As a new academic year begins, one can’t help but reminisce over the past year. I think fondly of graduation: a constant cycle of birth and rebirth, as new interns begin, and graduating residents become our professional colleagues. This cycle is the reason many of us go into and stay in academics. We gain fulfillment from helping our trainees grow and develop until they graduate. They become our colleagues and our friends. But unlike years past, we have to take a moment and acknowledge that this year has not been like those before. Half of our trainees have only been physicians or practiced anesthesiology during this pandemic. They don’t have a reference point for what it was like to be an anesthesiology resident before 2020. Everyone acknowledges that residency is tough, but most of us reading this won’t ever truly understand how tough residency has been for more than a year and a half.

Despite the challenges that trainees, faculty, nurses and staff have all faced, I have been impressed by how everyone in the department has risen to the challenge, not only to survive, but thrive.
The core of the anesthesiologist's profession is clinical care. The ebb and flow of the pandemic have made case volume difficult to predict. But despite the challenges, every clinical provider continues to strive for excellence, doing what is best for our patients and achieving a level of care most people can only dream of in their careers. The social distance necessitated by the pandemic made us crave celebrations and camaraderie that were routine before. This summer, we were able to come together for LA Dodgers games, and we look forward to more events to connect us during the upcoming year.

Thank you, everyone, for your commitment to excellence and for supporting the pillars of the department through clinical care, education, and research.

Maxime Cannesson, MD, PhD

A Word from the Editor

By Karen Sibert, MD, FASA

As summer comes to a close, we have much to celebrate and give thanks for, even as we try to come to terms with a world that will never be quite as it was. The Hollywood Bowl reopened, and I shared the pure delight of watching John Williams conduct and thousands of people wave light sabers (mine was blue, thank you) as the orchestra played iconic theme music from Raiders of the Lost Ark, ET, and Star Wars.

We went to restaurants and to the beach this summer. We celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2021 with an in-person graduation ceremony – though it was held outdoors at the UCLA Luskin Conference Center, and we still wore masks in the buffet line out of caution and respect for the servers. We congratulated our new chief residents – Drs. Ryan Gamlin, Jake Melendrez, and Annie Tran. We welcomed our CA-1 residents and our new fellows into the operating rooms, and wished the new Class of 2025 all the best as they began their internship year.

Though the summer brought news of another COVID surge due to the delta variant, to date Los Angeles hasn’t seen the deluge of cases that have plagued other parts of the U.S., and our surgical volume continues unabated. We have enjoyed ready access to vaccination and PPE. We’ve learned to take better care of ourselves. We don’t expect people to drag themselves into work when they’re ill, as we all used to do because we didn’t want to cause inconvenience and we wanted to pretend we were invincible. If there’s one thing this pandemic has proved, it’s that no one is invincible. Life is short; we need to cherish it, and each other.

In this issue of Open Circuit, we hope you’ll enjoy reading about the many accomplishments of our faculty, fellows, residents, nurse anesthetists, and administration staff members. We have a list of the dozens of panels and presentations you can look forward to seeing – virtually or in person – at ANESTHESIOLOGY 2021 in San Diego, and we want to extend special congratulations to our researchers who’ve been chosen to present at the prestigious “Best of Abstracts – Basic Science” session on Sunday morning.

Dr. Cannesson with Drs. Samrawit Abraha, Lydiesther Martinez, Stew Smith, Jennifer Lucero, and Ceci Canales at UCLA Minority Housestaff Inaugural Welcome Reception

Chief residents Jake Melendrez, Annie Tran, and Ryan Gamlin
Really, we know everyone only wants to look at the photos, and we have plenty of them — from the fun our department had at Dodgers games to our ever-popular pets and babies. But don’t miss the feature on our department’s podcast “influencers”, and a look at the live clinical research happening in our midst.

Please continue to send us your news items, whether you’re a current member of the department or a past graduate. We would love to hear from you, and we always appreciate photos! And finally, many, many thanks to Associate Editor Shevaughn Marchese, and to Assistant Editor Darnell Bagsik, for their expert help with this issue.

Karen Sibert, MD, FASA

Congratulations to Our 2021 Graduates

By Shevaughn Marchese

To our collective surprise and delight, we were able to hold our resident graduation ceremony this year in person, not virtually! Residents, their families, and faculty members enjoyed a sunny outdoor event at the Luskin Conference Center on June 26, with a buffet lunch and presentation of awards.

