February Newsletter

We made it through the first month of a new year! We hope you have taken some time to reset and work towards your resolutions. It may be difficult to feel ambitious with the weather, but in our monthly feature Dr. Maksim Sinyuk gives us some great ideas of how to beat the winter blues. Don’t let the cold stop you from getting out and exploring Cleveland!

This month we feature Lerner alumnus Dr. Ángel Reyes-Rodríguez, fellow Dr. Ajai Tripathi, and graduate student Nazmin Bithi.

We also provide recaps of the recent LEADERS seminar, photos from the Lunar New Year celebration, as well as upcoming events that you won’t want to miss!

Don’t forget to submit your accomplishments so they can be featured in our newsletter and, as always, stay active on our LinkedIn group.

Join our LinkedIn group

The Lerner Postdoctoral Association and Alumni Network is a group of current and former postdoctoral fellows, research associates and graduate students at Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Institute. Our goals are to provide opportunities for career development, networking and highlighting our scientific achievements. We also post reminders about upcoming events, so make sure to turn on notifications.

Request to join today and tell all of your fellow trainees!
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MEET OUR ALUMNI
Interview with Lerner Alumnus Dr. Ángel Reyes-Rodríguez

“...look for joy in whatever [you] do... it could lead you to clues as to what your next career step might be.”
- Dr. Ángel Reyes-Rodríguez

When did you work in Lerner and in which lab?
I worked at Lerner between 2016 and mid 2019 in the laboratory of Cornelia Bergmann.

What did you work on at Lerner?
I studied the role of IL-10 signaling in macrophages and IFNγ signaling in astrocytes during coronavirus infection in the central nervous system.

Where are you now, and what do you work on?
I am the Director of the McNair Scholars Program at Cleveland State University. My job is to help undergraduate students become successful graduate school applicants and give them tools to succeed once there.

How did being at Lerner prepare you for your current role?
There are many skills I developed at Lerner that prepared me for my current role. The most important one has been establishing collaborations. At Lerner, there is a lot of collaboration and comradery between labs. In my current role, I collaborate with people from different parts of the university to gather the resources my students need.

What is something you miss from your time at Lerner?
I loved many things at Lerner, from the research itself, to people in the Department of Neurosciences, and my work on the LPDA. But what I miss the most are my former labmates, PI, and friends from the neighboring labs. There is nothing like having those people around to celebrate when an experiment worked, or to commiserate when it didn’t.

How was the transition to your current role?
I had to learn a lot to be effective at my current job. Fortunately, many aspects of my role come very naturally to me, so it has been a successful transition so far.

What is your favorite part of your current job?
My favorite part of my job at Cleveland State is that I can see how I’m making a difference in someone’s life.

What advice would you give current Lerner postdocs?
My advice for Lerner postdocs is to look for joy in whatever they do. A lot of times life in a lab can be hard, but you can always find joy in different aspects of your work. Not only will you feel more fulfillment, but it could lead you to clues as to what your next career step might be.
MEET YOUR FELLOW

Dr. Ajai Tripathi is from Varanasi, a city in the northern part of India. He was a veterinarian who dreamed of becoming a research scientist. Dr. Tripathi achieved his dream when he completed his PhD at Anand Agricultural University in Gujarat, India investigating myostatin gene silencing in chicken and goat myoblasts with the objective of enhancing meat production. After completing his graduate training, Dr. Tripathi’s new dream was to understand how the central nervous system (CNS) works and what happens in the microenvironment of the CNS in neurodegenerative diseases. He began his journey as a postdoctoral fellow at Case Western Reserve University in the lab of Dr. Neena Singh where he was very productive and published his findings on the underlying mechanisms of various neurodegenerative diseases. In 2016, he joined the lab of Dr. Ranjan Dutta in the Neurosciences department at Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Institute. Dr. Tripathi’s research focuses on manipulating miRNAs which are present in lesions from multiple sclerosis (MS), a neurodegenerative disease. He is using miRNAs to inhibit the ongoing demyelination and promote myelin synthesis, which will advance the field significantly and could lead to new treatment options for demyelinating diseases. Dr. Tripathi has been quite successful in this research and has recently published a novel function of miR-27a in MS lesions. This study, published in Cell Reports, shows that an optimal level of miRNA is necessary for successful remyelination. In many diseases, including neurodegenerative disorders, most of the research efforts are made to repair tissue. However, Dr. Tripathi explains that it is also necessary to discover inhibitory factors that are present in the tissue microenvironment to treat these diseases. When he is not in the laboratory, Dr. Tripathi enjoys reading, watching movies and playing soccer.

