

Lerner Trainee Newsletter

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This newsletter is written by members of the Lerner Trainee Association Communications Committee. We welcome your questions and suggestions!

Email LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org to connect with us.

Welcome to the June 2025 Lerner Trainee Newsletter! We're here to keep you informed and inspired with important updates and resources to help you succeed in your training!

This month, don't miss our newest brain teaser in the *Puzzle* section! While we're no longer able to offer prizes, we'll continue bringing fresh puzzles each month to spark curiosity and help you unwind. In *Recent Events*, we highlight the past quarter's major happenings, including Graduate Student Appreciation Week and CWRU Student Leadership Awards Ceremony. Be sure to check out our *Upcoming Events* section for exciting opportunities just around the corner!

Meet Dr. Priya Das Sinha, a postdoctoral fellow whose research investigates heme maturation in Cytochrome P450 enzymes and the regulatory role of nitric oxide. Joining her is PhD student Sabré Randall, whose research explores how glioblastoma tumor cells alter microglial responses in a sex-dependent manner. Be sure to visit our *Recent Accomplishments* section and congratulate your colleagues for their awards, publications, talks, and career milestones. Want to get featured? Check out the *Opportunities* section and start applying.

This month, *CCF Innovations* is redefining what's possible in healthcare by uniting science, strategy, and compassion. From AI-driven diagnostics to groundbreaking partnerships, this feature explores five visionary ideas transforming the future of patient care – and how research, philanthropy, and innovation came together to revolutionize autism screening.

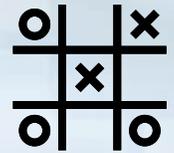
Lastly, trainees can find *Wellness Resources* that provide Yoga, Meditation, Fitness, and Culinary Medicine sessions. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please reach out to us at LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org.



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.](#)

LTA Newsletter Puzzle



Congratulations to March Puzzle winner Derick DuFriend!



How to play:

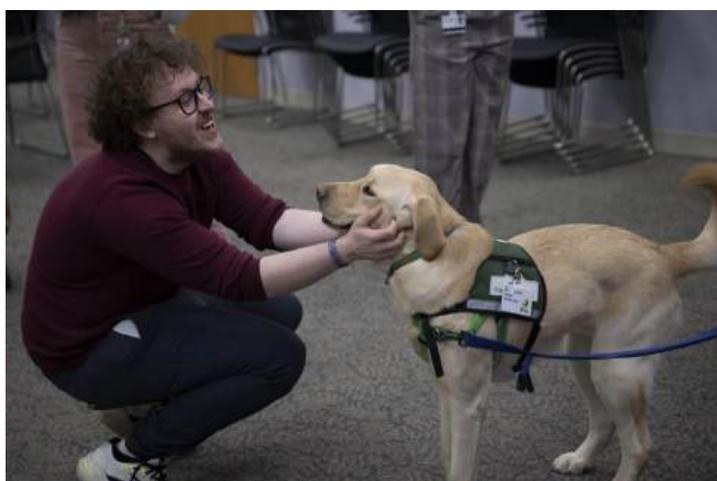
- Figure out the correct sentence. **Hint: Ants**
- Unfortunately, we're no longer able to offer prizes. However, we'll continue bringing you new puzzles for your enjoyment!

A N O N' A E
S F N O J E F N I S A T
Z Y F G O. M F O N T S J,
N I T L C X T S N I T
N I X E Y G I O V S Z Z
Q E N N N A E
E R T F M F G O F S V T J
O R M X S D Z T O.

Recent Events

2025 Graduate Student Appreciation Week

In April 2025, the Research Education and Training Center (RETC) joined research institutions across the country to celebrate Graduate Student Appreciation Week (GSAW), honoring the contributions of over 170 graduate students at the Lerner Research Institute. The week-long celebration, held from April 7–11, featured a rich lineup of events aimed at professional development, community building, and plain old fun. Highlights included a career Q&A with Dr. Jessica McCourt on transitioning to industry, a panel on non-PI academic careers co-sponsored by the Cancer Impact Area and Lerner Trainee Association (LTA), and a behind-the-scenes session on scientific publishing with Dr. Natalie Cain from *Cell Reports*. The LTA also showcased its diverse subcommittees and initiatives to inspire greater trainee involvement. Midweek stress relief came courtesy of Cleveland Clinic's beloved Caring Canines, while the week wrapped up with a lively social event celebrating the hard work and dedication of our graduate students.



Cleveland Clinic Caring Canines bring smiles to GSAW.
Photos courtesy of the LRI Communications Office

Recent Events

CWRU Student Leadership Award Ceremony

At the 2025 CWRU Student Leadership Award Ceremony, members of the Lerner Trainee Association (LTA) were recognized for their impactful contributions. **Zaida Laventure** and **Andras Ponti** each received the Outstanding Graduate Student Organization Member Award—Zaida for her dedicated support and initiative in the Social & Outreach subcommittee, and Andras for his leadership in the Mentorship & Advocacy subcommittee, particularly his work on the Buddy Program. The ceremony also spotlighted the debut of **LTA Science Slam**, which won the Dorothy Pijan Award for Outstanding New Student Event. This lively and inclusive event invited trainees to present their research in a creative, one-minute format, blending humor, costumes, and slam poetry to make science fun and accessible. It was a hit among participants and audience alike, creating a space where scientific ideas could be shared with energy and creativity. The recognition of both individual excellence and innovative programming reflects LTA's continued growth as a driving force in fostering community and collaboration at Lerner.



