim, Rong Chu, Julie Ondrey, and Martin Vittone

HMH Lab: Heather Hendrickson, Kristi Pepper, Tamekia Fairbanks, Natu Puntachart, Dorothy Munoz, Alexia Romero, Sabrina Badgett, Ahzsalee Garza, Erika Walker, Oscar Araujo

Peer-nominated Individual Awards for Innovation in Quality and Safety: Randy Olsen, MD, PhD

Dr. Powell Serves as Editor and Contributor to CAP Book on Professionalism

Departmental Vice-Chair for Education and Chief of Neuropathology, Suzanne Z. Powell, MD, authored a number of chapters and served as an editor for the
College of American Pathology’s new book “Professionalism in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine.” Intended to address key concerns regarding ethics and professionalism in the practice of pathology, the book provides guidance in many areas, including well-being, diversity and inclusion, and patient safety and quality of care.

Thank you, Dr. Powell, for your contributions to education!

Department Members Volunteer at Vaccination Events

Department members, including faculty and staff, have been assiduous in serving as volunteers in systemwide COVID-19 vaccination efforts, including at the two “mega-vaccination” events at the Josie Roberts administrative building and the daily weekday vaccination push for Houston Methodist patients in vaccination tiers one through three. To date, Houston Methodist has administered over 300,000 doses of the vaccine to both employees and the public. This effort would not have been possible without the service of employees who were willing to volunteer their time.
and effort. Volunteers serve a variety of roles, from checking-in patients and performing crowd control to administering the vaccine and ensuring that no complications are observed. Many thanks to all of our Department members who have volunteered thus far, including: Dr. David Bernard, Ms. Vivian Johnson, Ms. Irene Kenny, Mr. Will Kyle, Ms. Dilzi Mody, Dr. James M. Musser, Dr. Randy Olsen, Ms. Jackie Oommen, Dr. Sasha Pejerrey, Dr. Eric Salazar, Dr. Mary Schwartz, and Ms. Adrienne Winston.

**UK B.1.1.7 and South Africa B.1.351 SARS-CoV-2 Variants First Identified in Houston by Houston Methodist**

On February 8, the [Houston Chronicle](https://www.houstonchronicle.com) reported that Houston Methodist had detected the first known case of the South African B.1.351 SARS-CoV-2 virus in Texas. The South African variant, as well as the UK B.1.1.7 variant which was first present in Houston in early January, have been reported to show evidence of greater transmissibility.

**S. Wesley Long, MD, PhD**, took part in a press conference with the City of Houston announcing the presence of these new variants in the greater Houston area. Dr. Long was also interviewed by the [Houston Chronicle](https://www.houstonchronicle.com) and [Houston Public Radio](https://houstonpublicradio.org) about the variants and spoke with Houston Methodist Chief Physician Dr. Rob Phillips about the central role that the viral sequencing of all positive COVID-19 tests at Houston Methodist plays in discovering the presence of new viral variants such as B.1.1.7 and B.1.351 in the community. Dr. Long also stressed the continuing importance of observing social distancing, mask-wearing, and avoiding gathering in large crowds. These measures, along with receiving a COVID-19 vaccine when available, will aid in eventually stopping the transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

**Community News**

**Community Leadership Changes Announced**

**Hazel Awalt, MD**, retired in early February, after decades of service with our Department. Dr. Awalt was the Medical Director of Houston Methodist The
Woodlands Hospital (HMTW) since its opening in 2017, and she previously served as Medical Director of Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital (HMWB).

Congratulations to Dr. Awalt!

Byron Moore, MD, has been chosen as the new Medical Director for HMTW, following his tenure as Medical Director at HMWB. Dr. Moore reports that he will miss working with Dr. Tracie Koen, Dr. Yingchao Piao, and Dr. Pulin Kothari at HMWB, but is excited to join the team at HMTW and is happy to have a shorter commute to work. Dr. Moore thanked Dr. Ruba Halloush for her hard work at HMTW in the past months, and he wishes Dr. Awalt the best in her retirement.