“In many diseases, including neurodegenerative disorders, most of the time effort is made to repair the tissue; however, it is also necessary to find inhibitory factors present in the tissue microenvironment.”

-Dr. Ajai Tripathi
Nazmin Bithi is a graduate student who recently won the Best Poster Award at the 39th Annual Cleveland Clinic Research Day for her poster titled “Caloric Restriction alters Sulphydrome Profiles in Major Metabolic Tissues Dependent on Cystathionine Gamma Lyase Activity.” This research was focused on determination of endogenous hydrogen sulfide in different tissue and tissue-specific sulfhydration (post-translational modification of protein) along with their biological function under 50% dietary restriction. Nazmin is from Bangladesh and graduated from the University of Asia Pacific with a Bachelor’s in pharmacy. She is a Cleveland State University student in the lab of Dr. Christopher Hine in the Department of Cardiovascular & Metabolic Sciences. The Hine lab focuses on aging and anti-aging interventions research. Currently, the best studied and most effective interventions and genetic models to extend both lifespan and healthspan across evolutionary boundaries are dietary restriction and disruption of the growth hormone (GH)/insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1) axis. A central molecular phenomenon and possible mechanism of action shared amongst several dietary, pharmaceutical, and genetic models of longevity and improved healthspan is the increased production capacity and/or bioavailability of hydrogen sulfide (H_2S) gas. One of the mechanisms of action of H_2S is through post-translational modification of proteins which is known as protein sulfhydration. Nazmin’s research focuses on identifying those sulfhydrated proteins and their biological functions in a tissue-specific manner under different types of dietary restriction and growth hormone conditions in mouse models. Nazmin chose to work at LRI because it is a top-ranking biomedical research institution, and a benchmark of research success. The institution offers a great opportunity to learn from the best scholars/PIs. Nazmin appreciates the opportunity to learn valuable research techniques, instrumentation, and professionalism which is important to achieve her career goals. During her rotation time as a graduate student in Dr. Hine's lab, she came to realize that his patient guidance, encouragement, and helpful advice are the best fit for graduate student life, and she feels very lucky to have him as her PI. Outside of her research, Nazmin enjoys fishing, spending time with her cat, and watching Netflix.
MEET YOUR LPDA CAREER DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Dr. Priya Putta is from Mumbai, India and obtained her BS and a MS degrees in microbiology from Sophia College for Women at the University of Mumbai. She moved to the United States to pursue her PhD in Cell and Molecular Biology at Kent State University. For her PhD, she explored the fundamental nature of lipids and their influence on protein interactions in plants. After her PhD, she wanted to take this passion for lipids further into understanding their role in human disease and health. This brought her to her current position as a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Linda Graham’s lab at Lerner. The overall goal of her research is to enable the body to recover and heal from cardiovascular surgery, such as balloon angioplasty, faster, more efficiently and without scar production and thus avoiding complication and reoperation. In her free time, Dr. Putta likes to spend time in nature as much as the Cleveland weather will allow. She has a new-found interest for rowing, which she believes stems from her desire to be outdoors and to be one with nature.

Dr. Sumit Bhutada is from Mumbai, Maharashtra in the western part of India. Dr. Sumit obtained his Bachelor’s in zoology from Birla College (Mumbai University), Masters from Hislop College (Nagpur University) and earned his PhD in biochemistry from National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health – Indian Council of Medical Research (Mumbai University). Currently, he is working with Dr. Suneel Apte in the Biomedical Engineering department as a postdoctoral fellow. His work is focused on the identification of proteolytically cleaved substrates and their proteases using a proteomics-based approach. He chose to work at Cleveland Clinic because there are just a few labs around the world which specialize in using proteomics-based tools for this purpose. Apart from lab work, he enjoys enhancing his skills as a photographer and cinematographer.