Upcoming Events



Bring Your Own Lunch with RETC | Tuesday 6/24, 1:00- 1:45 PM|

Open to all trainees; however, registration is limited to the first 20 participants. Please register only if you can attend. Thank you, RETC!

[START NOW](#)

Upcoming Events



**Leave your mark on
the future of science!**

Research caregivers are invited to sign their names on steel beams which will connect our new research buildings.

June 2 - 30
NC1 Garden Hallway

Questions? LRICommOffice@ccf.org

Upcoming Events



WORKSHOP

Building Authentic Professional Relationships

July 10th 3:00 – 4:15PM

In person: NE1-205

Strong professional relationships go beyond collecting business cards or LinkedIn connections—they're built on authenticity, trust, and mutual value. In this session, we'll explore how to apply transferable skills—like communication, active listening, and emotional intelligence—to identify and grow the relationships already within your reach, initiate new connections with confidence, and maintain meaningful engagement over time.

Speakers:

Kelsey Bohn, PhD Postdoctoral Training and Programs	Priya Putta, PhD Global Research Education
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Research Education and Training Center
Lerner Research Institute

Transferable Skills

This year's series will highlight transferable skills. As an attendee, you will participate in short guided self-reflection and group discussions focused on skills you can learn now and apply to any career you want to pursue with your PhD, making you a more competitive candidate.

Register to attend at

<https://forms.office.com/r/NP1iVKT1XR>

- Light refreshments will be served.
- Florida trainees meet in FRIC Main conference Room 111.

All postdocs, research scholars, and PhD students welcome!

Upcoming Events



45th Annual
Research Day

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Monday, May 19 - Friday, July 11

Cleveland Clinic has a long history of pioneering research to improve the lives of patients. Research Day celebrates this tradition with caregivers across the enterprise.

All senior and junior investigators are invited to submit basic, translational and clinical research to participate in Research Day poster sessions and awards.

Submit Your Abstract

For more information and to submit your abstract, visit:
<https://intranet.lerner.ccf.org/researchday/>

Poster Presentations

Abstracts will be considered for in-person poster presentation on Research Day.

Awards

Eligible abstracts will be considered for F. Merlin Bumpus Junior Investigator Awards, Impact Area Awards and the ***NEW*** Kattan Award for Best Research Using Quantitative Health Science Methods.

Important Dates

Monday, May 19

Abstract submissions open

Friday, July 11

Abstract submissions close

Wednesday, October 22

Bumpus Basic Research
Finalist Presentations

Wednesday, October 29

Bumpus Clinical Research
Finalist Presentations

Wednesday, November 12

Research Day

Questions? Contact ResearchDay@ccf.org



Meet your Fellow

Priya Das Sinha

PhD

Where are you from?

I am from India.

What is your educational background?

I obtained my Master's degree in Biotechnology from St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, India. In my Masters project I had the opportunity to do a project at Indian Institute of Chemical Biology under the supervision of Dr Jayati Sengupta on 'Understanding the role of conserved GTPase Hflx in ribosome biogenesis'. I pursued my PhD from Dr Subrata Adak's lab at Indian Institute of Chemical Biology (IICB) and earned my Doctorate degree in Science from Jadavpur University. My thesis explored the role of Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase present in extracellular vesicles of *L. major* in host-parasite interaction. Upon obtaining my PhD, I served as a project associate in the laboratory of Dr. U. Mabalirajan at the IICB translational unit, further refining my skills.

What did your graduate research focus on?

My graduate research focused on the role of Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase in posttranscriptional repression of TNF- α expression in macrophages during infection. Our research uncovers a new virulence role of Leishmanial GAPDH found in Extracellular Vesicles, which is transferred from the parasite to host during infection, binding to the AU-rich region in the 3' UTR of TNF- α mRNA, leading to its suppression and consequently influencing the host immune response. So, targeting the LmGAPDH gene located in EVs may present a promising avenue for the development of new treatments in the battle against leishmaniasis.

How did you decide to pursue your current postdoc at Cleveland Clinic?

After my PhD paper was published in an international journal, I got the offer. I was overwhelmed and felt that Cleveland Clinic is the ideal place to grow as a scientist.

Which lab do you work in and for how long have you been a part of this team?

I have been working with Dr. Dennis Stuehr and the team in the Department of Inflammation and Immunity; it's been almost one and half years since I joined.

What is your current research focus?

