



A Private University with a Public Mission



Participating Mentors

Annual Medical

Student Research Colloquium

Current Research in Health Disparities

Medical Student Research Thesis Program

Charles R. Drew University
Of Medicine and Science

Friday, February 28, 2020

The CDU/UCLA Medical Student Research Thesis Program

The CDU/UCLA Medical Education Program is committed to preparing excellent physicians by providing exceptional clinical research and practical training for individuals interested in serving urban, medically disadvantaged populations. Students enrolled in the College are required to engage in longitudinal research activity under the auspices of the Medical Student Research Thesis Program (MSRTP), which culminates in the submission of a thesis. In accordance with a bench-to-bedside approach to translational research, students have many options when choosing a health disparities-related, mentored research project, including basic, clinical, bio-behavioral/psychosocial, environmental, quality improvement, public policy, and/or educational research. Each year, the senior class presents their research findings at the annual medical student research colloquium.

Dear Mentors,

As Chair of the Medical Student Research Thesis Program, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your dedication and commitment to the education of Medical Student Class of 2020.

Shahrvad Bazargan-Hejazi, PhD



A Private University with a Public Mission



Sebhat Afework, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Dr. Sebhat Afework, MD is an obstetrics & gynecology specialist in Los Angeles, CA and has been practicing for 38 years. He graduated from Addis Ababa University, Faculty of Medicine in 1982 and specializes in obstetrics & gynecology. Currently he is the Chief of Obstetrics & Gynecology department and Women's Clinic at Martin Luther King Jr. Out Patient center and Chair and Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology in the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. He is also Professor and Vice-Chair, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA.



Olujimi Ajijola MD, PhD
Internal Medicine

Dr. Ajijola completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Virginia, and received his medical degree from Duke University, during which he participated in the HHMI Medical Research Fellows Program. He went on to the Massachusetts General Hospital for residency training in internal medicine, and completed clinical fellowships in cardiovascular medicine and cardiac electrophysiology at UCLA. He received a Ph.D. in Molecular, Cellular, and Integrative Physiology at UCLA, as part of the Specialty Training and Advanced Research (STAR) program.

From a clinical research perspective, he is interested in neuromodulation, as adjunctive therapies, for treating patients with minor and severe cardiac arrhythmias, and performs invasive cardiac electrophysiological procedures.

His translational research lab is focused on understanding how cardiovascular injury induces remodeling within the cardiac neural hierarchy, and how various neuromodulatory strategies may be aimed at treating cardiovascular diseases, including sudden cardiac death. In addition to the NIH Director's New Innovator award, he is also a recipient of the A. P. Giannini Foundation post-doctoral award, and a Young Physician Scientist Award from the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI).



Shervin Assari, MD, MPH
Psychiatry

Shervin Assari, MD MPH is an associate professor of Family Medicine at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU). Before joining CDU, he served as an assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and a visiting faculty at UCLA Department of Psychology. Assari has over 18 years of postdoctoral research experience which has resulted in 300+ publications in journals such as JAMA and Lancet. He is an elected fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM), the Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM), and American Academy of Health Behavior (AAHB). He has sat on review panels for CDC and the Robert Wood Johnson foundation. He has served as the president of the Society for Public Health Association of Iran (SAPHIR). His work is primarily focused on the intersectional effects of race, ethnicity, gender, and social determinants of health (SDoH) of people of color. His current work focuses on Marginalization-related Diminished Returns (MDRs), defined as weaker than expected health effects of SDoH for people of color and LGBT individuals.



Ambriz,
Marvin



Arteaga, Elvis



Avila-Garibay,
Fernando



Cargle,
Melanie



Carter, Devon



Craddock,
Marquell



Ferguson,
Frederick



Gibbs, Lauren



Gordon,
Wesley



Griner, Jaionn



Harley,
Dushawn



Isidro, Claire



Jones-Linares,
Brittany



McKenzie,
Shanice



Michel,
Joaquin



Molina,
Alfonso



Montoya,
Hector



Moore, Kyasha



Neal,
Jasmin



Pettway, Bria



Ruiz, Maria



Turner,
Maurice



Williams,
Dimeji



Chizobam Ani, MD, MPH
Internal Medicine

Dr. Chizobam Ani is an internist and epidemiologist. He is a graduate of the University College Hospital in Ibadan, Nigeria. He completed his residency training in internal medicine at Loma Linda University. He also holds a Master of Public Health (MPH) from the Wichita State University and University of Kansas. He is currently completing his PhD in Epidemiology at Loma Linda University.

