"August is like the Sunday of summer"

In this issue, we feature post-doctoral fellow Lavanya Jain, PhD and doctoral student Marko Mrdjen. We also feature the recent LTA Lerner Lunchtime Linkup and all the accomplishments from previous couple of weeks.

As you continue working towards your professional milestones, don't forget to check out upcoming future events: Lerner Lunchtime Linkup on September 6, American Heart Association Heart Walk on October 7, and the Cleveland Biomedical Trainee Alliance Conference on Octobers 19 and 20.

As always, best of luck!
Your Communications Committee
Cleveland Biomedical Trainee Alliance Conference
SAVE THE DATES!
Oct 19\textsuperscript{th}-20\textsuperscript{th}
Nov 10\textsuperscript{th}

For those that are not already aware, the \textbf{Cleveland Biomedical Trainee Alliance (CBTA)} was formed in 2022 by the Cleveland Clinic Lerner Trainee Association, CWRU Biomedical Engineering Graduate Student Association, CWRU Biomedical Graduate Student Organization, and CSU Association of Biomedical and Chemical Engineers. The purpose of this collaboration is to bring graduate and postdoctoral trainees together from across the Cleveland region for robust professional and personal development with opportunities for networking and career planning on a multi-institutional scale.

In this pursuit, and in response to data collected from trainees amongst our partnering institutions, the CBTA is working to develop the first \textbf{CBTA Conference} devoted to trainee career development. In essence, this would be a one-stop-shop for all trainee development and resource needs.

There will be speakers coming in from all over the country to talk about different aspects of trainee personal and professional development. We look forward to seeing you all there, and hope that you will find this conference very resourceful. Depending on the interest we gather this year, this may turn into an annual thing!

The Conference Skills Development portion will take place on \textit{October 19-20, 2023} at the \textit{Tinkham Veale University Center Ballroom} at Case Western Reserve University, followed by the first \textit{Graduate Student/Post-Doc Networking Career Fair} on \textit{November 10, 2023}! Spread the word with your fellow trainees!
Upcoming Events

LERNER LUNCHTIME LINKUP

Chat! Collaborate! Connect! with your fellow LRI trainees over coffee and treats!
Bring Your Own Lunch if desired

When: First Wednesday of every month
Where: LRI commons – garden side

Next Linkup: September 6
12-1:30pm

Brought to you by the Lerner Trainee Association

Want to get involved with the LTA? Email us at LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org
Upcoming Events

Results with every step.
Be a Heart Walk Hero.

Join the Lerner Trainee team for the annual AHA Heart Walk!

Saturday, October 7
The Flats East Bank

More details coming soon!
Recent Events

Highlights from Lerner Lunchtime Linkup and Ice Cream Social

On July 12th, the Lerner Trainee Association sponsored its first Lerner Lunchtime Linkup in the LRI Commons. The purpose of the event is to foster interactions between trainees across all 11 departments housed in the Lerner Research Institute. By providing a forum for trainees to share lunch together, cross-lab collaborations might develop in ways that would not traditionally have happened. All attendees are encouraged to meet trainees outside of their academic circles. The LTA aims to host this event on a monthly basis.

The recent ice cream social, LTA’s second event in July, brought the trainee community together in a fun and refreshing way. Held at the LRI commons, graduate students and postdocs from all departments enjoyed a taste of 15 Mitchell’s™ ice cream flavors and seven toppings. Beyond the sweet treats, the event provided a chance for friends and colleagues to mingle while enjoying music and cornhole.

For this first ever event, the LTA provided a variety of gourmet cookies from the nearby bakery Insomnia Cookies as well coffee catered by Starbucks. The turnout was amazing! Nearly 100 trainees showed up within the first hour.

The LTA kept the momentum going by hosting another Lerner Lunchtime Linkup on Wednesday, August 2nd. With over 120 trainees in attendance, the event was a hit!
Meet your Fellow
Lavanya Jain, PhD

Where are you from?
I was born and raised in the capital of India, New Delhi. I moved to Himachal Pradesh, in the lower range of the Himalayas, for my undergraduate and graduate studies, and then finally moved to the United States in the fall of 2014 to pursue higher education.

