Join our LinkedIn Group

The Lerner Postdoc and Grad Student Alumni Network on LinkedIn is a group of current and former postdoctoral fellows, research scholars and graduate students at Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Institute. We share opportunities for career development, networking and highlighting our scientific achievements. We also post reminders about upcoming events, so be sure to turn on notifications! Request to join here.
The Mentorship & Advocacy Committee is excited to launch the 2024 LRI Buddy Program! The goal of this program is to welcome 1st year new LRI trainees and help them settle down into their new roles. In the meanwhile, it is aimed to offer complementary opportunities for current trainees (2nd year and above) to practice and develop mentoring skills and expand professional networks within LRI. The ability to cultivate a positive, motivating, and encouraging mentor-mentee relationship is a crucial factor in academic applications and has a lasting impact on scientific achievements.

In this program, we will pair a mentor with 1 or 2 mentees who newly joined the LRI as trainees, from similar research backgrounds. There will be monthly meetings covering various topics such as survival skills, training, collaboration opportunities within LRI, and career development. We hope through this program, we can provide extended opportunities for you to hone your mentorship skills, broaden the connections, and add to the impact you will make at LRI.

All the mentor and mentee positions have been filled for the next year, but for more information, please feel free to reach out to our LTA Mentorship/Advocacy subcommittee Co-chairs, Kavya Vipparthi (vipparp@ccf.org), Jia Liu (liuj19@ccf.org), and Amira Salim (salima@ccf.org).
Trainee Holiday Party

Celebrate with your fellow Postdocs, Research Scholars and PhD Students with dinner & raffle baskets!

December 7th, 2023
5:00 pm - 7:00pm
NC1-202 & NE1-205

Please scan the QR code to RSVP by November 20th

Hosted by the Research Education & Training Center
Recent Events

Highlights from the CBTA Professional Development Conference 2023 and Halloween Party

On October 19th and 20th, the Cleveland Biomedical Trainee Alliance hosted its first ever Professional Development Conference at the Case Western Tinkham Veale University Center Ballrooms. We had an amazing turn out of trainees. 158 attendees registered and over 100 people in attendance each day. Polling after the event revealed that 8/10 found the sessions helpful and informative!

Thank you to the amazing sponsors!

The purpose of the Conference was to bring local graduate and postdoctoral trainees together for the purpose of robust in-house professional and personal development with opportunities for networking and career planning.

CBTA also put together its first ever Halloween Party which was held on October 28th in the One University Circle Sky Lounge.

We had over 80 attendees and we celebrated with some really creative costumes, pizza, snacks, drinks, games, and great company!
Recent Events

Congratulations to the semi-finalists and winners!

F. Merlin Bumpus Junior Investigator Awards

The F. Merlin Bumpus Junior Investigator Award was created to highlight excellence in research by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. It is named after F. Merlin Bumpus, PhD, who served as Chair of the Lerner Research Institute from 1966-1985.

BASIC SCIENCE

Winner

Kala Mahen
Cancer Biology

Semi-finalists

Taylor Baker
Cancer Biology

Kristen Kay
Cardiovascular & Metabolic Sciences

Chin-Chih Liu, PhD
Genomic Medicine Institute

CLINICAL

Winner

Darren Liu
Genomic Medicine Institute

Semi-finalists

Phillip Awodutire, PhD
Quantitative Health Sciences

Adriel Kim
Genomic Medicine Institute

Thiago Peixoto Leal, PhD
Genomic Medicine Institute

Benjamin Mittman
Center for Value-Based Care Research
Recent Events

Python Bootcamp for Beginners

October 13, 2023 to January 5, 2024

This is an ongoing seven-part workshop series introducing Python basics for beginners, tailored to meet the diverse needs of biologists aiming to integrate programming skills into their daily research.

These workshops are held in-person on Main Campus every other Friday from 1-2 pm followed by 30 minutes of optional hands-on skills application.

Instructors provide optional homework activities and walk-in office hours for additional skills development.

Capacity was limited to 30 participants on a first come first served basis, but all interested LRI caregivers and trainees were welcome to sign up.

We have received a phenomenal response for this bootcamp and we intend to organize similar activities in the next year, so stay tuned! For more information, please feel free to contact the Co-chairs for LTA Career Development and Resources subcommittee, Ujjwal Dahiya (dahiyau@ccf.org) and Adya Sapra (sapraa@ccf.org).