Dr Ani's primary research interest is focused on cardiometabolic diseases particularly risk factors and interventions to mitigate these risks among minority ethnic communities. He is currently working on several studies aimed at understanding the unique role of diabetes on cardiomyopathy and heart failure among ethnic minorities. He has been an investigator on several federally funded research grants and authored or co-authored several peer reviewed research articles.



Shahrzad Bazargan-Hejazi, PhD

Medical Sociology

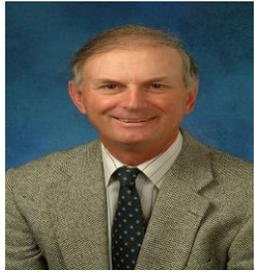
Shahrzad Bazargan-Hejazi PhD is the Professor of Medical Sociology in the Department of Psychiatry, the Research Director in the Psychiatry Residency Training, and has been the Chair of Medical Student Research Thesis Program, in the College of Medicine at CDU since 2006. She is also an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. She is a member of the Global Burden of Disease collaborator network, participating in the production, analysis, improvement, and presentation of the Global Burden of Disease. Dr. Bazargan has led and collaborated in several emergency-department and community-based studies related to the social aspects of disease and illness as they relate to misuse of alcohol, mental disorders, injury, and violence. In addition, she is interested in investigating the intersection of mindfulness, emotional literacy, and social capital, and the ways in which these practices and concepts build resiliency and promote well-being. Dr. Bazargan is a prolific writer and is on the editorial board of several journals, including *Medicine*; *BioMed Research International*; and *Journal of Injury and Violence Research*.



Jennifer Weiss, MD

Orthopedic Surgery

Dr. Weiss is an Orthopaedic surgeon at Southern California Permanente Medical Group, Los Angeles Medical Center and specializes in pediatric sports medicine. Prior to joining Kaiser Permanente in 2011, she practiced at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and Santa Monica Orthopaedic Group as director of the Pediatric Sports Program. Dr. Weiss graduated from Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. She completed her internship in general surgery and a residency in Orthopaedic surgery at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, followed by a fellowship in pediatric Orthopaedics at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Dr. Weiss has been active with the AAOS for nearly a decade, and most recently served as a mentor in the Leadership Fellows Program, and was a fellow herself in that program in 2010 to 2011. Dr. Weiss also served on the nominating committee for the Board of Specialty Societies. In addition to holding a previous term on the Communications Cabinet, she also served as a Member at Large on the Board of Directors and on the Women's Health Advisory Board. Dr. Weiss also is an active member of the Pediatric Orthopedic Society of North America (POSNA), serving that organization as the most recent Communications Council Chair on their Board of Directors.



Drew J. Winston, MD

Internal Medicine

Dr. Drew J Winston, MD, is an Infectious Disease specialist in Sherman Oaks, California. He attended and graduated from University Of Missouri, Columbia School of Medicine in 1972, having over 48 years of diverse experience, especially in Infectious Disease. He is affiliated with many hospitals including Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.



Mohsen Bazargan, PhD

Medical Sociology

Dr. Mohsen Bazargan is Professor, Faculty Trustee, and Director of Research in the Department of Family Medicine at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine & Science (CDU). In addition, he is also Adjunct Professor at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine. He is a Medical Sociologist with extensive training in the fields of aging, research methodology, evaluation, and statistics.

He received his PhD in Medical Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He has been a member of the Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU) faculty since 1993, and was previously on the faculty of the Xavier University. Dr. Bazargan entire research related activities is concentrated around the health status and health disparities experienced by racial/ethnic minorities and socio-economically disadvantaged populations. He has conducted several large population and community based surveys on access and utilization of health services by underserved minority older adults. Dr. Bazargan has authored more than 150 scientific papers many of which address access to care, barriers to medical care, use of health services, racial disparities, and health outcomes among older adult African Americans. During the last 30 years, he has been funded by several federal agencies including the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), the Administration for Children and Family (AHF), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to conduct research and interventional study among minority populations.



