

Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Medicine









Message from the Vice Chairman

Mission

Staff & Affiliated Faculty

Publications, Presentations, & Outreach

Newly Approved Studies

Funding Activity

DIVISION OF RESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHAIRMAN



Michael Pearl, MD, FACOG, FACS, FAAHPM

Professor, Division of Gynecological Oncology Vice Chairman, Research and Faculty Development Director of Women's Cancer Services, Cancer Center Medical Director. Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office





Silo: noun

"a part of a company, organization, or system that does not communicate with, understand, or work well with other parts:

- We found that a lot of people work in silos they don't see the connections between what they do and how another part of the airline operates.
- The silo mentality that keeps different parts of the healthcare industry from working together."

Silo: verb

"to separate something or someone from other things or people:

- The goal is to level the barriers created when an organization's data is siloed.
- The study of the Web has been siloed into certain areas."

[1]

Medical research has a serious problem that, while not unique to our field, potentially has a greater impact than on research in other fields. Ever increasing amounts of clinical data are generated and stored, "data which if analyzed, could hold the key to unlocking cures for rare diseases, help us manage our health risk factors, and provide evidence for public policy decisions." [2] However, much of these data are siloed and inaccessible to researchers. The reasons these data are siloed are myriad, including governmental regulations (e.g., Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), International Safe Harbor Privacy Principles), terms-of-use restrictions (commercial and non-commercial), lack of communication between researchers, cross-platform incompatibility, and informed consent issues.

Addressing contemporary research questions in many fields requires integrating multiple areas of expertise. Medical researchers explore isolated components of extraordinarily complex, interconnected systems; the challenge is integrating the results of these isolated explorations and recognizing the impact on the overarching system. Silos hinder progress towards understanding the basis of disease and development of novel treatments.

For example, the folate metabolism pathway has been successfully targeted since 1948 when aminopterin was used to treat childhood leukemia. [3] Methotrexate, an inhibitor of dihydrofolate reductase, was developed in 1949. [4] Its use led to the first recorded cure of a solid tumor by chemotherapy when a woman with terminal choriocarcinoma was treated in 1959. [5] The folate-receptor 1 (FOLR-1) was identified as a biomarker for epithelial ovarian cancer at least a decade ago [6]. The folate receptor alpha (FR α) is a glycosylphosphatidylinositol-anchored glycoprotein encoded by the FOLR-1 gene that is expressed on ovarian cancer cells but not on normal cells. [7] Last November, the FDA granted accelerated approval for the use of mirvetuximab soravtansine to treat adults with FR α -positive, platinum-resistant epithelial ovarian, fallopian tube, or primary peritoneal cancer who have received one to three prior systemic regimens. Concomitantly, the FDA approved the Ventana FOLR1 RxDx Assay as a companion diagnostic test. [8] Mirvetuximab soravtansine, an antibody-drug conjugate (ADC), is one of the first biomarker-driven therapies for ovarian cancer, enabling screening of patients with recurrent disease at earlier stages.

The pathway from identifying the factor (subsequently called folic acid, after the Latin follium for leaf, as it was isolated from spinach leaves) discovered in the 1930's by a missionary physician in India treating impoverished, pregnant textile workers with megaloblastic anemia [9] to FDA approval for mirvetuximab soravtansine to treat recurrent ovarian cancer has taken nearly a century and required overcoming the impact of innumerable siloed disciplines.

Within the scientific research community, including medical research, silos have been blamed for hindering progress by hindering communication. According to one review, there are three aspects that define scientific research silos: "(1) enormous growth in the knowledge available to scientists, (2) organization of scientists into communities and (3) slowing of the propagation of scientific knowledge between those communities." [10]

The factors leading to a silo mentality include leadership discord, poor information-sharing, unclear priorities, communication obstacles, lack of feedback opportunities, and narrow expertise. In a siloed culture, delays, mistrust and rivalry between teams, unwillingness to accept responsibility and task duplication progressively worsen and disrupt productivity. [11]

There are effective strategies for breaking down silos in favor of integration. At the corporate level, these strategies include 1) building a unified vision mentality, 2) setting specific goals, 3) using a single, centralized communication channel, 4) develop cross-team transparency, 5) increase opportunities for cross-team collaboration, communication and interaction, 6) foster a sense of community and support, and 7) create a safe space for feedback. [11]