Workshop instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jayadev Joshi</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabio Cumbo</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Lartey</td>
<td>PhD</td>
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</tbody>
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Workshop Organizers:
- Sumit Bhutada, PhD
- Ujjwal Dahiya, PhD

Workshop Advisors & Sponsors:
- Ahmet Erdemir, PhD
- Daniel Blankenberg, PhD
- Kelsey Bohn, PhD

Hosted by the Lerner Trainee Association
The 2023 Molecular Medicine Student Showcase, held on November 3rd, was a resounding success, offering a glimpse into the remarkable research conducted by our talented students. The dedication and commitment of both our students and the exceptional judges and faculty members were evident in their outstanding presentations and posters, reflecting the high caliber of research within our Molecular Medicine program here at LRI. Together, their collective efforts have showcased the impressive talent and commitment to excellence within our academic community.
Where are you from?
I am from Ranchi, India.

What is your educational background?
I have a Bachelor’s and a Master’s degree in biotechnology from Ranchi University and M.S from University of Baroda, India. I graduate with PhD from CSIR-Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research, Delhi in Neurosciences.

What did your graduate research focus on?
My graduate research focused on understanding the effect of chronic low-level exposure of arsenic through drinking water on brain macrophages and microglia, i.e., the functional alterations in microglia that negatively affect neuronal functions in the presence of arsenic.

How did you decide to pursue your current postdoc at Cleveland Clinic?
As I drew closer to my graduation, I saw myself wanting to do more with my expertise in neuroimmunology. I wanted to explore avenues of translational research with applicability toward human disease, specifically, multiple sclerosis (MS). The research environment, clinical exposure, compensation including health benefits, growth opportunities and collaborations at Cleveland Clinic-Lerner Research Institute were unparalleled. Therefore, I chose Cleveland Clinic to start my postdoc career.

What do you like to do outside of the laboratory?
I absolutely love to cook and try to take advantage of every opportunity to try new recipes.

Which lab do you work in and for how long have you been a part of this team?
I work in Dr. Bruce Trapp’s laboratory in the Department of Neurosciences. I have been with the Trapp group for a little over four years.

“My research focus is two-fold: to identify living progressive multiple sclerosis patients with minimal cerebral white matter demyelination known as myelocortical multiple sclerosis, and to utilize the post-mortem multiple sclerosis brains with in-situ MRI scans to characterize cerebral white matter hyperintensities.”

What is your current research focus?
My current research focus is two-fold. First aspect of my research is to identify living progressive multiple sclerosis patients with minimal cerebral white matter demyelination known as myelocortical multiple sclerosis. I anticipate this would help in better outcomes for remyelinating therapy clinical trials. The second aspect is to utilize the post-mortem multiple sclerosis brains with in-situ MRI scans to characterize cerebral white matter hyperintensities. Due to lack of tissue damage and extreme gliosis in such brains, these are a suitable medium. Also, we are expecting to find new pathogenic mechanisms driving clinical disability in multiple sclerosis patients by doing post-mortem MRI-pathology correlation studies.

Do you have any recent accomplishments in your current position?
In 2022, I got the opportunity to give a talk in Young investigator session of the American Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis (ACTRIMS-2022), and I presented a poster at the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS-2023).
Meet your Graduate Student
Jacob Rich

Where are you from?
I proudly hail from right here in Cleveland, OH.

What is your educational background?
I hold a Master of Arts in Mathematics and Economics (double major), Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Economics (double major). Both of these degrees were earned at Eastern Michigan University.

Which lab do you work in and for how long have you been a part of this team?
I joined the Center for Value-Based Care Research in September 2023, where I work for Dr. Phuc Le.

How did you decide on the Cleveland Clinic?
As a local, I am aware of my bias, but I think Cleveland is one of the most wonderful cities in the world, having a world-class art museum, incredible theatre district, and a phenomenal orchestra. I have difficulty understanding how some people don’t appreciate this city.

What is your current research focus?
Simply put, I work on policy analysis (i.e. do public health interventions achieve their goals?). Specifically, my research focuses on causal inference in public health, determining whether government interventions to improve health are effective. Currently, I mostly focus on the consequences of substance use policies, such as [opioid] prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) and menthol cigarette bans.

I am an epidemiology and biostatistics PhD student at the CWRU School of Medicine's Department of Population & Quantitative Health Sciences, conducting research for the Center for Value-Based Care Research at the Cleveland Clinic.

What are your future goals?
I hope to teach various courses in advanced statistics at a university/medical school and to implement public health policy as an appointee within the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS).

“My research focuses on causal inference in public health, determining whether government interventions to improve health are effective. Currently, I mostly focus on the consequences of substance use policies, such as [opioid] prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) and menthol cigarette bans.”