Tracie Koen, MD, assumed the role of Interim Medical Director at HMWB on January 24. Dr. Koen reports that she is enjoying her time as Interim Medical Director, with “several exciting projects in the works, such as the construction of our brand new histology lab that will double our current grossing capacity.”

Many thanks to Dr. Awalt for her dedicated service to our Department, and congratulations to Dr. Moore and Dr. Koen in their new leadership roles!

Update from Houston Methodist Clear Lake

Houston Methodist Clear Lake (HMCL) Medical Director David Alrahwan, MD, reports that the HMCL lab was recently inspected and re-accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP). Their new Medical Office Building (MOB) lab had its
initial inspection and was granted accreditation by CAP. A CAP inspection team based at the HMCL lab completed an inspection of a large commercial lab located in the Houston area. HMCL has purchased the last MOB on its campus that was not owned by HMCL and construction on a new MOB is ongoing, with opening slated for mid-2021.

The Houston Methodist Deer Park Emergency Care Center (ECC) opened December 28, 2020. The ECC has an on-site laboratory that is managed in partnership between the Houston Methodist Laboratory System and HMCL’s Laboratory Leadership. The training of nurses performing laboratory testing at the ECC was performed by the HMCL Laboratory staff.

HMCL went live with lab barcode specimen collection, and the new STAT COVID-19 testing on the Roche Liat instrument is going well.

Laboratory News

Team Spotlight: Blood Bank and Blood Donor Center

While the work of the blood bank and blood donor center are always crucial, the past year has presented new challenges as these teams responded to the COVID-19 crisis and provided crucial support to Houston Methodist’s first-in-the-nation convalescent plasma treatment protocol for COVID-19 patients. Co-Medical Director of Transfusion Medicine, Dr. Eric Salazar, says: “The Department of Pathology and Genomic Medicine has been uniquely able to consistently provide life-saving COVID-19 convalescent plasma with high levels of anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies to all hospitals in the Houston Methodist system almost from the beginning of this effort. This would not be possible without the tireless efforts of the many dedicated blood donor center and blood bank staff. They are all true heroes.”

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Heather Cantrell, Chief Technician of Transfusion Services, reports:

This has been an incredibly challenging year!

In Transfusion Services, the donor processing techs and I stayed late and came in on days off to ensure that we got the plasma processed, labeled, and placed into inventory seven days a week. As we are supplying plasma to the entire system, the entire staff have had to take on thawing products, packing them, and shipping to the other hospitals (on all three shifts). We have a very strong team in the blood bank, and they have definitely stepped up to this challenge. We have also had to validate four new freezers for product storage, develop a tracking method so we can quickly locate the high titer units, and develop policies to provide this new product.

Before we were ready to start transfusing, we had to build the products in our computer system and validate them. Hat-tip to Eric Briggs, Claude Moussa, and the Lab-IT team who helped us every step of the way, from initial build to the FDA labeling changes that we had to make. They always make themselves available to help us when we need them.

As Blood Bankers, we know that our services and products save lives every single day, but it has taken on a whole new feeling during the pandemic. Being a part of the plasma program from the research phase to the EUA phase has been an honor, and I’m thankful that Methodist took it on. We are improving patient outcomes with this program.

It’s been a very long year, but I am very proud to be a member of this team. We rock!
Amer (AJ) Musharbash, Transfusion Service, Apheresis, and Donor Center Manager reports:

The blood donor center and the blood bank have been working hard to maintain the convalescent plasma supply of high-titer units that has been depleted due to the huge surge in COVID-19 patients throughout the system. The donor center staff have expanded their hours during the week to 7 pm and opened up all day Saturday and Sunday to accommodate donors who cannot come during the week to donate. A lot of the staff members have worked eight and nine day stretches to ensure that we have adequate staff to collect and label as many units as we can.
From the start of this pandemic to this day, the staff have adapted to so many changes, from putting together the convalescent plasma donor center on Smith 5, to having to move to Jones 8, then moving again to Fondren 8, and all the stress that comes with moving an entire operation three times and the endless changes as the FDA came out with the EUA.