Kathleen Brown, MD

Internal Medicine

Dr. Kathleen Brown is a radiologist in Los Angeles, California and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, including Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Hospital and UCLA Medical Center. She received her medical degree from Tufts University School of Medicine and has been in practice for more than 20 years.

Madeleine Mendoza Valencerina , MD

Psychiatry

Dr. Valencerina is Board Certified in Adult, Child and Adolescent psychiatry as well as a specialist in addiction psychiatry. She was a Fellow at the USC Child Residency Program and completed her internship at MetroHealth Medical Center at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio. She has been practicing in Los Angeles for the past 30+ years. Dr. Valencerina also has a passion for medical education, as the previous Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at Charles R Drew School of Medicine and Chief Operation Officer and Psychiatry Program Director for medical students at Kedren Mental Health. She coordinates programs at Kedren's Adams facility, including Family Preservation, School Satellite and CalWorks, and Full-Service Partnership Programs. She has vast knowledge in numerous mental illnesses, including and not limited to schizophrenia, ADHD, mood disorders, and substance use.



Magda Shaheen, MD, PhD, MPH, MS

Internal Medicine/Surgery

Dr. Shaheen is an Associate Professor and an associate professor in residence at UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine. She is the director of the CDU Research Design and Biostatistics and Co-Leader of the UCLA/CDU CTSI, Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Research Design. She has 30 years' experience in research and has 25 years' experience in teaching research methods, epidemiology, biostatistics, and clinical, translational and community research at UCLA and CDU. More specifically, Dr. Shaheen has expertise in utilizing and analyzing the public use and administrative databases in research and health service research especially related to health and health care disparities taking into considerations the design, sampling and statistical analysis issues. Dr. Shaheen earned her M.D. and Master's Degree in Internal Medicine from Cairo University. She received her PhD and MPH from UCLA with extensive doctoral and post-doctoral training in epidemiology, biostatistics, and research methods.



Anna Karina Celaya, MD, MPH, FACOG

Obstetrician/Gynecologist

Dr. Celaya is an Assistant Professor Obstetrician/Gynecologist at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. She attended Stanford University as an undergraduate, received her Master's degree at the University Of Michigan School Of Public Health and received her medical degree at UCLA/Charles Drew University. She is currently the Outpatient Medical Director and 4th year Clerkship Director for the Ambulatory Women's Health Elective. Her areas of interest include addressing health disparities in pregnancy/postpartum period, improving the delivery of health care in underserved communities through system changes, and social determinants of health.



Melvin Chiu, MD

Dermatology

Dr. Chiu is Clinical Professor of Dermatology (Clinician Educator) in Keck School of Medicine of USC's Department of Dermatology. His clinical interests are in general medical dermatology, and his research interests are in the provision of health services, patient safety and quality improvement, provider wellness, and access to care. Dr. Chiu has previously served as Associate Residency Program Director for the UCLA Dermatology Residency Program, Director of the Psoriasis and Phototherapy Center at UCLA, and President of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Dermatological Society.



Breana Taira, MD, MPH

Emergency Medicine

Dr. Taira is the Director of Research for the Department of Emergency Medicine at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center. She is also the U.S. Director of Project SEMILLA, a volunteer group of emergency medical professionals whose mission is to improve emergency health care capacity in Latin America. She is an honorary professor of the national university of Nicaragua and lectures there regularly. Dr. Taira is the director of the section of International and Domestic Health Equity and Leadership (IDHEAL) of UCLA Emergency Medicine.