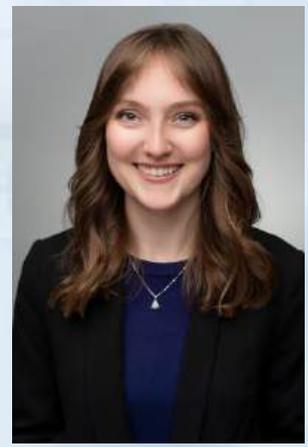
My current research focusses on the mechanism of heme maturation in Cytochrome P450, a superfamily of heme containing enzymes that are essential for the metabolism of drugs, xenobiotics, and endogenous substances. Additionally, we investigate the significant role of Nitric oxide in regulating Cytochrome P450 activities by managing the distribution of heme within the cell.

What do you like to do outside of the laboratory?

Outside my research, I am fond of painting and engaging in arts and crafts, as it fosters my creativity. I have a strong affinity for music and poetry. I enjoy travelling to different places and enjoy cherishing moments with my family. Last but not the least I take pleasure in experimenting with new recipes in the kitchen, where science meets flavorful outcomes.

Meet your Graduate Student

Sabré Randall



Where are you from?

I grew up here in Cleveland, Ohio!

What is your educational background?

I earned dual degrees at The Ohio State University – a BS in Biology (Pre-Health Professional) and a BA in Spanish (Peninsular Literature and Culture). As an undergraduate, I participated in the SEA-PHAGES research program, aimed to isolate and identify novel bacteriophages. Through this program, I attended my first research symposium where I saw the difference biomedical research can make in a clinical setting. I also spent time working in the clinic, where I saw firsthand how patients are impacted by disease. In addition, I had the invaluable opportunity to volunteer with MEDLIFE, shadowing local physicians abroad. These experiences drove my passion to better understand diseases and contribute to advancing treatments.

Which lab do you work in and for how long have you been a part of this team?

I am excited to have joined Dr. Justin Lathia's lab this year as a first year Molecular Medicine PhD student! I am grateful to be able to work alongside and learn from a knowledgeable and passionate team dedicated to advancing our understanding of malignant brain tumors – specifically glioblastoma. Our lab focuses on the tumor microenvironment studying cell-cell communication, tumor-immune interactions, and cell adhesion. Before starting the PhD program, I worked as a Research Technician in the Lathia Lab where I studied how regional astrocytes alter tumor proliferation and migration. I am truly thankful to be part of a team that values my ideas and actively supports my growth and development as a young scientist!

How did you decide on the Cleveland Clinic?

I have always been passionate about making a difference in other's lives, and I found my purpose in biomedical research. So, having the opportunity to study here at the Cleveland Clinic felt like the perfect place to learn and grow as a young scientist! Additionally, my time as a technician at the LRI showed me the power of collaboration between driven scientists and top-ranked physicians. Being part of such an innovative, patient-focused environment inspires me every day to advance our healthcare.

What is your current research focus?

My current research focus is investigating how microglia respond to tumor cells in a sex dependent manner. It is very early in the project - I am hoping we will be able to learn more about how the tumor cells alter their microenvironment, specifically microglia, and how the sex of origin influence their ability to respond.

What do you like to do outside of the work?

Art has been a creative outlet where I can express myself and a way to connect with others. Specifically, I love painting, writing, and making films! In addition to building community through creating, I enjoy going to local events here in Cleveland! This year I spent many evenings at the Cleveland International Film Festival, and I love connecting with other artists from around the world. In the summer, I love to explore the local metro parks and Cuyahoga Valley National Park, either hiking or biking on the trails. We have so many beautiful trails around Cleveland, and I am excited to go to new trails this year! Also, the past two years I ride in VeloSano, a fundraiser for the cancer research happening right here at the Clinic, and I am looking forward to participating for my third year!

Accomplishments

Congratulations to Dr. Jeong from the Saab Lab in Biomedical Engineering!

Dr. Ki-Soo Jeong defended his dissertation, titled "Bridging Neurophysiology and Behavior: Investigating Pain through Somatosensory and Corneal Nociceptive Models." Manuscripts related to this work are in-preparation for submission.

He also published "Spinal Cord Stimulation using time-dynamic pulses achieves faster and longer reversal of allodynia compared to tonic pulses in a rat model of neuropathic pain" in *Frontiers in Pain Research*.

- <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpain.2025.1541078>



Congratulations to Dr. Khazaie from the Baldwin Lab in the Department of Inflammation and Immunity!

Dr. Sepideh Khazaie recently published two articles in *Sleep and Breathing*, titled "Actigraphy-based sleep disruption and diurnal biomarkers of autonomic function in paroxysmal atrial fibrillation" and "Impact of a multidisciplinary sleep apnea management group clinic on positive airway pressure adherence and patient-reported outcomes: a randomized controlled trial."

- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11325-025-03293-4>
- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11325-025-03319-x>

Congratulations to Dr. Dutra from the Wilson Lab in the Department of Ophthalmic Research!

Dr. Barbara Dutra defended her dissertation, titled "Effect of topical losartan in the treatment of corneal fibrosis at University of Sao Paulo (USP)". This work has been published in *Cornea*, *Journal of Ocular Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, and *Translational Vision Science & Technology* journal.