They all have been amazing and selfless throughout this process and I’m proud to have all of them on the team. Burn out is real, but this group takes care of each other, looks out for one another, and knows the importance of the product they are collecting for patients in our communities to combat this pandemic. They have heard first-hand from donors how convalescent plasma has helped their family members and friends get better.

Our deepest thanks go out to the blood bank staff who came on weekends and their days off to make sure these donations are labeled and ready to be issued to system hospitals for the patients in need. Everyone in this operation from recruiting and collection to labeling and shipping have been tremendous and made this hard and arduous process continue no matter what the challenges they faced were.

Front row (left to right): Monisha Dey, Suylan Sauceda, (left to right) Recruiter Olivia Duffey Aurora Ramirez and Research Coordinator Katharine Dlouhy
On behalf of our Department, the entire Houston Methodist system, and all of those you have touched with your truly selfless commitment, thank you to our blood bank and blood donor center teams.

**Sign-out of the First Full HLA Typing Report Using NGS Data**

The HLA lab is excited to report that HLA typing by next-generation sequencing (NGS) was initiated on samples arriving in the laboratory beginning on February 1, 2021. In the subsequent three weeks, samples from 104 patients and donors have been HLA typed by NGS.

The first two samples were potential hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT) donors for a patient with severe aplastic anemia. Due to time constraints related to the initiation of pre-transplant conditioning therapy, the typing results were requested with expedited turnaround. The first two samples were potential hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT) donors for a patient with severe aplastic anemia. Due to time constraints related to the initiation of pre-transplant conditioning therapy, the typing results were requested with expedited turnaround. Patients requiring allogeneic HSCT have two potential sources of donors: related or unrelated individuals. Unrelated HSCT donors are selected from the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) based on a variety of factors, including the patient’s HLA type. Once identified, samples are collected from the donor and sent to an HLA laboratory for confirmatory HLA typing. In this case, two potential donors were identified in the NMDP registry. Buccal swabs were collected from the potential donors and were shipped to the Houston Methodist HLA laboratory as a source of DNA for typing. HLA typing was completed by NGS and the results were found to be concordant with the HLA typing provided by the registry. As
a result, the patient was able to start conditioning therapy in preparation for his HSCT.

Congratulations to the entire HLA team on this important milestone!

Department Acquires State-of-the Art Instrument for High-Throughput Genomic Sequencing

In support of SARS-CoV-2 whole genome sequencing, the Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory has acquired a new Illumina NovaSeq 6000 instrument. As compared to other next-generation sequencing instruments in the clinical laboratory, the NovaSeq 6000 is capable of generating up to 50 times more data. The instrument takes advantage of sequencing by synthesis technology to detect single bases as they are incorporated into growing DNA strands, making it capable of reading billions of sequences in parallel. Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory Director, **Randy Olsen, MD, PhD**, said, “This tremendous sequencing capacity enables the COVID-19 genomics team to analyze more virus genomes in less time at a lower cost”.

To date, the Houston Methodist team has sequenced more than 20,000 SARS-CoV-2 genomes—more than any other laboratory in the US. The new instrument will be crucial to our department’s ongoing efforts to identify mutations in SARS-CoV-2 and track variants of concern, such as the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Brazil strains.

![Erika Walker (left) and Prasanti Yerramilli (right) load 768 SARS-CoV-2 genome libraries for sequencing on the new NovaSeq 6000 instrument.](image)

![The SARS-CoV-2 genomics team includes (left to right): Jessica Cambric, Matthew Ojeda Saavedra, Madison Shyer, Prasanti Yerramilli, Layne Pruitt, and Kristina Reppond.](image)
Molecular Laboratory Obtains New Instrument for COVID-19 Testing

Houston Methodist Hospital’s Molecular Laboratory recently acquired a new instrument for COVID-19 testing. The Cobas 6800 system from Roche Diagnostics is a fully automated, high-throughput platform for real-time polymerase chain reaction-based virology testing. The instrument is housed in Fondren 8 and the Molecular team has been busy performing training and clinical verification of the SARS-CoV-2 test on the Cobas
Go-live for the SARS-CoV-2 test on the Cobas 6800 system began the week of February 8, 2021.