David B. Reuben, MD

Internal Medicine

Dr. Reuben is Director, Multicampus Program in Geriatrics Medicine and Gerontology and Chief, Division of Geriatrics at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Health Sciences. He is the Archstone Foundation Chair and Professor at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and Director of the UCLA Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center and the UCLA Alzheimer's and Dementia Care program. Dr. Reuben sustains professional interests in clinical care, education, research and administrative aspects of geriatrics, maintaining a clinical primary care practice of frail older persons and attending on inpatient and geriatric psychiatry units at UCLA. His bibliography includes more than 220 peer-reviewed publications in medical journals, 39 books and numerous chapters. Dr. Reuben is lead author of the widely distributed book, *Geriatrics at Your Fingertips*. Dr. Reuben is a past President of the American Geriatrics Society and the Association of Directors of Geriatric Academic Programs. He served for 11 years on the Geriatrics Test Writing Committee for the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) and for 8 years on the ABIM's Board of Directors, including as Chair from 2010-2011.



Christine Dauphine, MD, FACS

Surgery

Dr. Christine Dauphine is a breast surgeon at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. She is an Associate Professor of Surgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. She is also the Vice Chair of Education in the Department of Surgery at Harbor-UCLA. She received her medical degree from the UCLA School of Medicine and then completed her General Surgery Residency at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in 2006. Her clinical research interests are in breast cancer, health care disparities specific to cancer, and improving surgical education.



Christian De Virgilio, MD

Surgery

Dr. De Virgilio is originally from Argentina, and moved to the U.S. as a child. He attended Loyola Marymount University as an undergraduate, medical school at UCLA, general surgery residency at Harbor-UCLA, and vascular surgery fellowship at the Mayo Clinic. He is currently Chair of the Department of Surgery at Harbor-UCLA, and Co-Chair of the College of Applied Anatomy at the UCLA School of Medicine. He particularly enjoys teaching and mentoring medical students and residents.



Siamak Rahman, MD

Anesthesiology

Dr. Siamak Rahman is an anesthesiologist in Los Angeles, California and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, including UCLA Medical Center and UCLA Medical Center-Santa Monica. He received his medical degree from Shiraz University of Medical Sciences and has been in practice for more than 20 years.



Jasmine Patel, MD

Obstetrician/gynecologist

Dr. Jasmine Patel is an obstetrician/gynecologist at the Los Angeles County Medical Center - University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine. She is in her subspecialty fellowship of Complex Family Planning and pursuing a Master's of Science in Clinical Investigation. Her research interests are medical education, as well as female and male contraceptive methods, including vasectomy and withdrawal. Her other interests include traveling and physician advocacy. Dr. Patel is also a fellow with Physicians for Reproductive Health.



Obidiugwu K. Duru, MD, MS

Internal Medicine

Dr. O. Kenrik Duru graduated from medical school (University of California, San Francisco) and completed internal medicine residency (University of Chicago). After one year of Chief Residency at Cook County Hospital in Chicago and another year there seeing patients, he completed a National Research Service Award as a primary care research fellow at UCLA. Dr. Duru joined the UCLA Division of GIM/HSR in 2004. His areas of research interest include enhancing physical activity among minority seniors and designing interventions to reduce disparities in medication adherence and clinical outcomes among patients with diabetes.



Rodney A. Gabriel, MD

Anesthesiology

Rodney A. Gabriel holds a position as Chief of the Division of Regional Anesthesia and Acute Pain Medicine and is the Medical Director at the Koman Family Outpatient Pavilion surgery center. He is an Associate Professor of Anesthesiology and Associate Adjunct Professor in Biomedical Informatics.

Brittany Burton is a PGY-1 Anesthesiology resident at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is an alumnus of UC San Diego, holds a master's degree from John Hopkins Bloomberg School Public Health, and has over published 30 research manuscripts.



Anita L. Nelson, MD

Geography & GIS

Anita Nelson, MD is Professor and Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Western University of Health Sciences, Professor Emeritus in Obstetrics and Gynecology at The David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles and Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Keck Medical School at University of Southern California. She was Chief of Women's Programs at Harbor-UCLA for 27 years and has been Medical Director of Research at Essential Access health (formerly California Family Health Council) for nearly 30 years. She was a volunteer lecturer at the PA Program at CDU for 3 years. Her research interests have focused on outpatient reproductive health care issues including contraception, abnormal uterine bleeding, menopause, gynecologic cancer screening and prevention and sexually transmitted infections. She has published over 200 articles in professional journals and mentored dozens of fellows, residents, medical students and other students. She serves on the editorial boards of several journals and reviews manuscripts for dozens of others. She lectures extensively and is often interviewed by the media