This diagram depicts 'the important role of interdisciplinary integration within the research process and several strategies that researchers can implement to build successful integration across fields." [15]

Top-down influences and strategies (e.g., funding, reward structures, organizational and community norms, venues for publication and interaction)

Strategies for integrating across fields within the research process

- Jointly develop and utilize research foci that interweave perspectives
 - Design and implement mechanisms for interacting across fields at the working level
- Purposefully interconnect knowledge and ideas across fields throughout the research process
 - Lead in ways that enable contributions from multiple fields and empower rigorous interdisciplinary synthesis

Bottom-up influences and strategies (e.g., researcher interests, expertise, knowledge, skills)

Fig 1. Diagram depicting the important role of interdisciplinary integration within the research process and several strategies that researchers can implement to build successful integration across fields.

Although difficult to implement, "true interdisciplinary research escapes the shackles of particular theoretical prejudices, privileged methods or favourite solutions. This is usually achieved not through large programmes, but in more intimate pluralities embodied within small teams, or even individuals. Genuinely interdisciplinary researchers publish in or between several different fields, moving to and fro over time. The result is greater openness and transparency about the diversity of ways to understand and address particular problems."[16]

As I discussed in my Vice-Chairman's Report last year, one of Dr. Igarashi's (Dean, Renaissance School of Medicine) core research-related themes is interdisciplinary research, echoing the stated goal of Dr. McInnis (President, Stony Brook University) of "fostering more effective collaboration on our campuses and with partners in our community." Within our department, we have a "multidisciplinary team approach to women's healthcare, clinical education and research." Our active multidisciplinary research teams, some of which were described in last year's report, strive to create and expand knowledge of women's health through basic and clinical research and to bring the fruits of scientific discovery to our patients.

To further highlight one of our leading multidisciplinary research teams, Drs. J. Gerald Quirk and Cassandra Heiselman (Maternal-Fetal Medicine) are in the fifth year of their NIH-funded RO1, "Predictive Analytics for Monitoring the Well-Being of Fetuses", with Drs. Petar Djuric (Electrical Engineering), IV Ramakrishnan (Computer Science), Christian Luhmann (Psychology) and Paul Fodor (Computer Science). "The main objective of the project is to use recent breakthroughs in machine learning to drive the development of predictive analytics to support and improve the interpretation of EFM data, especially under real world conditions and in real time where clinicians must make timely decisions about interventions to prevent adverse outcomes. It is anticipated that the results of this project will contribute to significantly decreased use of operative vaginal delivery and cesarean delivery while more precisely defining the fetus at risk for developing metabolic acidosis and long-term neurologic injury." [17]

This is a truly interdisciplinary, highly productive collaboration, yielding 26 presentations at national meetings, one book chapter, one peer-reviewed paper and an annual average of nine students mentored thus far. For further information regarding this interdisciplinary collaboration, please explore their public website at https://preanafo.ece.stonybrook.edu/

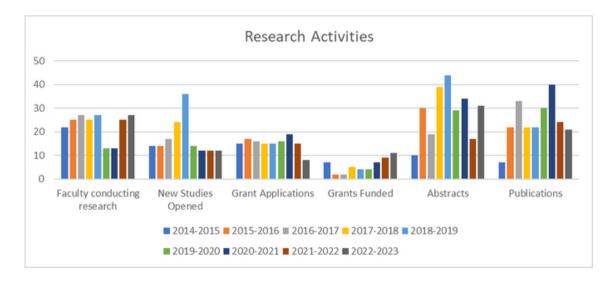
As we move forward, with the commitment of the Renaissance School of Medicine and Stony Brook University, we will continue to break down silos, improve our multidisciplinary activities and strive towards true interdisciplinarity.

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As you can see from the data below, we have a productive departmental research program. We continue to focus on solutions, rather than bemoan the challenges. With the ongoing support of Renaissance School of Medicine and Stony Brook University's leadership, the unwavering support of our past and interim chairmen, Drs. Griffin and Burke, and the Division of Research's staff, we remain optimistic about our research program.