Cepheid and Liat Instruments Deployed at Community Hospitals

Cepheid and Roche Liat benchtop instruments have been validated at Houston Methodist Hospital and transported to the six Houston Methodist community hospitals for on-site stat testing for SARS-CoV-2. Each community hospital received three or four of either the Cepheid or Liat instruments. The assay run on the Cepheid instruments is the Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 test, and the assay run on the Roche Liat instruments is the Cobas SARS-CoV-2 test. The total testing time for both assays is between thirty minutes and one hour, providing rapid results for patients that meet stat testing criteria at each Houston Methodist site.

Routine testing for SARS-CoV-2 on patient specimens collected at the community hospitals is still sent to Houston Methodist Hospital via courier system. The stat SARS-CoV-2 molecular testing using these instruments at the HM community hospitals went live in December 2020.

On-Site Oncology Gene Mutation Testing Resumes at Houston Methodist
The Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory has resumed performing several molecular tests in-house to support the clinical oncology services across the Houston Methodist system. Since the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, all molecular oncology testing routinely performed at Houston Methodist Hospital has been referred to outside laboratories, in order to accommodate the urgent demand for SARS-CoV-2 molecular testing. In December of 2020, the Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory resumed in-house testing of the reflex-ordered molecular biomarker panel for lung adenocarcinomas. The Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory has also recently resumed in-house molecular oncology testing for thyroid cancers, advanced stage colorectal adenocarcinomas, and analysis of single-gene mutations (\textit{BRAF, PIK3CA, IDH1/2}) and translocations (\textit{NTRK1/3}) for solid organ tumors in February of 2021.

Specialist Holli Dale, MLS, was central to the resumption of in-house molecular oncology testing at Houston Methodist. Together with Associate Director of the Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory, Jessica Thomas, MD, PhD, MPH, Ms. Dale helped to make the re-launching process possible, from planning until the go-live.

Dr. Thomas said: “The Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory at HMH is committed in our effort to provide the highest quality care for our patients and will continue the work of resuming our full molecular oncology testing menu in-house as we have the capacity available to do so.”

\textbf{HM Microbiology Lab Rises to Meet New COVID-19 Pandemic Challenges}

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented no shortage of challenges to our laboratories and other facilities. At the onset of the pandemic, the nasopharyngeal swabs especially were in short supply. Dr. S. Wesley Long, Medical Director of the Microbiology Laboratory, reports that supply chain issues from vendors have required the Microbiology Laboratory to be flexible in terms of reverting back to the
use of older culturing techniques for some pathogens for a period of time, as well as pivoting from the use of the Quidel Antigen to other alternative assays.

Dr. Long states:

Because of the pandemic, some vendors unexpectedly shifted production away from other molecular assays to manufacture more COVID-19 tests. Frequently, this was done with little to no warning to laboratories. This shift required the Microbiology Laboratory to be incredibly nimble, and adapt to these unexpected changes to keep providing the best service possible to patients.

In the case of STI testing, there was a nationwide shortage across all vendors, resulting in a return to older, plate-based culture methods for gonorrhea, for instance. This required us to rapidly acquire more media and disseminate it to sites around the system along with instructions, as the sample must be collected at the bedside. This helped us bridge the gap until molecular STI test reagent supplies became available again.

In the case of antigen testing for respiratory syncytial virus and Group A Strep, we again had to unexpectedly mobilize to find an alternative vendor for test reagents and distribute protocols and validation kits to multiple sites around the system to allow for validation of these new replacement assays when the prior vendor stopped shipping reagents without warning.

Everyone in the laboratory at Houston Methodist Hospital, as well as our partners at the system institutions worked together to adapt to these unexpected challenges to continue providing the best care to patients, a true testament to our ICARE values.

Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory Reflects on One Year of COVID-19-Related Accomplishments
The Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory recently commemorated the one-year anniversary of the first SARS-CoV-2 test performed at Houston Methodist. The medical directors and technologists reflected on their many accomplishments with a boxed lunch, personalized notes thanking one another, and laboratory-themed games. A bulletin board timeline highlighted many COVID-19-related events, including the hiring of new laboratory colleagues and the acquisition of new automated instruments.