Gerardo Moreno, MD

Family Medicine

Dr. Gerardo Moreno is an Associate Professor in Family Medicine and the Director of UCLA PRIME-LA (Program in Medical Education). He received his medical degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, and completed his clinical residency training in Family Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. He received a Master of Science in Health Services from UCLA School of Public Health, and completed a post-doctoral research fellowship in the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Foundation Clinical Scholars Program at UCLA. Dr. Moreno is an educator and clinician investigator with formal training and expertise in community-based participatory research (CBPR) and health services outcomes research. Dr. Moreno is an associate editor of the *Annals of Family Medicine* and serves on the Board of Directors for the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM). He has published studies that have increased our understanding of health disparities and the social determinants of health among Latinos, and currently is PI for a grant to evaluate healthcare services for undocumented persons in 13 California counties.



Dennis Hsieh, MD, JD

Emergency Medicine

Dr. Dennis Hsieh is an attending physician in the emergency department at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Torrance, CA. He also has earned a J.D. from Yale Law School and completed a two-year Equal Justice Works Fellowship in Los Angeles, CA, with Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County. He has co-founded a medical, legal partnership with St. John's Well Child and Family Center in South Los Angeles and Compton advocating for issues around housing, immigration, and public benefits. Dr. Hsieh also had a significant role in improving access to care in South Los Angeles after the closure of M.L.K. Hospital in Compton. He also co-founded the Health Advocates of Alameda Health System, a program that brings together volunteers and lawyers to create a continuum of care for addressing the social determinants of health for patients. The Health Advocates program now has over one hundred volunteers and runs five days a week serving Highland patients. Dr. Hsieh has secured a \$425,000 grant from the USDA to incentivize Highland patients to purchase fresh produce. He has also begun working with the Everyone Home and Home Stretch Initiatives in Alameda County to explore a Housing First Approach to Health. At Harbor UCLA, Dr. Hsieh works with the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services on access to care and addressing the social determinants of health for patients of Los Angeles with a focus on re-entry from the county jail system.



Jay R. Lieberman, MD

Orthopedic Surgery

Jay R. Lieberman, M.D. is Professor and Chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California and Director, Orthopaedic Institute. He is a member of the Hip Society, the Knee Society and the International Hip Society. He is Past President of the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons (AAHKS) and he was the inaugural editor of the highly popular American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Comprehensive Orthopaedic Review. He has been named multiple times to the Best Doctors in America List, Top Doctors and as a California Super Doctor. Dr. Lieberman's clinical research interests are related to improving outcomes after total joint arthroplasty, osteonecrosis and venous thromboembolic prophylaxis. His basic science research focus is on the development of regional gene therapy to enhance bone repair and understanding the role of growth factors in influencing the biological activity of stem cells. Dr. Lieberman is an NIH funded investigator and he is considered a pioneer in the field of gene therapy for bone repair. He has received multiple research other awards, and has published more than 280 peer reviewed papers, book chapters and reviews.



MARK S LITWIN, MD

Urology

Dr. Litwin is a Professor Chair of the UCLA Department of Urology in the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA; Professor of Health Policy & Management in the Fielding School of Public Health; Professor in the UCLA School of Nursing; Fran & Ray Stark Foundation Chair; a board-certified academic urologist, former Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar; and a fellowship-trained health services researcher. He held the nation's first joint faculty appointment in urology and public health. He has conducted a wide variety of epidemiologic, economic, and health services research studies addressing resource utilization, costs, medical outcomes, practice patterns, quality of life, and quality of care that span the breadth of malignant and benign urology. He has been continuously federally funded since 1997, including 11 years with R01 support. He presently leads a DoD-funded project involving prostate cancer outcomes communication and runs a large international outcomes registry for men with prostate cancer. Dr. Litwin actively mentors and trains post-doctoral fellows, research residents, and medical students and has been awarded honors in research mentorship, research innovation, service to my profession, and humanism in medicine.