- <https://doi.org/10.1097/ico.00000000000003725>
- <https://doi.org/10.1089/jop.2024.0200>
- <https://doi.org/10.1167/tvst.13.8.22>



We love celebrating trainee accomplishments! To submit your own news or to recognize someone else, email

LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org

Accomplishments

Congratulations to Dr. Ashok from the Prasad Lab in the Department of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Sciences!

Dr. Anushruti Ashok received a travel award by the Ohio Physiological Society to support her attendance at the 2025 Physiology Summit Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland to present her project titled “Mechanistic basis of protein phosphatase 2A inhibition by Inhibitor of PP2A (I2PP2A): A key step in AR resensitization.”



Congratulations to Dr. Almotah from the Wessely Lab in the Department of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Diseases!

Dr. Khalil Almotah has been promoted to a new position as a postdoctoral researcher in the Wessely Lab. He is studying ulcerative colitis and colon cancer and how inflammatory signaling influences the expression of the chemokine CXCL8 in interstitial colon fibroblasts. CXCL8 is a potent chemoattractant chemokine that plays an essential role in the progression of the ulcerative colitis disease to colitis-associated cancer. His overall aim is to better understand this signaling system to identify new therapeutic angles to prevent the progression of ulcerative colitis to colitis-associated cancer

Congratulations to Dr. Saavedra from the Stolley Lab in the Department of Inflammation & Immunity!

Dr. Flávia Saavedra won the best oral presentation at 9th Mini symposium for young investigator at the 2025 American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research / Canadian Association for Dental Research (AADOCR/CADR) Annual meeting in New York City, NY. The title of the talk was “Unveiling CD8⁺ T_{RM} immune-modulatory mechanisms in experimental periodontitis.”



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Accomplishments

Congratulations to Abhinav Abhishek, Azita Ramezani, and Ghazal Mashhadiagha, PhD students under Dr. Shravan Kethireddy, Critical Care MD at the Cleveland Clinic!

Their abstracts were selected for poster presentation at the **2025 American Thoracic Society (ATS) International Conference**, which took place **May 16–21, 2025**, in San Francisco, CA. **Abhinav’s abstract**, entitled “Delay From the Onset of Hypotension to Appropriate Antifungal Therapy Initiation Is the Critical Determinant of Outcome in Candida-associated Septic Shock,” emphasizes the critical role of early antifungal intervention in improving survival outcomes in patients with Candida-associated septic shock. **Azita’s abstract**, titled “Impact of Timeliness of Appropriateness of Initial Antimicrobials on Mortality in Neutropenic Septic Shock,” highlights the importance of timely and appropriate antimicrobial therapy in improving survival outcomes for patients with neutropenic septic shock. **Ghazal’s abstract**, entitled “Impact of Timing of Empiric Antibiotic Therapy and Surgical Intervention on Septic Shock Associated with Necrotizing Fasciitis: Every Hour Counts,” emphasizes how early, well-coordinated care can drastically change outcomes in septic shock due to necrotizing fasciitis, making time the most critical factor in improving survival.

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Accomplishments



Quantum – AI Biomedical Frontiers Fellowship

About the Fellowship

The **Cleveland Clinic** and the **Novo Nordisk Foundation** established a prestigious new postdoctoral exchange program:

- ◆ Launched in **2024**, this 3-year initiative integrates quantum technologies artificial intelligence (AI), and biomedical research.
- ◆ Funded with up to DKK 43 million (~\$6.2M USD) by NNF.
- ◆ Supports the exchange of **12 postdoctoral researchers** from Cleveland Clinic and Denmark.
- ◆ Offers access to Cleveland Clinic's **IBM Quantum System One**, *world's first quantum computer dedicated to health-care.*

Congratulations to our 2025 Awardee!



Dr. Syed Hassaan Ahmed Bukhari

Proposal Title:

AI-Driven Electrocardiography for the Early Detection and Management of Occlusion Myocardial Infarction in the Danish Population.

Joint Research:

Cleveland Clinic and University of Southern Denmark.

To learn more, reach out to Priya Putta, PhD | Program Manager, Global Research Education (RET) at puttap@ccf.org

Research Education and Training Center

We love celebrating trainee accomplishments! To submit your own news or to recognize someone else, email

LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org

Accomplishments



Alumni Association Postdoctoral Travel Award

Each year, the Cleveland Clinic Alumni Association provides funding for the professional development of postdoctoral research fellows at the Lerner Research Institute. Using these funds, the Research Education and Training Center (RETC) established a travel award to be used by Lerner postdocs to attend a nationally recognized scientific conference and present their research. We are proud to announce the following 2025 Cycle 1 winners. The 2025 Cycle 2 applications will be accepted starting in August. **Congratulations to the winners and thank you to the Alumni Association for sponsoring this effort!**

Congratulations to our 2025 Cycle 1 Winners!