MEET YOUR LGSA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Katie Troike is a graduate student from Bath, Ohio, a suburb of Akron. She attended Ohio University in Athens, Ohio where she received her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. She is currently studying the role of iron metabolism in glioblastoma (GBM). GBM tumor cells have been shown to increase their iron uptake, which drives proliferation and tumor growth. Her project focuses on the iron regulatory protein, HFE, which drives iron sequestration by preventing cellular iron export hypothesizing that GBM tumors overexpress HFE to further sequester iron and enhance tumorigenicity. To test this, she is currently looking at how modulation of HFE influences iron homeostasis in mouse glioma cells and how this ultimately impacts cell viability and tumor growth in vivo. Katie chose to work at Lerner because in addition to Cleveland Clinic being ranked as one of the top hospitals in the country, she really enjoys the collaborative environment fostered here. Outside of work she enjoys home renovation projects and building furniture with her dad, hiking with her husband, and computer gaming in her spare time.

“Cleveland Clinic provides a specialized research environment to identify proteolytically cleaved substrates using proteomic-based tools.”
-Dr. Sumit Bhutada

“We have the unique ability to work closely with clinicians in order to drive translational research forward.”
-Katie Troike
UPCOMING EVENTS

2020 Lerner Experience in Advanced Development of Educational and Research Skills (LEADERS)

WHO: Janice M. Bianco, MA
Manager, International Physician & Scientist Services
Mary Katherine Curry
Assistant Manager, International Physician & Scientist Services

WHEN: February 10, 2020
4:00 - 5:00 PM

WHERE: NC1-202

Please come with questions!
UPCOMING EVENTS

Northeastern Ohio Science and Engineering Fair
Trainee Volunteers Needed!

Lerner Trainee Outreach Opportunity

Northeastern Ohio Science and Engineering Fair

NEOSEF 2020
March 9 - 10 at CSU

Monday, March 9th
10 AM - 1 PM Setting up the gym
1 PM - 8 PM Student registration
Shifts can be as little as 2 hours.
Monday volunteers can also judge on Tuesday at the fair.

Please visit http://bit.ly/NEOSEF2020
to sign up for a Monday shift

Tuesday, March 10th
1:30 PM - 5:45 PM Special LRI Awards judging
3 PM - 6 PM Reception set up
6 PM Reception for judges
*Non-judges only; heavy lifting may be involved

Please sign up for Tuesday opportunities
by emailing RETC@ccf.org

Questions? Please contact RETC@ccf.org
UPCOMING EVENTS

LGSA Graduate Student Coffee Hour

Join the Lerner Graduate Student Association for

Graduate Student Coffee Hour!

DATE: Friday February 14th at 2:00PM

LOCATION: Lerner Commons (Garden Side)

Need a break? Have comments to share? We’d like to hear from you!

Stop by for refreshments with your LGSA team and learn about our upcoming plans for 2020!

By Grad Students, For Grad Students
RECENT EVENTS

Highlights from LEADERS Seminars

-Ashley Nemes-Baran, PhD

Did you miss the LEADERS seminar on ‘Resources Available to Lerner Trainees’ by Kelsey Bohn, PhD and Sarah Kostiha Smith, MEd, MBA? Here is a recap!

The first LEADERS seminar of 2020 was presented by Kelsey Bohn, PhD and Sarah Kostiha Smith, MEd, MBA outlining some of the resources available to postdoctoral research fellows, research scholars and graduate students at Lerner Research Institute. The Research Education and Training Center (RETC) is located in ND4-06. Their office provides support to LRI trainees, so make sure you take advantage of the resources available to you during your time at Lerner! For current trainees, these resources can be found here. The RETC intranet page provides information for trainees on graduate programs, the LGSA and LPDA, living in Cleveland with information on housing options, award opportunities, and career development resources. For postdoctoral research fellows, the handbook is available through this page as well as a link to request time off of work and view payroll and benefits information. The graduate student handbook is coming soon.

