

SPORTS NEUROLOGY-NEUROTRAUMA

FELLOWSHIP OVERVIEW



Chris Giza, MD
Director
UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Program



Meeryo Choe, MD
Tisch Fellowship Director
Associate Director
UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Program

ABOUT

The UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT (**S**afety, **P**erformance, **O**utreach, **R**esearch, **T**reatment) Program, is one of few places in the world training the future generation of multidisciplinary TBI healthcare providers. The generosity of Mr. Steve Tisch's donation allowed the endowment of two distinct BrainSPORT fellowship programs offering training in sports neurology and sports neuropsychology.

BrainSPORT training is unique in its exposure to diverse treatment, research and community outreach opportunities that span populations of military veterans as well as youth, collegiate, professional, and retired athletes, and the general population.

CURRICULUM

The UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Sports Neurology & Neurotrauma Fellowship explores the intersection of treatment, research and community outreach as it relates to neurological, cognitive, emotional and neuropsychological symptomatology. Fellows will be expected to provide clinical care in the outpatient setting, conduct preseason neurological screenings of community athletes, conduct guided independent research, and engage in the program's broader community education efforts. This is a 2-year fellowship that incorporates all of the below opportunities for training.

Clinical

Through close working relationships with attending physicians, neuropsychologists, and other team members (occupational therapists, dietitian, and research assistants) fellows are trained through exposure to outpatient evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of concussion and post-concussive symptoms, sideline neurological testing, and pre-season neurological screening.

- ▶ **There are four, half-day outpatient concussion clinics each week.**
 - ▶ **Tuesday mornings in Santa Monica, CA**
 - ▶ **Wednesday mornings in Westwood, CA**
 - ▶ **Thursday mornings in Westwood, CA**
 - ▶ **Friday mornings in Westwood, CA**

- ▶ **Sideline neurological testing occurs at high school football games at community partnered high schools**

(continued)



Research

▶ **Study Investigator or Co-Investigator**

Fellows are encouraged to serve as study investigator or co-investigator for at least one research project. Research projects can be singular or multidisciplinary across clinical, translational basic science, epidemiological and/or public health fields. Fellows will be able to collaborate and foster relationships with members of the UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT multidisciplinary teams including the UCLA Brain Injury Research Center (BIRC), UCLA Departments of Pediatrics, Neurology, Sports Medicine and Neurosurgery. Fellows also have the opportunity to participate in multisite research studies including the 4 Corners Youth Consortium and NCAA-CARE Project.

▶ **Abstracts & Posters**

Fellows are encouraged to submit at least two abstracts/poster presentations for national academic conferences per year.

▶ **Grants**

Fellows are encouraged to apply for their own funding and will have close guidance as to which grants and opportunities are available.

**Dedicated research time is built into both years of the training program*

Community Outreach

We are committed to sharing our expertise in sports related concussion with our community. To address the large need for community education and knowledge about brain health and SRC, we engage with Greater Los Angeles in a variety of educational and preventative efforts.

▶ **Youth Sports Participation Preseason Neurological Screenings**

Conduct at least 40 hours (10 sessions) of direct service with baseline testing at community schools and youth leagues each year.

▶ **Community Brain Health & Sports Safety Education Series**

Conduct at least one educational session per sports season for parents, athletes, and/ or school administrators. Fellows have presented to the LAUSD, World Boxing Council, Community partnered high schools, Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation, and others.

Teaching & Mentorship

The UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Fellows will engage in the teaching and mentorship of our feeder programs:

▶ **High School Summer Internship Program**

Serve as a mentor for at least one high school summer research intern. Our summer internship offers students in the community the opportunity to gain hands on experience with research and sports related concussion care.

▶ **Undergraduate BrainSPORT Volunteer Club**

Present to the club twice a year on current research, case studies or projects to the BrainSPORT undergraduate volunteer club.

▶ **Concussion Champions CME Course**

Participate in teaching a breakout session for at least one Concussion Champions course a year. Concussion Champions is a UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Program initiative aimed at educating community primary healthcare providers on concussion diagnosis and management

Didactics

Fellows are encouraged/required to attend regular didactic activities which include:

- ▶ **Pediatric TBI Group Weekly Meeting**

Regularly present case conferences to our interdisciplinary team of researchers and healthcare providers. Also an opportunity to present your choice of literature review, research idea, research design, methods proposal, grant application or findings of a project already underway.