Pooneh Koochaki, PhD
Department: Cancer Biology
PI: Abishek Chakraborty
Meeting: American Association of Cancer Research



Noah Lorincz-Comi, PhD
Department: GMI
PI: Feixiong Cheng
Meeting: Alzheimer's Association International Conference



Eli Newby, PhD
Department: CVMS
PI: Andrew Dhawan
Meeting: International School and Conference on Network Science



Vartika Srivastava, PhD
Department: I&I
PI: Jeannette Messer
Meeting: American Society for Microbiology (ASM)-Microbe 2025



Gabriel Tavares, PhD
Department: Neurosciences
PI: Antoine Louveau
Meeting: Gordon Research Conference/Seminar - Neuroimmune Communication in Health and Disease

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Accomplishments



The Mary B Stark Travel Award for Graduate Students

The LRI Research Education and Training Center (RETC), together with Dr. George R Stark would like to thank all of you who submitted materials for this year's Mary B Stark Travel Award for Graduate Students. This award was made possible by the generous donations of friends and colleagues of both Mary and Dr. George Stark in honor of Mary's memory and her unwavering dedication to Cleveland Clinic, especially to students like yourself.

Congratulations to our 2025 Cycle 1 Winners!



Amanda Ifft
Department: CVMS
PI: Sarah Schumacher Bass, PhD
Meeting: American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics 2025 Annual Meeting



Edelyn Park
Department: CVMS
PI: Scott Cameron, MD, PhD
Meeting: Gordon Research Conference on Cell Biology of Megakaryocytes and Platelets



Rupleen Kaur
Department: Cancer Biology
PI: Andrew Dhawan, MD
Meeting: Stochastic Physics in Biology Gordon Research Seminar



Shehryar Rahim Sheikh, MD
Department: Biomedical Engineering
PI: Carl Saab, PhD
Meeting: Society for Neuroscience



Tenesha Connor
Department: Neurosciences
PI: Murat Yildirim, PhD
Meeting: American Association for Cancer Research 2025 Annual Meeting



William Horrigan
Department: Ophthalmic Research
PI: Bela Anand-Apte, PhD
Meeting: The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology 2025 Annual Meeting

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LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org

Opportunities

Professional Development

The Cancer Impact Area is seeking **self-nominations from postdoctoral fellows** who would be interested in joining as a **representative to the Cancer Impact Area (CIA) Leadership Group**. The Cancer Impact Area is an overarching group consisting of investigators at CCF with a common research focus on cancer, forming a scientific thread across departments. The Leadership Group develops and coordinates CIA activities and events throughout the year, including initiatives such as the Clinical Translational Grand Rounds speaker series in partnership with Taussig lectures, town halls, faculty-trainee CIA social hours, Shark Tank pilot award competitions, and more.

Eligibility:

- Any CCF postdoctoral fellow working in a lab/research group conducting cancer-related research
- One postdoc will be selected to join the leadership group for a 1-year term beginning July 2025

Why apply:

- Are you passionate about driving initiatives? This position offers a great platform to channel that passion and build leadership experience.
- Bring your ideas for trainee engagement and development. This is a unique opportunity to shape initiatives that can directly impact the trainee community.
- Learn strategic planning and build meaningful connections with cancer-focused faculty, leaders, and peers.
- Gain exposure to valuable career development opportunities and insights that can help shape your professional path.

Benefits:

- Service/leadership experience that can be highlighted on your CV
- Receive \$500 credit towards the fundraising commitment for VeloSano 2025

Commitment:

- Attend monthly meetings for one year
- Actively provide input and feedback from the trainee perspective on CIA initiatives and future plans
- Lead the development of trainee-focused CIA events, with appropriate administrative support for coordination

Next Steps:

- Submit your CV and a brief statement of why you are interested in joining (no more than one paragraph) to Tiffany Masters at mastert2@ccf.org by Monday, June 23rd, 2025
- Prepare a 10-minute presentation (5-minute pitch, 5-minute Q&A session) explaining:
 - Why you want to join the CIA and why this is a good time in your career development?
 - What do you think you can/want to contribute?
- Please also direct any questions you may to mastert2@ccf.org

CIA Leadership Team: Stephanie Schmit, Ofer Reizes, Mohammed Dwidar, Neetu Gupta, Natalie Silver, Roberto Vargas, Linda Lai Chan, and Kavya Vipparthi

Opportunities

Professional Development

- **Learn how to advance your research with the Center for Computational Life Sciences (CCLS).** Whether you're looking to expand your research through biospecimens or high-performance computing, CCLS offers a variety of opportunities to learn and collaborate across the enterprise. With state-of-the-art resources and facilities including the Cleveland Clinic BioRepository and the Discovery Accelerator, we can advance our research like never before. Find more information, including a video about the progress made in CCLS programs, [here](#).
 - Lara Jehi, MD, Director of CCLS and Chief Research Information Officer, recently shared more about how clinicians and researchers can get involved with the CCLS's programs. Topics covered in her webinar included:
 - How institutes across CCF are collaborating on Discovery Accelerator projects
 - Funding opportunities as an entry point to implementing high-performance computing in research projects
 - Bio-R growth and sample availability, as well as new tools to search biospecimens
 - How Bio-R co-enrollment can support future studies
 - Discover the progress each program has made and all the ways you can get involved in the video [here](#).
 - For more questions, feel free to contact ccls@ccf.org or visit these pages:
 - [BioRepository intranet](#)
 - [DA internet/website](#)
 - [CCLS intranet](#)
- **Complete Career Masterclass Collection:** RETC is covering the cost for all of you to access Jeremy's Complete Career Masterclass Collection on LinkedIn + ChatGPT (see Upcoming Events, page 8). Claim your free access to the course collection by [registering here](#) before July 1st, 2025, for lifetime access!