2022-2023 Data

Grant applications: 8 Publications: 21 Abstracts: 31

New studies opened: 12 Faculty conducting research: 27

Grants funded: 11

MISSION

The Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Medicine recognizes the importance of research by our faculty members, residents and students. One of our core values, as part of the academic mission of the department, is to establish an atmosphere of respect and excitement for research. Our commitment to multidisciplinary team-based women's healthcare is a key component of our efforts to create and expand knowledge and improve the quality of our patients' lives through excellent basic, translational, and clinical research. The Department's mission to foster clinical investigation and translational research amongst the faculty is supported by an established and rapidly growing Division of Research.

Critical to the success of our endeavor is the integration of the pillars of academic medicine: clinical care, education, and research. Excellence in one of these domains is always dependent upon success in the other two. To this end, the Division of Research is dedicated to supporting our faculty members, residents and students in a variety of ways. A few of these, all part of an ever-expanding list, include:

- ·Aiding our investigators in developing their research interests
- ·Assisting researchers in the design and development of their projects
- ·Providing assistance with regulatory compliance
- ·Helping to identify and secure funding for research projects
- ·Providing mechanisms to find collaborators in other departments
- ·Creating opportunities to meet with other investigators to discuss common interests
- ·Fostering inter-departmental and inter-institutional collaborative research efforts
- ·Hosting regular research meetings for faculty and staff where projects can be discussed

STAFF



Michael Pearl, MD | Vice-Chair for Research and Faculty Development

Dr. Michael Pearl is a Professor, Division of Gynecological Oncology; the Vice Chairman, ObGyn Research and Faculty Development; the Director of Women's Cancer Services, Cancer Center and the Medical Director, Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office. He is the Principal Investigator at Stony Brook Medicine for NRG Oncology, a National Cancer Institute-funded cooperative research group dedicated to promoting excellence in the quality and integrity of scientific research. As Vice-Chair, Dr. Pearl oversees departmental research projects and advises faculty and staff on related matters.



Elizabeth Roemer, MA | Associate Director of Research

Elizabeth Roemer is the primary point-of-contact between the Division of Research and the SUNY Research Foundation offices and the Stony Brook Office of Vice President for Research. She facilitates interaction with academic departments on and off campus and aids faculty and residents in developing their research interests. In addition, Ms. Roemer identifies and tracks funding opportunities and works with faculty to develop strategies and proposals for grant and clinical research funding. She is the Division's key resource to obtain auxiliary services and assistance for research enterprises.



Deidre Lee, MHS | Senior Research Support Specialist

Deidre Lee provides support for faculty and residents in their research studies and coordinates industry-sponsored clinical trials. In this role, she assists with preparation and submission of regulatory documents, consent and enrollment of eligible patients as study participants, and data collection and management. Ms. Lee also manages IRB submissions and ensures appropriate regulations are being followed throughout the course of studies. Additionally, she assists with building databases in REDCap, grant writing, chart reviews, and is responsible for managing undergraduate and medical student research assistants.

AFFILIATED FACULTY



Marci Lobel, PhD | Director, Stress and Reproduction (STAR) Lab, Professor, Department of Psychology and Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Medicine

Marci Lobel, Ph.D. holds a primary appointment as Professor of Psychology. She is Director of the Stony Brook Stress and Reproduction (STAR) Lab which focuses on perinatal stress, coping, and health behaviors that affect maternal and child health. She collaborates with colleagues in the US and Europe, is an author of more than 300 articles and conference presentations, and is the recipient of national and university awards for her research, service, teaching, and mentorship. She directs the International COVID-19 Pregnancy Experiences (I-COPE) Study and is Co-Investigator of a project to develop the Profile for Maternal & Obstetric Treatment Effectiveness (PROMOTE) prenatal vulnerability screening tool.



James E. Swain, MD, PhD, FRCPC | Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Behavioral Health and Psychology

Dr. Swain is cross appointed to Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Medicine at Stony Brook Medicine, where he serves as perinatal mental health consultant to maternal fetal medicine. He is Principal Investigator of National Institutes of Health research projects on Maternal Brain-Behavior Adaptations and Interventions in the Early Postpartum. Currently a fellow member of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, Dr. Swain has authored over one hundred peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on the neuroscience of parenting, stress, and development.