- ▶ **Monthly Journal Club**

Present an academic article of interest at least once every 6 months to our interdisciplinary team. This monthly brain health and research gathering takes place off-campus and promotes cross-collaboration among researchers at UCLA.

Teaching & Mentorship

The UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Fellows will engage in the teaching and mentorship of our feeder programs:

- ▶ **High School Summer Internship Program**

Serve as a mentor for at least one high school summer research intern. Our summer internship offers students in the community the opportunity to gain hands on experience with research and sports related concussion care.

- ▶ **Undergraduate BrainSPORT Volunteer Club**

Present to the club twice a year on current research, case studies or projects to the BrainSPORT undergraduate volunteer club.

- ▶ **Concussion Champions CME Course**

Participate in teaching a breakout session for at least one Concussion Champions course a year. Concussion Champions is a UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Program initiative aimed at educating community primary healthcare providers on concussion diagnosis and management

Tisch BrainSPORT Fellows also have the opportunity to rotate through the UCLA Department of Sports Medicine and other clinical departments.

BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION

- ▶ **Salary- \$75,000**

- ▶ **Vacation - Up to 24 days per year**

- ▶ **Conference Allowance - Up to 2 meetings per year, but more if presenting**

Participate in teaching a breakout session

- ▶ **Benefits Include:**

- ▶ Medical insurance
- ▶ Dental Insurance
- ▶ Vision Insurance

APPLY

Eligibility

- ▶ Must anticipate completion of a residency in child neurology, adult neurology or PM&R by the start of the fellowship
- ▶ Must be eligible for a license to practice medicine in the state of California

Application Requirements

▶ **Personal Statement**

Please include background, interest in program, research interests; can be up to 1 ½ page single space

▶ **Three Letters of Recommendation**

One letter of recommendation should come from your residency program director

▶ **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**

All of the above documents should be emailed directly to administrator, Alex Corona (ACorona@mednet.ucla.edu)

Application Process

- ▶ Selected applicants will be asked for a phone/videoconference interview(s) by our Fellowship Director and current fellows. This may be followed by an in person visit.

CURRENT TISCH BRAINSPORT FELLOWS

▶ **Rachel Pearson, MD** - Tisch BrainSPORT Fellow '21

SPECIALIZATION:

Pediatric Neurology

BIOGRAPHY:

Dr. Rachel Pearson grew up in Memphis, Tennessee and received her B.A. in History from Washington University in Saint Louis. During this time, she studied abroad in Israel and interned at the Center for Familial Dysautonomia at Hadassah Medical Center. After obtaining her undergraduate degree, she attended the Medical College of Wisconsin and completed her M.D. There, she researched parental understanding of abnormal newborn screening results and was deeply involved in community outreach, developing patient education curricula for the Saturday Free Clinic for the Uninsured, the Teen Crisis Center, Milwaukee Women's Center, and Milwaukee Public Schools. After medical school she completed residency training in Pediatric Neurology at UC Irvine and Children's Hospital Orange County, where she developed a special interest in pediatric traumatic brain injury (TBI) and published research on pediatric posttraumatic headache. Additional research interests include the role of sleep in recovery after TBI and autonomic dysfunction after TBI. She is excited to further pursue her clinical and research interests as a fellow in the Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Program. Outside of medicine, her interests include dance, baking, and travel.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

Autonomic dysfunction, sleep, persistent symptoms, postural orthostatic tachycardia.

▶ **Kevin Bickart, MD, PhD** - Tisch BrainSPORT Fellow '21

SPECIALIZATION:

Neurology/ Neurobehavior

BIOGRAPHY:

Kevin Bickart grew up playing football from the age of 9 where he had some of his most formative and inspiring experiences. In that time, he also saw first-hand many devastating sports-related injuries, including many head injuries and repetitive head impacts that could have been prevented or more optimally managed. Kevin went on to earn his undergraduate degree in neuroscience from Quinnipiac University and MD/PhD in Anatomy and Neurobiology from Boston University School of Medicine because of his interest in the brain's role in optimal health, performance, and human cognition, mood, and behavior. During his PhD studies, and as a cofounder and consultant of health technology startup businesses, he investigated the neuroanatomy of social networks in healthy people and social impairments in people with frontotemporal dementia as well

as the neurophysiology of team chemistry in Division I team sports. Kevin completed his residency in neurology from Stanford University where he also studied the neuroimaging biomarkers of traumatic brain injury, particularly the vulnerability of brain networks to trauma as well as the genetics of these networks. He is excited to combine his interests by specializing in both Sport and Behavioral Neurology at UCLA. Here, he will continue dedicated clinical care of patients with brain injury and dementia while also carrying forward his research on the brain networks, genetics, and novel therapeutics relevant to these conditions.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