Opportunities

Professional Development

- **A Science Career Toolkit:** [This collection of articles](#) from Science Careers was curated to offer useful and actionable advice about some of the most common challenges faced by early-career scientists.
- **2025 Office of Educator & Scholar Development | Overview of Programs and Offerings and Updates:** The Education Institute offers both live and self-paced teaching courses. [Click here](#) to see the full list of offerings. Postdoctoral Fellows are now eligible to participate in their *Distinguished Educator Implementation Programs* (4 individual programs), after they have completed the *Distinguished Trainee Educator Program*. For questions, please contact educatordevelopment@ccf.org.
- **New Educator Development for Students:** This online, on-demand course provides an opportunity for students at Cleveland Clinic to explore key topics in health professions education. PhD students are eligible to participate! This is a great course to take if you are interested in teaching. [Click here](#) to register.
- **Mandel Global Leadership and Learning Institute Courses:** Check out free online opportunities to engage connect and help grow your skills as a leader [here](#).
- **NPA SmartSkills webinar:** You can find other archived NPA webinars [here](#). Check out the latest webinar on “Surviving and Thriving in the First Year as a Faculty Member”. Check out the other SmartSkills offerings [here](#). Not registered as an NPA member? RETC pays for LRI trainees to access a free NPA affiliate membership. If you’re interested in signing up, please contact RETC@ccf.org.

Opportunities

Funding, Awards, and Grant Writing

- **The Dr. Sylvain Brunet Award for Outstanding Accomplishment by a Graduate Student** is now open for submissions! [Click here](#) to apply no later than Friday, **June 6th at 11:59 PM**. Please reach out to RETC@ccf.org if you have any questions. See [flyer](#) for eligibility information and application link.
- **CCF Internal Opportunities:** Explore various funding and collaboration opportunities through the CCF Office of Research Development. Be sure to visit the Competition Space on [InfoReady](#) for the latest updates on internal opportunities tailored to support your research goals and levels.
- **Researchers' Writing Podcast:** Podcast is hosted by Anna Clemens, Ph.D., who has helped hundreds of researchers inside her online program, the [Researchers' Writing Academy](#), develop a structured writing process so they can get published in top-tier journals time-efficiently. Subscribe on YouTube [here](#). On this podcast, you will learn how to:
 - Write scientific research papers time-efficiently
 - Get published in your target journals
 - Structure a paper so that it tells a compelling and coherent story
 - Develop a healthy (and joyful!) relationship with your writing The Researchers' Writing

Opportunities

Funding, Awards, and Grant Writing

- **The POSTDOCKet | A Personal Guide to Applying for the NIH K99/R00 by Debosmita Sardar, PhD:** The NIH's K99/R00 Pathway to Independence Award provides up to five years of grant support in two phases - two years of mentored postdoctoral training (K99) and additional funding for up to three years of independent research support (R00). This prestigious and highly competitive award can fund up to approximately 1 million dollars and is the only NIH funding available for international postdocs. [This article](#) aims to discuss the overlooked aspects of the K99/R00 award in two parts. Part I will focus on the period before and during the preparation of the application; while Part II will delve into what happens after the submission and the potential of resubmission.

Career and Jobs

- **Education Institute Positions:** The EI has announced new positions have been posted to support our new organizational structure, including several leadership and program management positions: Program Manager, GME (I, II, III, IV): Requisition – 282048 – apply [here](#).

In Case You Missed It

- **New Executive Orders Toolkit:** A new [Executive Orders Toolkit](#) is now available for all caregivers on the intranet. Executive Orders are directives, issued by the president, that manage operations of the federal government. They serve as the president's plan of action on specific issues, and they often require various agencies in Washington, D.C., to enforce or circulate rules and regulations to implement the order(s). The toolkit is designed to be updated on an ongoing basis with as much information as possible, sorted by topic (including Research & Education, DEI and immigration) as well as resources to help caregivers navigate these changes. Please check back periodically for those updates. Should you have questions, you may contact EOQuestions@ccf.org.

Monthly feature



CCF Innovations

Cleveland Clinic Innovations (CCI) is the commercialization arm and tech transfer office of the Cleveland Clinic.

For this issue, we wanted to share two articles, one on "*The Future of Healthcare: 5 Groundbreaking Insights from Cleveland Clinic Innovations' Thought Leaders*" and another on "*The Power of Partnership: How Research, Philanthropy, and Innovation Created a Breakthrough in Autism Screening.*" The thought leadership articles highlighted below represent just a glimpse of the groundbreaking work being done at Cleveland Clinic Innovations to shape the future of healthcare. The next article covers an example of this, Cleveland Clinic's Autism Eyes. We hope that they both will spark creativity and questions.