What do you like to do outside of the work?
Outside of work, I keep active by hunting, lifting, and playing guitar. I hunt only for what I eat, which includes deer, turkey, and bear. I plan to try duck hunting in the near future. Although I mostly do powerlifting, I also like running if it is less than 5 miles at a time. As for my guitars, I prefer electric over acoustic and the Randy Rhoads model made by Jackson Guitars. My musical tastes include late '60s/early '70s rock, '50s/60s jazz, and '80s thrash metal.
What is your current position title and where are you now?

I am a Senior Scientist at Life Edit Therapeutics in Durham, NC. I am currently developing genome editing technology through nucleic acid biochemistry and engineering for therapeutic areas.

What does your role in your current position entail and what is your favorite part?

My role in the company is managing PhD level scientists who are highly motivated. My favorite part is doing high quality science that is directly relevant to patients.

"Along with research skills, social skills like leadership, communication, networking and mentoring are a must for a successful postdoc career."

What about your time at the Lerner do you think prepared you for this position?

Managing project in its entirety from the discovery to phenotypic impact at the organism level.

Is there something you particularly miss from your time at Lerner?

I miss getting to know diverse topics in the fellow seminar series, grant courses and the multiple core facilities that offer outstanding service at Lerner.

In one sentence, what advice would you give current Lerner postdoc?

Along with research skills, social skills like leadership, communication, networking and mentoring are a must for a successful postdoc career.
Congratulations to Dr. Vipparthi from the Karaayvaz Lab in the Genomic Medicine Institute!
Dr. Kavya Vipparthi recently won a first-place poster presentation award in the Basic Sciences category at the Great Lakes Breast Cancer Symposium 2023. The title of the poster was "Deficiency for BRCA2 leads to common fragile site instability in human mammary epithelial cells".

Congratulations to Dr. Sarkar from the Gack Lab in the Florida Research and Innovation Center!
The recent article by Dr. Lucky Sarkar titled “ISG15: its roles in SARS-CoV-2 and other viral infections” was published in Trends in Microbiology.

Congratulations to Hamed Javidi from the Quantitative Metabolic Research Lab!
Hamed Javidi recently won the Award for excellence-best graduate student 2023 here at LRI.

We love celebrating trainee accomplishments! To submit your own news or to recognize someone else, email LRIPTraineeAssoc@ccf.org
Accomplishments

Congratulations to Dr. Strobl from the Scott Lab in the Department of Translational Hematology & Oncology Research (THOR)!
The recent article by Dr. Maximilian Strobl titled “Treatment of evolving cancers will require dynamic decision support” was published in Annals of Oncology.


Congratulations to Nam Than from the Kim Lab in the Department of Inflammation and Immunity!
Nam was selected to give a talk at the Biomedical Engineering Society Annual Meeting 2023 in Seattle, WA. The title of the talk was "Regenerative Effects of Live Probiotics on Mucosal Barrier and Inflammation in a Microengineered Pathomimetic Leaky Gut Chip".

Congratulations to Dr. Ashok from the Prasad Lab in the Department of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Sciences!
Dr. Anushruti Ashok was recently elected for and received membership in Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Honor Society.

We love celebrating trainee accomplishments! To submit your own news or to recognize someone else, email LRTITraineeAssoc@ccf.org
Congratulations to Dr. Michael from the Wilson Lab in the Department of Ophthalmic Research, Cole Eye Institute!
The recent article by Dr. Shiju Michael titled “Transforming growth factor beta-3 localization in the corneal response to epithelial-stromal injury and effects on corneal fibroblast transition to myofibroblasts” was published in Experimental Eye Research. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37633325/

Congratulations to Dr. Jain from the Bekris Lab in the Genomic Medicine Institute!

Congratulations to Adya Sapra from the Dutta Lab in the Department of Neurosciences!
Adya recently won the Best Poster Award at the Americas Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis (ACTRIMS) Young Scientist Summit 2023 held in Scottsdale, Arizona. The title of the poster was "Micro-RNA-22 secreted from microglial exosomes is a regulator of oligodendrocyte differentiation".

We love celebrating trainee accomplishments! To submit your own news or to recognize someone else, email LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org
Accomplishments

Congratulations to all the poster and presentation winners at the 2023 Molecular Medicine Student Showcase!

The talent and creativity within the LRI Molecular Medicine PhD program was on display at the 2023 Molecular Medicine Student Showcase. Congrats to all the winners in each category!