What is your educational background?
I have a five-year dual degree with Bachelor’s and Master’s in Technology in the field of Biotechnology from Jaypee University of Information Technology, Himachal Pradesh, India that I pursued from 2009 to 2014. In 2014 Fall, I joined the doctoral program in Health Care Genetics at the School of Nursing in Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, which I graduated from in Spring 2021. During my time as a Ph.D. candidate, I had the opportunity to work at the Greenwood Genetic Center (GGC), Greenwood, South Carolina.

What did your graduate research focus on?
My graduate research focused on clinical and genetic profiling in a rare genetic syndrome, called Phelan-McDermid Syndrome (PMS) or 22q13 deletion syndrome.

How did you decide to pursue your current postdoc at Cleveland Clinic?
Close to my graduation in 2021, when looking for both academic and industrial positions suitable for my skill set, I got acquainted with my current PI, Dr. Lynn Bekris, at the American Society of Human Genetics Virtual Career Fair. With the opportunity to be an employee at a world-class medical center, I had a chance to work directly on patient samples and information, a step towards making a direct impact in their lives in my own small way.

Which lab do you work in and for how long have you been a part of this team?
I have the pleasure of working in the Bekris laboratory in the Genomic Medicine Institute (GMI). I have been with this fantastic team for more than two years now, and I am fortunate to be a part!

What is your current research focus?
My current research focus is biomarker discovery in dementia, particularly Dementia with Lewy Bodies. I look for biomarkers in the cerebrospinal fluid or blood plasma of different neurodegenerative disease groups that could be used to identify different forms of dementia during the life of a patient, even many years before the symptoms begin to appear. This is crucial for future diagnostic and therapeutic strategies for this population.

Do you have any recent accomplishments in your current position?
I was thrilled to attend the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference 2023 in Amsterdam, Netherlands on 16-20 July. There, I was honored to be selected as one of the panelists in the Lightning Presentation Round for Drug Development. I presented three posters at the conference. Currently, I have a publication in print and another one under submission process.

What do you like to do outside of the laboratory?
I am a dancer at heart and enjoy teaching Bollywood dance to kids, youth, and adults during the weekends, and I am also learning an Indian classical dance form known as Odissi. I am currently the coordinator of the Lerner Trainee Association, serving as the interim Chair for the Communications subcommittee, and I am a member of the GMI Engagement Committee as well.
Meet your Graduate Student
Marko Mrdjen

Where are you from?
I was born in Serbia, but I moved here to the United States when I was 4 years old. Since then, I've predominately been in the Cleveland area.

What is your educational background?
I completed my Bachelor of Science from Baldwin Wallace University in 2019. During this time, I carried out research work at both the Ohio State University and Clemson University studying microbiology. Following undergrad, I joined the Molecular Medicine PhD program where I am today.

Which lab do you work in and how long have you been a part of this team?
Currently, I am co-mentored by Mark Brown in the Cancer Biology department and Laura Nagy in the department of Inflammation and Immunity. I have been a part of both labs for about 2 years now carrying out my PhD thesis work.

How did you decide on the Cleveland Clinic?
My decision to conduct research at the Cleveland Clinic was driven by a combination of factors. The Clinic's esteemed global reputation, collaborative research atmosphere, and commitment to translating discoveries into practical solutions deeply resonated with my academic and career goals. Working alongside accomplished professionals in an innovative and diverse environment, I am excited to contribute to groundbreaking research that can directly impact patient care and advance healthcare.

What is your current research focus?
My research focus is on the role of the gut microbiome in alcohol-associated liver disease (ALD). Recently, many studies have pointed to the importance of the gut microbiome in a variety of diseases, especially in liver related pathologies. However, little is currently known about how gut-derived microbial metabolites can influence the course of ALD. Thus, my current work aims to understand both how these metabolites change in the circulation of patients with ALD and how they alter pathology in animal models of ALD. Right now, I am using synthetic bacterial communities to identify how microbial metabolites can protect against ethanol-induced liver injury to further our understanding of the microbiome in ALD.

"I am excited to contribute to groundbreaking research that can directly impact patient care and advance healthcare. Little is currently known about how gut-derived microbial metabolites can influence the course of ALD. Thus, my current work aims to understand both how these metabolites change in the circulation of patients with ALD and how they alter pathology in animal models of ALD."