If you have not been to the Walker Fitness Center yet, you should make it a point to go! The fitness center is on campus and offers a wide selection of exercise equipment from cardio to strength training. If you are looking to move and would like assistance in finding housing in Cleveland or even a roommate, the Student Housing Portal can help. This portal gives advice on creating a budget, offers questions to ask landlords and input on how to inspect a property and sign a lease. International trainees can find support for visas through the Graduate Medical Education office, who will be giving a LEADERS seminar on February 10th. A resource packet designed for international trainees is being developed and will be available soon! Trainees interested in improving their English-speaking skills in a friendly and casual environment can also participate in the Conversational English Program working in small groups with a volunteer coach. For more information, contact Claire Kirwen at KirwenC@ccf.org.

Keep an eye out for email correspondence from RETC@ccf.org for funding announcements, job opportunities and important information for trainees at LRI. If you are not aware of the Floyd D. Loop Alumni Library, you should check it out! It is located on the 3rd floor of the NA building and offers assistance with searching the literature, interlibrary loans and journal subscriptions which can be accessed remotely. Working in research is an incredibly demanding and stressful job. Sometimes we just need someone to offer guidance. Postdocs and research scholars have access to the Caring for Caregivers program to get confidential support. While this program is covered by employee health insurance, graduate students can still contact the program once for a free consultation to find help with their available resources. Kelsey and Sarah also discussed the various resources available outside of LRI that are useful to trainees seeking specific career paths in basic and clinical research, teaching, industry, business, technology and more. There are so many resources available that you may not even know about! For any questions or advice, don’t hesitate to talk to someone in the RETC office. They’re here to help! The slides from this presentation can be found on the Lerner intranet page here.
RECENT EVENTS

Lerner Lunar New Year Celebration

On January 17th, the Lerner Chinese Students and Scholars Association co-hosted a Lunar New Year celebration with the Lerner Diversity Council. The evening was filled with performances, games, chinese food, demonstrations, and more. Over 400 attendees stopped by to take part in the festivities and learn more about these valued traditions.

Learn more about the Cleveland Clinic Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA): The CCF CSSA is made up of Chinese members throughout the Cleveland Clinic in a wide variety of positions including many trainees here at Lerner. The organization was formed over 10 years ago and is currently lead by CSSA President, Pengjing Huang. They host various activities and events throughout the year and wish you all luck in the Year of the Rat for 2020!
Where Did the Snow Go?
-Maksim Sinyuk, PhD

When most people think of Cleveland, Ohio they may not imagine there is a lot to do in the winter. However, Clevelanders aren’t afraid of a little cold and this has been one of the mildest winters in my living memory. In fact, the Plain Dealer has reported that we have received 13.4 fewer inches of snow than usual and the temperature for January has been 10°F above normal. With such unseasonably warm weather, Clevelanders have plenty of opportunities to try all of the exciting things the city has to offer. Below are some of my recommendations!

Attention all dessert lovers, pastry aficionados, and sugar enthusiasts! Have you been feeling that your sweet tooth has not been satisfied this winter? Do you find yourselves drifting towards confections of every kind during parties? We have an answer for you. The Madison is hosting the 2020 Cleveland Dessert Festival this year on February 16th, featuring the most delectable sweets in Cleveland. The event is child friendly and each guest will receive their own treat box. Tickets are $15 for both adults and kids and can be purchased [here](#). Please keep in mind that each individual will need a ticket regardless of age. Guests will be able to sample a treat from each dessert vendor and additional treats will be available for sale.

February may not be the brightest or most glamorous month of the year in Cleveland, but we’ve learned to adapt. Brite Winter was created as a way to escape the winter blues and celebrate the power of music. This non-profit festival was created to bring all Clevelanders together to discover new music and art in their community. It has been a tradition for over 10 years and spans three locations along with hundreds of bands and artists. The event, on February 22, is free although a donation of $10 is appreciated to offset costs. Children and adults will need tickets which can be obtained [here](#).