Morgan Engelhart  
Winner: Oral Presentation  
Philip Ahern Lab  
Unraveling the molecular basis of microbiota-induced immune tolerance

Susan Afolabi  
Winner: 2nd Year Poster  
Feng Lin Lab  
Development and characterization of a novel anti-complement Factor H nanobody as a complement agonist

Sarah Stanko  
Winner: 2nd Year Poster  
Dimitrios Davalos Lab  
In vivo Imaging Study of Microglia-Mediated Perivascular Lesion Formation in a Mouse Model of Multiple Sclerosis

Noah Dubasik  
Winner: 4th Year Poster  
Abhishek Chakraborty Lab  
Unraveling the Mechanisms Underlying AHCYL1 Dependency in Kidney Cancer

Josephine Volovetz  
Winner: PRISM Award  
Justin Lathia Lab  
Sex Differences in Immune Response in a Novel Murine Glioblastoma Resection Model

We love celebrating trainee accomplishments! To submit your own news or to recognize someone else, email LRIPTraineeAssoc@ccf.org
**Announcements**

- **NIH All About Grants Podcast: What Early Career Researchers Should Know (Part 1) – the Hidden Curriculum**

  Hosted by NIH podcasters Dr. Oliver Bogler and Dr. Lauren Ullrich. In the episode, they relay experiences and lessons learned on finding the right mentor, importance of open communication, networking, career progression and opportunities. For more information and to access the episode, click [here](#).

- **Alliance Scholars Program at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center**

  Attention late-stage PhD students! Do you want to fast-track your career into an independent research or faculty position? Through the Roswell Park Alliance Scholars Program, you can design and implement your own funded postdoctoral training experience. Learn more [here](#).

- **Parkinson’s Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant ($124,000/2 years)**

  For young basic scientists, fresh from their PhD training or neurology residency to study at major research institutions. The Parkinson’s Foundation seeks research proposals from promising early-career scientists that will directly impact the understanding of Parkinson’s disease or its treatment. More information and application [here](#). If you have any questions or if you’d like help with your proposal, please contact Robyn Trem, Director, Foundation Relations in the Cleveland Clinic Philanthropy Institute ([tremr@ccf.org](mailto:tremr@ccf.org)).

- **NIH Extramural Loan Repayment Program**

  NIH LRP awardees can receive up to $100,000 of qualified educational debt repayment with a two-year award. Check out this [three-minute overview video](#) to learn more about this program. For application details, click [here](#).

- **Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation**

  Quantitative Biology Fellowship Award for computational scientists who innovatively combine quantitative analyses and modeling to solve biological questions. See the flyer for awards programs information and application guidelines [here](#). The deadline to apply is on or before 4PM (ET) December 1st. To apply, click [here](#).
Announcements

- **American Society of Transplantation Research Grant**

  2024 Fellowship Research Grants ($150,000/2 years) support the research of individuals who have spent two years or less performing research in the area of solid organ transplantation (and/or immunology relating to solid organ transplant) since obtaining their last doctoral degree (PhD, MD, PharmD, or equivalent). For general information and research categories view the flyer [here](#). Application deadline is December 1st. To apply, click [here](#).

- **American Society of Transplantation Research Grant**

  Early Faculty Development Research Grants ($150,000/2 years) supports preliminary research findings for individual research or career development awards. For more information, view the flyer [here](#). Application deadline is December 1st. To apply, click [here](#).

- **Cystic Fibrosis Foundation**

  Postdoc-to-Faculty Transition Awards (up to $300k/up to 5 years) are intended to provide an opportunity for promising postdoctoral fellows to hone research skills, develop into independent investigators and initiate an independent CF research program. Application deadline is December 7th for more information and to apply, click [here](#).

- **Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation**

  Young Investigator Grant ($180,000/3 years) supports a research career in pediatric cancer. Application and full proposal are due before 8PM (ET) December 11th. To learn more about eligibility requirements, and to apply, click [here](#).

- **American Brain Tumor Association**

  Basic Research Fellowships ($100,000/2 years) are mentored grants supporting postdoctoral fellows who are conducting laboratory or field-based research projects that focus on brain tumors. Accepting Letters of Intent through December 13th. For FAQ’s and to apply, click [here](#).
Hello LRI Trainees! **Cleveland Clinic Innovations** (CCI) is the commercialization arm and tech transfer office of the Cleveland Clinic. Our strategic goal is to accelerate the delivery of life-changing healthcare solutions to patients. We re-organized in 2021 to better serve inventor and to make innovation easier and more accessible for all caregivers. The results are new medical devices, therapeutics and diagnostics, and digital health solutions that drastically improve patient outcomes.