Heidi Preis, MSW, PhD | Research Scientist, Department of Psychology and Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Medicine

Dr. Heidi Preis received her PhD in Social Work in 2018 and conducted a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at the Stress and Reproduction Laboratory at Stony Brook University. She is currently a Research Scientist in the Department of Psychology and an Assistant Research Professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Medicine. She is the PI of two federally and institutionally funded research project. The SB-COPE Study which follows a large national cohort of mothers who were pregnant during the COVID-19 pandemic and their children and the PROMOTE project to improve screening for psychosocial vulnerabilities and substance use in prenatal care.

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April 2023

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Parikh B, Garretto D, Heiselman C, Herrera K, Kohli H, Korgaonkar-Cherala C. Effect of Race and Insurance on Outcomes in Women With Placenta Accreta Spectrum [ID: 1374697]. Obstetrics & Gynecology. 2023 May 1;141(5):35S-. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1097/01.AOG.0000930172.46398.15

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NEWLY APPROVED STUDIES

July 2022

Utility of 1st Trimester Preeclamptic Laboratory Evaluation in Women with a History of Preeclampsia Principal Investigator: Joseph Chappelle, MD

Retrospective Study Comparing Obstetric Outcomes of IVF Di-Di Twins vs Conceived Spontaneously Principal Investigator: Kimberly Herrera, MD

August 2022

Preeclampsia risk factor screening and implementation of low-dose aspirin guidelines: a chart review Principal Investigator: Kimberly Herrera, MD

September 2022

Comparing PAPP-A values in IVF/ICSO pregnancies with and without CHD Principal Investigator: James Stelling, MD

October 2022

Women's Health Social Media Consumption: A cross sectional survey Principal Investigator: Fatima Daoud, MD

November 2022

Evaluation of Free Fluid in the Abdomen after a Cesarean Delivery Using the Focused Assessment with Sonography in Trauma (FAST) Scan
Principal Investigator: Ingy Khattaby, MD

January 2023

Assessing the Use of Additional Agents During Universal Cystoscopy Following Laparoscopic Hysterectomy for Benign Indications
Principal Investigator: Xun Lian, MD

March 2023

Is PCOS a risk factor for cervical dysplasia?
Principal Investigator: Fatima Daoud Yilmaz, MD

Video Instructed Compliance of Antenatal Massage (VICAM) Principal Investigator: Andre Plair, MD

Survey of Medical Student Perceptions on Residency Employee Coverage of Oocyte Cryopreservation Principal Investigator: Lauren Safier, MD

April 2023

Concordance between expert impression and Rotterdam criteria in diagnosis of polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Garduno, MD, MPH

NEWLY APPROVED STUDIES

May 2023

Retrospective Study of External Cephalic Version for Noncephalic Presentation: Differences in Practice Based on Race and Ethnicity

Principal Investigator: Kimberly Herrera, MD

Retrospective review of ultrasonographic evidence of cervical lengthening following cerclage placement

Principal Investigator: Kimberly Herrera, MD

June 2023

Identifying and addressing barriers to postpartum care in patients with hypertensive disorders of pregnancy Principal Investigator: Kimberly Herrera, MD

FUNDING ACTIVITY

July 2022

Dr. David Garry and Dr. Maricedes Acosta were awarded an SOM Dean's Fusion Grant for their 2 year project: "Role of Extracellular Vesicles in Prenatal Opioid Exposure"

Dr. James Swain received a NIDA Summer Research Internship Program Supplement for his R01 award: "Opioids and Maternal Brain-Behavior Adaptation During the Early Postpartum". Dr. David Garry and Chris Kocis are co-Investigators.

August 2022

Dr. Joseph Chappelle, Ms. Kristin Rosato, and Ms. Elsa Singh applied to the New York State Department of Health initiative: "Expanding Safe and Supportive Medical and/or Procedural Abortion Access in New York State Phase Two".

Dr. David Garry and Dr. James Bernasko, with Dr. Cassandra Heiselman and Dr. Sharon Nachman submitted an application to NIH to become an NICHD Maternal Fetal Medicine Clinical Trial Site

Dr. James Swain received an NIH Administrative Supplement to his R01: "Violence Across the Lifespan – Opioids Maternal Brain on the Opioids and Maternal Brain-Behavior Adaptation During the Early Postpartum" David Garry and Chris Kocis are co-Investigators.

Dr. James Swain applied for a NIH Administrative Supplement to R61: Health Equity, Opioids and Maternal Brain-Behavior Adaptation During the Early Postpartum". David Garry and Chris Kocis are co-Investigators.