An annual tradition, the Cleveland Auto Show, comes back to the I-X Center from February 21st to March 1st. Come and see hundreds of car exhibits featuring ride and drives, vehicle giveaways, and a classic car competition. Parents and kids are welcome to sit and explore almost every vehicle on display and participate in simulated racing challenges. Tickets are $14 for adults and $12 for children ages 7-12 and can be purchased online [here](#). Kids under 6 get in free. There will also be a Harvest for Hunger food collection opening day Friday, February 21st and guests are encouraged to bring in in perishable food items for donation.
Faculty Tenure-Track (9 Month)  
**Biological Sciences, Stark Campus, Kent State University**  
Kent State University at Stark invites applications for a full-time, nine-month, Tenure-Track position as an Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences Beginning Fall 2020. A Ph.D. in Biological Sciences with specialization in Cellular and Molecular Biology (especially Microbiology) is preferred. Teaching experience is required and post-doctoral experience is beneficial.  
For more details [click here](#)

Visiting Assistant Professor  
**Biology (Molecular Biologist), The College of Wooster**  
The Biology Department at The College of Wooster invite applications for a one-year visiting position in Molecular Biology at the level of Assistant Professor, beginning in August 2020. Applicants with expertise in any area of molecular and cellular biology will be considered. Applicants should submit a letter of application; curriculum vitae; unofficial graduate transcripts; a teaching philosophy statement; a statement of research interests; a statement detailing how the applicant has engaged and/or expects to engage with issues of diversity and inclusion in the classroom and the curriculum, as well as on campus and in the broader community; and three reference letters through.  
For more details [click here](#)

Research Scientist  
**Molecular Biology, UES Inc. Dayton, OH**  
Research Scientist position available, focused in Microbiology, to support research projects working at the Air Force Research Laboratory, Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, OH. The Research Scientist will have the opportunity to work across multiple collaborative projects exploring microbial biodegradation and biocorrosion and aid the team in investigating the physiology of bacteria and fungi that contaminate USAF assets.  
For more details [click here](#)

Data Scientist,  
**ThermoFisher Scientific, Grand Island, NY**  
Seeking a highly motivated Data Scientist with hands-on experience computational scientist/informaticist. The successful candidate will join a multifunctional team and will help in the development of new cell culture products to support the commercial production of novel biologic therapeutics. PhD in Bioinformatics, Life Sciences, Molecular Biology, Computer Science or related field.  
For more details [click here](#)

Postdoc Fellow  
**Cancer Biology, University of Cincinnati**  
The Department of Cancer Biology within the College of Medicine at the University of Cincinnati is seeking an analytical chemist with expertise in small molecule/metabolite identification using LCMS to join a multidisciplinary cancer research team of cancer biologists, bioinformaticians and translational investigators in NIH and privately funded research to identify metabolic vulnerabilities in malignant cancers of the kidney, brain, and pancreas. Ph.D., M.D., or M.D./Ph.D., required.  
For more details [click here](#)

Research Fellow, Pulmonary Biology  
**Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center**  
A postdoctoral position in the Kalin lab is available immediately to study cellular and molecular mechanisms critical for lung repair after injury, the effects of proton radiotherapy on lung cancer treatment, radioresistance and pulmonary fibrosis. The positions will involve the use of animal models, human cell lines and cutting-edge technologies, including single-cell RNA sequencing and nanoparticle delivery systems. PhD, MD or equivalent degree in a related discipline. The candidates should have a strong laboratory background with an experience in cellular and molecular biology techniques, small animals handling (preferably), microscopy and biomaging.  
For more details [click here](#)
Congratulations to Dr. Kirsten Evonuk from the DeSilva lab in the Department of Neurosciences!

Dr. Evonuk published an original article titled, “Reduction of AMPA receptor activity on mature oligodendrocytes attenuates loss of myelinated axons in autoimmune neuroinflammation” in Science Advances (January 2020). For more details, click here.

Congratulations to Dr. Mohammed Tanjimur Rahman from the Stenina-Adognravi lab in the Department of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Sciences!

Dr. Rahman published an original article titled, “Effects of thrombospondin-4 on pro-inflammatory phenotype differentiation and apoptosis in macrophages” in Cell Death & Disease (January 2020). For more details, click here.

Congratulations to Dr. Aniruddha Das from the Dana lab in the Department of Neurosciences!