We, the engagement partners, would like to introduce ourselves as the dedicated contacts for LRI inventors interested in working with CCI: **Morgan Carter, PhD** and **Matt Koletsky, MS** as leads for Therapeutics and Diagnostic related ideas, **Nicole Byram** as lead for Medical Device related ideas, and **Michelle Leung** as lead for Digital Health related ideas.

The Innovations team is here for caregivers and inventors as they navigate all aspects of inventing at Cleveland Clinic. We, the engagement team, are your first point of contact for CCI. Over the next few newsletters, we will introduce ourselves further and showcase how your peers in LRI have had success inventing and innovating.

Today, we want to introduce the innovations process (see below). There is also a [video link](#) that describes how you can engage with our office and receive the support you need:

**CCI 2022 Innovation Process**
Engagement: The Engagement Team focuses on inventor service. Engagement Partners (EPs) will work directly with caregivers and Institute Innovation Leads (IILs) to mine ideas, craft quality Invention Disclosure Forms (IDFs), and develop strong value propositions for inventions.

Assessment: Key activities include quantification of commercial potential, patentability/intellectual property analysis, competitive landscaping, regulatory and reimbursement analysis, and clinical need evaluation.

Go/No-Go Committee (GNGC): This Committee reviews all aspects of the invention and votes on whether the invention should continue in the Cleveland Clinic Innovations (CCI) process based on commercialization viability and/ or enterprise alignment.

Development: The Development Team is responsible for translating validated and vetted ideas to viable products. Inventors can expect the Development Team to create, maintain, and communicate a development program with clear timelines and investable milestones.

Business Development and Licensing: The Business Development and Licensing Team establishes partnerships, develops strategies to enter markets, assists in negotiations, and identifies licensing opportunities.

NewCo Team: The New Company (“NewCo”) Team commercializes Cleveland Clinic intellectual property into standalone spin-offs for inventions whose value proposition and target market warrant it.

It’s no secret that innovation is a complex and uncertain journey, but we are here to help and support inventors as they push the boundaries of innovation to ultimately benefit patients. We believe every idea matters! To learn even more, please visit our Inventor Portal: http://portals.ccf.org/innovations/

We look forward to exploring other aspects of innovation in future newsletters. Please let know if you have any questions and/or want to meet to discuss a potential idea!

Thanks,
Morgan, Matt, Nicole, and Michelle
Wellness Resources

Well-Being, Self-Care and Emotional Support for Caregivers

Please note: A connection to the Cleveland Clinic network is required to access many of these resources.

For a more detailed and complete list of resources, please visit this link.

Caregiver Experience Wellness Portal: disconnect, unwind or say thank you virtually

Caring for Caregivers: confidential services that preserve, restore and enhance wellbeing of our caregivers. Available at 1-800-989-8820 (including new Boost telephone appointment).

Cleveland Clinic Office of Caregiver Experience on Facebook and Instagram.

Connect Today/Learner Connect: resiliency resources to help you manage complex, changing times (virtual meetings, change and stress management, and communication)

Occupational Health: If you have further questions about COVID-19 please contact the COVID-19 Caregiver Hotline at 216-445-8246.

OneClick to Well-Being: well-being information and resources for staff

Spiritual Care and Healing Services: information for the religious and spiritual needs of CCF patients, their families and loved ones, and Cleveland Clinic caregivers. (216) 444-2518

CCPD Victim Advocacy: resource to help educate and support the CCF community on domestic violence. Email the committee at: dvcommittee@ccf.org

Daily Wellness Tools for YOU Program


Meditation
Monday 12:15 – 12:45 pm

Fitness
Friday 10:00 - 10:30 am

Yoga - Therapeutic Chair
12:15 - 12:45 pm
Tuesday - Level 1
Wednesday - Level 2
Thursday - Level 3

Culinary Medicine/Nutrition
Friday 12:15 - 12:45 pm
two times per month
(see event page for dates)

All sessions will be held via the Webex platform, registration is required at: clevelandclinic.org/CILMevents

Join in on live virtual Yoga, Mediation, Fitness and Culinary Medicine sessions. These are available for free to all caregivers. All sessions will be held via the Webex platform, registration is required at: http://clevelandclinic.org/CILMevents

**Graduate Students are welcome to join!**
This newsletter is written by the Communications teams of the Lerner Trainee Association Leadership Council and fellow trainees. We welcome your questions and suggestions!

Email LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org to connect with us.

LTA Communications Team
Jason Ross, William (BJ) Massey, Alan Chen, Anushruti Ashok, Swapnil Dey, Nam Than, Susan Afolabi, Lavanya Jain

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