September 2022

Dr. Kimberly Herrera and co-Investigators Dr. Cassandra Heiselman, Dr. Emily Stetler, Dr. Tiffany Yang and Ms. Marianna Lawrence, submitted; "Improving Education of Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnancy Using a Multimodal Educational Tool" to the Macy Foundation: Catalyst Award program.

October 2022

Dr. Cecilia Avila and co-PI Dr. Noelle Mann resubmitted: "HOPE (Heart Outcomes in Pregnancy: Expectations) for Mom and Baby Study" an application for an NIH flow through grant to the Curators of the University of Missouri from Saint Lukes' Hospital of Kansas City.

Dr. Heidi Preis submitted an NIH R01 application: "Development and evaluation of a machine learning-based clinical decision support tool to improve assessment and intervention in perinatal health" with co-Investigators Dr. Cassandra Heiselman, Dr. Petar Djuric, Dr. IV Ramakrishnan and Dr Marci Lobel. Also participating as Faculty are Dr. Joseph Chappelle, Dr. Brittain Mahaffey, Dr. Shanthy Sridar and Dr. Clare Whitney.

November 2022

Dr. James Stelling is participating as faculty on Dr. Guy Schwartz's Center of Excellence Renewal application to the Huntington's Disease Society of America. Also participating are co-Investigators: Dr. Josephine Connolly-Schoonen and Dr. Lisa Muratori, as well as Faculty: Dr. Nicole Absar, Dr. Craig Beale, Dr. Dodie Gillett, Dr. Brian Lebowitz, Dr. Geoffrey O'connell, Dr. Cheryl Rooney and Dr. David Tegay.

FUNDING ACTIVITY

December 2022

Dr. Cassandra Heiselman is the PI on "Pregnancy Expectations Among Stigmatized Populations: Life experiences, Vulnerabilities, and Community Role" and application to the Long Island Network for Clinical and Translational Science (LINCATS) opportunity for innovative translational science research projects. Her co-Investigators include Dr. Heidi Preis, Dr. Clare Whitney and Dr. David Garry.

January 2023

Dr. Sierra Washington submitted an application to the "2023 Call for Proposals L'Initiative" from the French Embassy for "Strengthening Health Systems at All Levels (Community to National)

February 2023

Dr. Cassandra Heiselman and her team received a LINCATS award for "Pregnancy Expectations Among Stigmatized Populations: Life experiences, Vulnerabilities, and Community Role" Her Co-Investigators include Dr.s Heidi Preis, Dr. Clare Whitney and Dr. David Garry.

Dr. Theofani Orfanelli and Dr. Eszter Boros submitted an NIH R02 for: "Development of a diagnostic PET and fluorescent agent for B7H4 positive ovarian cancer"

April 2023

Dr. Theofano Orfanelli is a co-Investigator on a subcontract with PI Jacob Houghton, PhD from Viewpoint Molecular Targeting for their STTR Fast Track application: "Antibody-based pretargeted alpha particle therapy for ovarian cancer"

May 2023

Dr. Gabrielle Gossner and co-Investigators Dr. William Burke and Dr. Theofano Orfanelli received funds from the NRG Oncology Foundation Inc, for: "CC008 NRG-CC008 (ClinicalTrials.gov NCT # 04251052) A Non-randomized Prospective Clinical Trial Comparing the Noninferiority of Salpingectomy to Salpingo-Oophrectomy to Reduce the Risk of Ovarian Cancer Among BRCA-1 Carriers [SOROC]"

June 2023

Dr. Cassandra Heiselman is negotiating the set-up of the FNAIT clinical study: "A prospective, natural history study to assess the occurrence of HPA-1a alloimmunization in women identified at higher risk for Fetal and Neonatal Alloimmune Thrombocytopenia (FNAIT)" with Rallybio IPA, LLC.

Dr. Sierra Washington received a 2023/2024 Targeted Research Opportunity Program (TRO) Clinical Research Award from the SOM Dean for: "Using mHealth Technology to Save Lives."

Jennifer Griffin is a team member on Dr. Sharon Nachman's application to the Health Resources and Services Administration for the "Ryan White Part D WICY Base and Supplemental" grant.

Dr. Joseph Bacchi was awarded a Presidential Mini-Grant for Departmental Diversity for his work with the LGBTQ+ community.