Amygdala networks following TBI, neuroimaging, dysautonomia, resting-state fMRI and TBI

▶ **Daniel Rafie, MD** - *Tisch BrainSPORT Fellow '22*

SPECIALIZATION:

Neurology

BIOGRAPHY:

Daniel Rafie was born in Virginia, but grew up in Honduras, Central America. At the age of 12, he and his family moved to Miami, Fl. He played basketball, baseball, and soccer, and these sports shaped his formative years. During this time, he had personal experiences with the detrimental effects of concussion. Additionally, his resilient commitment in sports taught him perseverance and the reward of hard work, lessons he has used throughout his career and continues to use today. He attended James Madison University for his undergraduate studies and graduated with a B.A. in International Affairs. He then obtained his MD at the American University of the Caribbean, and completed his Neurology residency training at the JFK Neuroscience Institute in New Jersey. During his residency training, he worked on concussion guidelines for the Amateur Boxing Association and volunteered alongside boxing ringside physicians. His main clinical and research interests include objective measures for concussion diagnosis, utilizing Neurological therapies to enhance peak athlete performance, community education outreach, and the potential use of Cannabidiol (CBD) as a therapeutic in concussion. He is looking forward to his UCLA BrainSPORT fellowship, where he will pursue his research interests, care for patients with traumatic brain injuries, and apply his experience as an athlete to encourage a practice and precedent that places the athletes and patients first.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

CBD therapy in concussion recovery, neurological therapies to enhance athletic performance, objective measures for concussion diagnosis, and community education outreach.

▶ **TISCH FELLOWSHIP ALUMNI**

Meeryo Choe, MD

- Current Position: Clinical Professor of Pediatric Neurology, UCLA; Associate Director, UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Program

Adam Darby, MD '17

- Current Position: Neurologist, UCLA Health Network; Attending in UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Clinic

Josh Kamins, MD '18

- Current Position: Assistant Professor of Neurology, UCLA; Attending in UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Clinic

Julia Kerrigan, MD '18

- Current Position: Head of neurology and concussion clinic - St. Luke's University Health Network, Bethlehem, PA

Dorothy Harris, MD, PhD '19

- Current Position: Neurologist, Providence Saint John's Medical Foundation, Santa Monica, CA

Rafael Romeu-Mejia, MD '19

- Current Position: Psychiatrist - Rancho Los Amigos, Los Angeles, CA

Tara Sharma, DO '20

- Current Position: Clinical Assistant Professor, Neurology - University of Washington

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**Q: Is this an accredited fellowship?**

A: No, however, fellows are eligible to take Brain Injury Medicine Boards through 2022 grandfathering period. For additional information: https://www.abpn.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2020_Brain_Injury_Medicine_CERT_Information_for_Applicants.pdf

Q: How long is this fellowship?

A: Two years

Q: When would I start and end the fellowship?

A: Start date is July 1 with an end date of June 30 for the 2nd year

Q: How many fellows are accepted every year?

A: 1 or 2

Q: When should I apply?

A: We accept applications on a rolling basis. We recommend applicants apply 20-24 months in advance (about 2 years). We will aim to make a decision about 18 months prior to the start of the fellowship.

Q: If I am interested in applying to the fellowship but would like to have a formal rotation with BrainSPORT, would that be possible?

A: Yes, we encourage interested future applicants to rotate with us and meet our team. Please contact our rotation coordinator, Raquel Gallegos (RGallegos@mednet.ucla.edu) for more information

CONTACT US

Our team is regularly represented at the following conferences each year, come find us!

- American Academy of Neurology Annual Meeting
- American Academy of Neurology Sports Concussion Conference
- Child Neurology Society Annual Meeting
- National and International Neurotrauma Society Meetings
- Western Neurotrauma Meeting

For any other questions, feel free to contact the Pediatric Neurology Department Administrator, Alex Corona (ACorona@mednet.ucla.edu).