What do you like to do outside of the work?
Outside of the lab I enjoy going on hikes when the weather is nice and keeping active by playing soccer. I recently spent two weeks volunteering at the Cape Town Penguin Reserve. I also enjoy music and trying different restaurants in the Cleveland area.
Accomplishments

Congratulations to Dr. Rawat from the Heemers Lab in the Department of Cancer Biology!
Dr. Chitra Rawat received the National Cancer Center (NCC 2023) Fellowship as a principal investigator for their proposal titled “Elucidating the role of CIT-Mediated phosphorylation on pre-mRNA splicing in prostate cancer”.

Congratulations to Dr. Biswas from the Stuehr Lab in the Department of Inflammation and Immunity!
The recent article by Dr. Pranjal Biswas titled “Indoleamine dioxygenase and tryptophan dioxygenase activities are regulated through control of cell heme allocation by nitric oxide” was published in the Journal of Biological Chemistry. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37116709/

Congratulations to Dr. Liu from the Ela Plow Lab in the Department of Biomedical Engineering!
Dr. Jia Liu recently won the first place for the oral presentation award at the Annual Scientific Meeting of American Spinal Injury Association 2023 in Atlanta, Georgia. The title of the talk was "Loss of cortical inhibition in chronic spinal cord injury: clinical implications for sensorimotor impairment, functional capability, and self-care independence".

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

Congratulations to Nam Than from the Kim Lab in the Department of Inflammation and Immunity!
Nam was awarded the 2022-2023 Danone North America Gut Microbiome, Yogurt and Probiotics Fellowship Grant offered by Danone North America for his proposal entitled “Evaluation of barrier functions and mucin synthesis mediated by next-generation probiotics in a human gut-on-a-chip”.

Congratulations to Abigail Dooley from the O’Connor Lab in the Department of Infection Biology!
Abigail recently defended her dissertation titled ”Role of human cytomegalovirus-encoded G-protein coupled receptors during viral infection”.

Congratulations to Dr. Matthews from the O’Connor Lab in the Department of Infection Biology!
The recent review by Dr. Stephen Matthews titled “Chromatin control of human cytomegalovirus” was published in mBio.
https://doi.org/10.1128/mbio.00326-23

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Accomplishments

Congratulations to Morgan Engelhart from the Ahern Lab in the Cardiovascular and Metabolic Sciences Department!
The recent article by Morgan Engelhart titled “The NQR complex regulates the immunomodulatory function of \textit{bacteroides thetaiotaomicron}” was published in \textit{The Journal of Immunology}.
https://journals.aai.org/jimmunol/article/doi/10.4049/jimmunol.2200892/265790/The-NQR-Complex-Regulates-the-Immunomodulatory?searchresult=1

Congratulations to Dr. Jain from the Bekris Lab in the Genomic Medicine Institute!
Dr. Lavanya Jain was also selected to give a talk on "ATN cerebrospinal fluid biomarkers in Dementia with Lewy Bodies: Initial results from the United States Dementia with Lewy Bodies consortium” at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) 2023 at Amsterdam, Netherlands. She presented three posters, one of the titles was mentioned above, other two were titled, "AD and ADRD differences in luminex and lumipulse atn categories", and "Exploring biomarker signatures of the peripheral immune response in alzheimer's disease: NIA artificial intelligence and machine learning consortium".

We love celebrating trainee accomplishments! To submit your own news or to recognize someone else, email LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org
Congratulations to Edward Carson from the Muschler Lab in the Department of Biomedical Engineering!

Edward Carson was selected to give a talk at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the International Society for Cell & Gene Therapy (ISCT) in Paris, France (supported by the Mary B Stark Travel Award). The title of the talk was "Variation in extracellular vesicles among clonally derived mesenchymal stromal cell populations". Edward was also selected to present three related posters at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) in Boston, MA. For related work, Edward also won the 2nd Place Poster Award at the Cleveland Clinic Inflammation Impact Area Poster Session in May.

Outside of the lab, as President of the CWRU Biomedical Engineering Graduate Student Association (BME GSA), Edward received the CWRU Outstanding Graduate Student Organization Officer Award 2022-2023. Additionally, the BME GSA received the CWRU Outstanding Graduate Student Organization Award 2022-2023. Edward also received the CWRU School of Graduate Studies Department of Biomedical Engineering Excellence in Graduate Teaching Assistantship Award in May.

Lastly, Edward was selected as one of two CWRU graduate students to attend the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Catalyzing Advocacy in Science and Engineering (CASE) Policy Workshop in Washington, D.C. in March.
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

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, Lavanya Jain

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