Holli Dale, MLS, served as an organizer for the anniversary activities. Ms. Dale reported:

Being able to see COVID-19 testing in terms of numbers, personalized for our Molecular team, really puts into perspective the incredible commitment that was made by our staff to survive an unfathomable rise in demand for testing. After spending a year of constantly rising to face rapid changes and many hardships, we wanted to give the team a chance to celebrate.

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The year in numbers:

460,995 SARS-CoV-specimens tested (as of March 5, 2021)

52 staff members added

11 major validations* completed

29 minor validations** completed

(* Major assay validation is defined as requiring a new SOP)

(** Minor assay validation is defined as an alteration to an existing SOP)
Trainee News

Houston Methodist Trainees Shine at Virtual TSP Conference

Our Department’s trainees once again have performed exceptionally at the annual meeting of the Texas Society of Pathologists (TSP). Jim Hsu, MD, PhD, won first place for his investigative poster “Mutational characteristics of KRAS-mutated lung adenocarcinoma: a multi-institutional study of 276 cases.” Michelle Lin, MD, won second place for her platform presentation “False-Negative Pap Tests in Women with Biopsy-Proven Endocervical Adenocarcinoma: A Retrospective Analysis with Assessment of Inter-Observer Agreement.”
We are extraordinarily proud of Dr. Hsu, Dr. Lin, and all of our trainees who represented Houston Methodist Hospital at this year’s TSP meeting.

Congratulations, all!

 Faculty Appointments

**Jesus Eraso, PhD**, received his faculty appointments as Assistant Research Professor of Pathology and Genomic Medicine at the Houston Methodist Academic Institute (HMAI) and Assistant Research Member at the Houston Methodist Research Institute (HMRI). Dr. Eraso joined our Department in 2014, after having spent 16 years on the faculty of the University of Texas Health Science Center investigating redox control of gene expression and bacterial cell division. Dr. Eraso’s research centers on investigating the virulence and fitness of *Streptococcus pyogenes* (GAS), particularly in exploring the pathogen-host interactions that occur in GAS infections. In 2019, Dr. Eraso and colleague **Priyanka Kachroo, PhD**, received the HMAI Award for Excellence in a Peer-Reviewed Publication for his article “Integrated analysis of population genomics, transcriptomics, and virulence provides novel insights into serotype M28 *Streptococcus pyogenes* pathogenesis.”
Weill Cornell Appointments

Andrea Diaz De Vivar, MD
Assistant Professor of Clinical Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

Chinnaswamy Jagannath, PhD
Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

Conferences & Events

USCAP 110th Annual Meeting (Virtual): March 13–18 2021

ACLPS Annual Meeting (Virtual): May 27–29, 2021

AACC Annual Scientific Meeting and Clinical Lab Expo: September 19–23, 2021 in Anaheim, California


ASCP 2021: October 27–29 in Boston, Massachusetts

OAD NEWS

The Office of Academic Development (OAD) of the Department of Pathology and Genomic Medicine is available and fully staffed during the current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic to assist department members with editing manuscripts, grants, posters, presentations, and more. Please contact Sasha Pejerrey at spejerrey@houstonmethodist.org or 713.441.5889; Adrienne Winston at awinston@houstonmethodist.org or 713.441.3395; or Heather McConnell at hmconnell@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, please let us know! We have access to iThenticate and expertise in reducing overlap to whatever percent a particular journal may require.

**Featured Faculty**

**Elizabeth Jacobi, MD**

Hometown: Houston, Texas

Education: BS in Biology from UT Austin; MD from UT McGovern Medical School

Current Role: Staff Pathologist

Academic Affiliations: Assistant Professor, HMAI and Weill Cornell; Assistant Member, HMRI

Advice for Trainees: “Be proactive. Take advantage of every opportunity. Never sacrifice your integrity.”

Hobbies: Outdoor activities, including hiking, boating, and deep-sea fishing. Plays the flute, has been a member of multiple bands over the years including The University of Texas Longhorn Band.