As always, if you would like to connect on anything innovations related or would like to see any specific content related to innovations in future issues, please reach out to your LRI Engagement Partners ([Morgan Carter, PhD and Matt Koletsky, MS](#) as leads for Therapeutics and Diagnostics, [Nicole Byram](#) as lead for Medical Device, and [Michelle Leung](#) as lead for Digital Health). We are here for any questions and/or to discuss the innovations process or ideas you may have. Also please check our [Inventor Portal](#). This page also has lots of information and resources for you.

THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE: 5 GROUNDBREAKING INSIGHTS FROM CLEVELAND CLINIC INNOVATIONS' THOUGHT LEADERS

As healthcare continues to evolve, thought leaders from across the industry are contributing insightful perspectives on how emerging technologies and innovative models are transforming patient care, operational efficiency, and medical outcomes. Cleveland Clinic Innovations is at the forefront of this transformation, with a team of experts from diverse fields offering groundbreaking ideas and solutions. From artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) to global collaborations and digital health strategies, these thought leaders are shaping the future of healthcare, paving the way for more personalized, efficient, and accessible care worldwide. In this article, we explore five recent thought leadership pieces from Cleveland Clinic Innovations that are pushing the boundaries of healthcare innovation and inspiring the next generation of solutions.

1. Empowering Patient Care: Linda Li, CFA, Partner at Cleveland Clinic Ventures on the Impact of AI, EEG, and VR/AR Technologies

In this article, Linda Li shares how Artificial Intelligence (AI), electroencephalography (EEG), and Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality (VR/AR) are reshaping healthcare. She discusses AI's role in optimizing clinical trials, improving patient workflows, and how EEG can enhance the early diagnosis of Alzheimer's, while also exploring the innovative therapeutic applications of VR/AR in

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clinical care.

“I believe that the future of healthcare technology will evolve in two stages. The initial focus will be on integrating AI, VR, and AR solutions within existing hospital settings. This phase aims to validate these technologies as effective components of patient care. Once validated, care will become more decentralized, empowering patients to choose how they receive treatment—whether online, at home, or in-person. With intelligent technology, patients can customize their care according to their needs.”

[2. Healing in the Digital Era: Sonja O'Malley, Senior Director, Digital Health on Healthcare Innovation and Emerging Business Models](#)

Sonja O'Malley presents a thought-provoking look at the digital transformation of healthcare, focusing on emerging business models, innovative technologies, and the role of AI in patient care and operational efficiency. She emphasizes the shift from traditional approaches to more ecosystem-driven models, highlighting how collaboration and technology are redefining how care is delivered.

“The future of healthcare lies in the seamless integration of advanced technologies with compassionate, patient-centered care. As we move forward, the most successful healthcare organizations will be those that can safely and ethically balance technological innovation with the human touch, creating a healthcare system that is not only more efficient but also empathetic and accessible to all.”

[3. Unlocking Healthcare Innovation Through Global Collaboration with Stephen MacNamara, MS, Associate Director, Innovations Development, Cleveland Clinic](#)

Stephen MacNamara discusses the critical role of global collaboration in driving healthcare innovation. Through Cleveland Clinic's partnership with Enterprise Ireland, he explores how bridging the transatlantic divide can foster mutually beneficial relationships between U.S. healthcare systems and Irish startups. Key insights from MacNamara include the importance of securing buy-in from stakeholders, validating the problem an innovation solves, and embracing a two-way exchange of ideas between large healthcare systems and agile companies. By building lasting, strategic partnerships, healthcare leaders can unlock transformative solutions that enhance patient care and operational efficiency on a global scale.

“The healthcare industry's rapid evolution demands new ways of thinking and working. By embracing the spirit of global collaboration, Cleveland Clinic Innovations and our partners are positioning ourselves to lead the way into a more globally connected, innovative future.”

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[4. The Virtual Physician's Assistant: How AI and AR are Transforming Healthcare Delivery with Gerald “Jerry” Wilmink, PhD, MBA, Director, Innovations Business Development and Licensing](#)

Gerald Wilmink explores the groundbreaking impact of AI and augmented reality (AR) in reshaping healthcare delivery at Cleveland Clinic. Highlighting the transformative potential of these technologies, Wilmink discusses AR's role in rehabilitation, such as the innovative Dual-task Augmented Reality Treatment (DART) for patients with Parkinson's disease, enabling therapy beyond hospital walls. AI is also democratizing medical expertise by providing automated diagnostic tools for conditions like aortic dissections, empowering hospitals without specialized expertise. While challenges remain in validating algorithms and integrating new tools into clinical workflows, Cleveland Clinic is focused on augmenting physician capabilities, reducing burnout, and enhancing personalized care through AI and AR innovations that promise a more accessible, efficient, and precise healthcare system.