Dr. Das published an original article titled, “Reversible Loss of Hippocampal Function in a Mouse Model of Demyelination/Remyelination” in Frontiers in Cellular Neuroscience (January 2020). For more details, click here.
Congratulations to Dr. Samreen Jatana from the McDonald lab in the Department of Inflammation and Immunity!

Dr. Jatana received fellowship awards from the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation and Pfizer as Principal Investigator, titled “Extraintestinal Manifestations of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) in the Skin.” The goal of this project is to establish and validate the first preclinical model for IBD with the extraintestinal manifestation Pyoderma Gangrenosum (PG) and compare it to human IBD/PG. Development of this model will enable researchers to probe common disease mechanisms, define markers of disease progression, and identify more effective targets for treatment for IBD patients with skin disease.

Congratulations to Dr. Nozha Borjini from the Davalos lab in the Department of Neurosciences!

Dr. Borjini received a National Multiple Sclerosis Society Postdoctoral Fellowship, titled, “Study of Blood Brain Barrier Disruption in Neuroinflammatory Disease.” The goal of this project is to study the specific cell-cell interactions involved with BBB disruption in the context of experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis (EAE), an established animal model for multiple sclerosis (MS). This work aims to identify when, where, and through which molecular pathways these cell-cell interactions cause vascular alterations and drive peripheral immune-cell recruitment to the CNS. Findings from this research may result in identification of novel targets and/or the development of new strategies to treat MS patients.
We are thrilled to open submissions for the 10th issue of *Stethos*, the medical humanities journal of the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine. In previous issues, *Stethos* has provided a wonderful forum to showcase the incredible diversity and creativity of our students, faculty, and colleagues, and we hope to continue this tradition in our 10th issue. We are seeking submissions of short fiction, reflective writing, poetry, personal narrative, essays, artwork, and photography. Submissions may be about any medicine-related topic (including the trials and tribulations of medical research); we are excited to include benchside perspectives, reflections, and artistic expressions from LRI trainees.

In celebration of our 10th anniversary, we will be organizing a feature piece highlighting reflections from past and present students (from any school/discipline). To contribute to this feature, we encourage you to consider writing a letter to your past or future self about lessons you have learned, dreams you hope to achieve, predictions about the world—the list goes on and on!

Please view previous issues of *Stethos* on our website to see examples of pieces that were published in the past: [http://portals.clevelandclinic.org/lcm2/Stethos/](http://portals.clevelandclinic.org/lcm2/Stethos/).

Our deadline for submissions this year will be **Monday, March 9, 2020**. Please see below for specific submission guidelines. Feel free to contact the Editors-in-Chief, Alice (tzenga@ccf.org) and Ellen (brinzae@ccf.org), with questions. We look forward to receiving your submissions!

All the best,

*Stethos Editorial Team*

**Submission Guidelines**

Please send submissions using our online form (click for link).

- Up to four submissions per author; **please send each submission on a separate form**
- Prose should be less than 2000 words, submitted in Microsoft Word
- Poems should be less than 75 lines, submitted in Microsoft Word
- Submit all photographs and artwork as a jpeg file (we will contact you later for high-quality file format)
- All photographs and artwork must include a caption

Please save the submission/illustration as the title (or abbreviated title) followed by the author's last name.

- For the article, "Generic" by Dr. Jones, save as follows: **Generic_Jones.doc**

For questions or issues regarding submissions, please contact the editors at cclcmhumanities@gmail.com.

**Review process**

All submissions will be peer-reviewed by a student-run editorial board consisting of co-editors and two editors-in-chief. The editorial board will review contributions for originality, style, and content.

**Patient consent/confidentiality**

Our confidentiality policy is based on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Please refer to this document with regards to any questions about patient confidentiality ([http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/)). As a rule, authors/artists should protect the confidentiality of all individuals whose personal details may be revealed without their consent.
GET INVOLVED!

Did you publish a paper recently or receive a grant or award? We want to highlight your accomplishments in the next newsletter! As part of the LPDA, we strive to improve this organization to its maximum potential. To do so, we will need the participation and input of all postdoctoral fellows and research associates. If you would like to be involved with our events or have any suggestions or accomplishments we can highlight, please email lri-postdoc-assoc@ccf.org.

LPDA Communications Team

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