Dr. Jacobi joined the faculty of our Department in July 2019.

Before beginning medical school, Dr. Jacobi worked at the Texas Heart Institute in the Cardiovascular Pathology Research Laboratory, where she was first exposed to pathology. After medical school, Dr. Jacobi elected to enter a residency program in General Surgery at Stony Brook University Medical Center, where she gained valuable experience. However, following the completion of her first year of the program she realized it was not the right fit and returned to UT Houston where she completed her residency in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology. She then went on to complete fellowships in Surgical Pathology at HMH and Cytopathology at MD Anderson. While those outside of the field might not see pathology as a collaborative discipline, Dr. Jacobi said that she enjoys the opportunities for collaboration that she finds daily, both within our department and with her colleagues in clinical
departments. She is active in the thyroid tumor board and is looking forward to getting more involved with various research projects.

Dr. Jacobi stressed the importance of getting medical students involved and interested in pathology, including encouraging them to rotate in pathology electives in order to acquire a more realistic insight into the field and the vast opportunities it has to offer.

In January of 2020, Dr. Jacobi was elected Secretary of the Young Pathologists’ Section (YPS) of the Texas Society of Pathologists and in January of 2021 transitioned to Chair-elect of the YPS. Dr. Jacobi also serves as an alternate delegate for the College of American Pathologists House of Delegates. Dr. Jacobi is grateful for her mentors and friends throughout the department, and for the opportunity to be a part of the outstanding Houston Methodist faculty.

Dr. Anton Publishes Major Article with Her Children

Rose Anton, MD, along with faculty members Paul Christensen, MD, and Mary R. Schwartz, MD, published an article in the American Journal of Infection Control, co-authored with Dr. Anton’s children Joseph and Canvian Anton. Entitled “The role of facial contact in infection control: Renewed import in the age of coronavirus,” the article was born from observations made by high-school senior Canvian and high-school junior Joseph.

Dr. Anton encouraged her children to devise a research project while they were at home because of the COVID-19 pandemic. While watching a White House press conference advising Americans to take basic safety precautions such as washing their hands and avoiding touching their faces to help to stop the spread of SARS-CoV-2, Canvian and Joseph noticed that these same experts were engaging in touching their own faces while on camera. After realizing that a study had not previously been made that observed the rate of facial contact in uncontrolled settings, Canvian and Joseph created the study, including their method of watching videos from YouTube of
lectures and other presentations, as well as the hypothesis that instigating factors, including fatigue, might play a role in the rate of facial contact by an individual.

Dr. Anton remarked “I think it is a good idea to show kids that they can be creative and come up with things on their own. So many kids are stuck at home wondering what they can do with their time. One of the reviewers said it was a novel approach to research (watching YouTube videos) that they would have never thought of, and that’s because the idea came from kids. We scientists can’t think outside the box like that.”

Congratulations, all, on your contribution to research!

**Faculty Publications**


Restrepo BI, **Khan A**, **Singh VK**, de-Leon E, Aguillón-Durán GP, Ledezma-Campos E, Canady DH, **Jagannath C**. Human monocyte-derived macrophage responses to
M. tuberculosis differ by the host's tuberculosis, diabetes or obesity status, and are enhanced by rapamycin. *Tuberculosis.* 2021 Jan;126. 102047.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tube.2020.102047

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamcollsurg.2020.08.764

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajpath.2020.10.008


Varela MC, Roch M, Taglialegna A, Long SW, Saavedra MO, Rose WE, Davis JJ, Hoffman LR, Hernandez RE, Rosato RR, Rosato AE. Carbapenems drive the collateral resistance to ceftaroline in cystic fibrosis patients with MRSA. *Communications Biology.* 2020 Oct 22;3(1). 599. [https://doi.org/10.1038/s42003-020-01313-5](https://doi.org/10.1038/s42003-020-01313-5)


Kamal S, Al Othman B, Kini A, Beaver HA, Chaudhry I, Prospero Ponce CM, Chévez-Barrios P, Lee AG. Infectious keratitis as the presenting sign of giant cell