“Our goal isn't to replace human caregivers but to augment their capabilities and extend their reach. Cleveland Clinic's partnerships with innovative companies and our internal development efforts are focused on making healthcare more accessible, precise, and personalized than ever before. As we continue to advance these technologies, we're not just improving individual tools and treatments – we're fundamentally reimagining how healthcare can be delivered in the 21st century.”

[5. The Impact of Innovation in Medicine: Bernardo Perez-Villa's Work Featured in JAMA and Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics](#)

Bernardo Perez-Villa, MD, MSc, Senior Engagement Partner at Cleveland Clinic Innovations, Florida, has significantly contributed to understanding how innovation and clinical benefit intersect. His research, featured in JAMA Internal Medicine and Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics, highlights critical findings about the provenance of medicines. In a 2023 JAMA study, he and his team discovered that medicines from academic settings demonstrated better clinical outcomes than those developed by the industry. Another key publication in Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics analyzed first-in-class drugs, revealing that over 50% of these drugs did not offer additional clinical benefit, despite representing scientific breakthroughs. Bernardo's work bridges medicine, research, and entrepreneurship, reshaping our understanding of how innovation translates into real-world patient benefits.

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Conclusion

The thought leadership articles highlighted here represent just a glimpse of the groundbreaking work being done at Cleveland Clinic Innovations to shape the future of healthcare. From harnessing the power of AI and augmented reality to fostering global collaboration and redefining business models, these leaders are driving transformative change across the industry. As emerging technologies continue to evolve, these innovations promise not only to improve patient care but also to enhance operational efficiency and democratize medical expertise. By embracing a forward-thinking, patient-centered approach, Cleveland Clinic is paving the way for a more accessible, efficient, and compassionate healthcare system, ensuring that the future of care is both technologically advanced and human-focused.

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP: HOW RESEARCH, PHILANTHROPY, AND INNOVATION CREATED A BREAKTHROUGH IN AUTISM SCREENING

Cleveland Clinic developed Autism Eyes, an eye-tracking technology that detects autism markers by analyzing how children view images. Acquired in early 2024, this technology aims to reduce the typical one-to-three-year delay between noticing symptoms and receiving a formal autism diagnosis.



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Early diagnosis is crucial for children with autism, yet there has historically been a significant one-to-three-year gap between when parents first notice concerns and when their child receives a formal diagnosis. Now, thanks to innovative research at Cleveland Clinic, a technology called Autism Eyes emerged that could revolutionize how autism is detected. The technology, which uses eye-tracking to identify autism markers earlier than traditional methods, was acquired by virtual reality therapy company Floreo in 2024, representing a major advancement in making early screening more accessible.

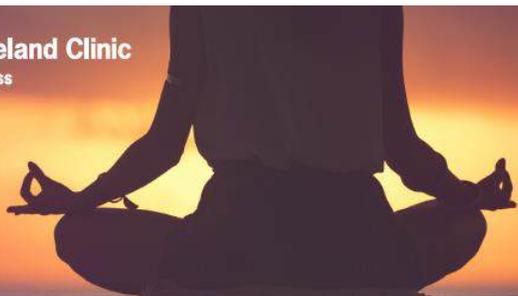
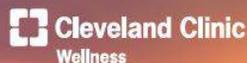
The development of Autism Eyes emerged from a crucial clinical observation: individuals with autism tend to focus more on abstract elements, colors, and movements, while those without autism are naturally drawn to human faces. Under the leadership of the then-director of the Center for Autism, researchers developed a screening tool that analyzes these distinct patterns of eye movement when children view specific images, enabling earlier intervention during critical developmental periods.

The success of Autism Eyes exemplifies how "smart philanthropy decisions can move the needle on big problems," as shared by Allison Cole, a board-certified behavior analyst and philanthropist whose contribution helped advance the project's development. Cleveland Clinic's unique ecosystem proved essential in nurturing this technology over its decade-long development. As Geoff Vince, PhD, Chief of Innovations, and Chair of Biomedical Engineering at Cleveland Clinic emphasized, "Taking that research and commercializing it is one of the major roles of Innovations because it directly will impact patient care."

Looking ahead, the integration of Autism Eyes technology into the virtual reality therapy platform represents a promising development in autism care. The team envisions these devices being deployed not only to schools and pediatrician offices but also to homes. The collaboration between research, philanthropy, and innovation demonstrates the power of partnership within Cleveland Clinic. As Mohammed Aldosari, MD, Director, Pediatric Neurosciences at Cleveland Clinic notes, "Teamwork is really at the essence of what we do here as a team at Cleveland Clinic." The success story of Autism Eyes and its future potential "would have only been able to be done at Cleveland Clinic," highlighting the institution's unique ability to identify unmet clinical needs and develop solutions that transform and improve patient care.

Read the latest Innovations news, subscribe to [Innovations Impact!](#)

Wellness Resources



Daily Wellness Tools for YOU Program

Weekly, live and virtual. Ongoing self-help support.

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, Meditation, 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!****

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.

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

Behind the Scenes

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

Nam Than, Amanda Daulagala, Swapnil Dey, Alan Chen, Kelsey Bohn

Lerner Trainee Association Leadership Council



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