Maxime Cannesson, MD, PhD, our department chair, opened the program with a warm welcome, a commentary on what a remarkable year this has been, and congratulations to all the graduates for their courage, hard work, and resilience. As always, our graduating residents recognized faculty anesthesiologists who have made notable contributions to the department’s education programs. Outstanding junior residents also received awards from the faculty.

For the second year in a row, on June 23 we hosted our annual Fellowship Graduation and Awards Ceremony via Zoom. With introductions by Vice
Chair for Education Judi Turner, MD, PhD, the program included affectionate and sometimes humorous bios of our graduating fellows, written and delivered by their fellowship program directors. Read about all of our Class of 2021 residency and fellowship graduates and view their photos in our 2021 yearbook, and be sure not to miss the class photo album at the end!

THE DILLON AWARD

Andrew Disque, MD, received the department’s Dillon Award for Outstanding Performance by an Assistant Professor, presented by the senior faculty. Harvey Rosenbaum, MD, introducing Dr. Disque, described him as an “outstanding educator and mentor” who is a member of the Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology and Liver Transplant Anesthesiology teams, and Chair of the Equipment Committee. Dr. Disque’s professional activities are focused on advancing patient safety, including the writing of case reports and review articles targeted toward professional education. Our residents previously awarded Dr. Disque the Excellence in Teaching Award in 2019.

Dr. Rosenbaum explained that the Dillon Award is “designed to honor an Assistant Professor for their accomplishments and contributions to advancing our teaching, clinical, professional and scientific missions.” He described our Assistant Professors as “a remarkable and diverse team of individuals who represent the future of our specialty and whose present contributions are essential to our success.”

The Dillon Award is named after the first chair of Anesthesiology, John Bartley Dillon, MD. Dr. Rosenbaum noted that Dr. Dillon, in his early career, built a plethysmograph to accurately record finger pulsation. Initially trained in physiology, he transitioned to anesthesiology and later led the Anesthesia Teaching Service at Letterman Army Hospital during WWll. He was recruited to serve as UCLA’s first Chief of the Division of Anesthesiology, where he served from 1950-1972, of our specialty and whose present contributions are essential to our success.”

The Dillon Award is named after the first chair of Anesthesiology, John Bartley Dillon, MD. Dr. Rosenbaum noted that Dr. Dillon, in his early career, built a plethysmograph to accurately record finger pulsation. Initially trained in physiology, he transitioned to anesthesiology and later led the Anesthesia Teaching Service at Letterman Army Hospital during WWll. He was recruited to serve as UCLA’s first Chief of the Division of Anesthesiology, where he served from 1950-1972.

Residency Program Director Jack Buckley, MD, introduced the 2020-21 Chief Residents, Azad Hirpara, MD, Jeffrey Kim, MD and Libing Wang, MD, and thanked them for their lasting contributions to the department in the area of resident recruitment. The outgoing Chiefs presented awards chosen by the residents.

Adrian Nava won the Perioperative Services Provider of the Year Award for his outstanding support as an anesthesiology and perioperative services technician. Dr. Wang stressed that it takes a village to achieve our aim of excellence in care, including our dedicated anesthesia technical personnel. She described Mr. Nava as a true role model in his field.

Olive View-UCLA faculty members Sachin Gupta, MD, and Maryetta Ovsepian, MD, each received an award for Affiliate Teacher of the Year. Dr. Wang described Dr. Gupta as a role model among UCLA alumni, and an exceptional anesthesiologist who is also immensely humble and personable. Dr. Kim lauded Dr. Ovsepian’s vast knowledge about and enthusiasm for regional anesthesiology, and commented that her teaching sparked his own interest in the field.
Dr. Hirpara thanked Dr. Lee for his dedication to resident teaching in the OR and didactic lectures, in addition to curriculum development and his work on the Education Committee.

Dr. Hirpara introduced the incoming Chief Residents, Ryan Gamlin, MD, Jacob Melendrez, MD, and Annie Tran, MD, and wished them success in the upcoming year.

Concluding the ceremonies, Dr. Cannesson and the chief residents presented a special thank-you award and video to Judi Turner, MD, PhD, who last year concluded a long, successful term as residency program director and has been promoted to Vice Chair for Education.

All the faculty and residents extended sincere thanks to the Education Office staff – Jessyka Delgado, Susan Kim, Lucelva Mendez, and Lucine Torosian – for their tireless dedication to and support of all our educational programs.

**GRADUATING FELLOWS**

In the virtual fellowship graduation ceremony, Dr. Turner introduced each of the fellowship program directors in turn to share the graduates’ bios and their future plans.

Critical Care Medicine Anesthesiology Program Director Vadim Gudzenko, MD, reflected on the unprecedented critical care challenges the four fellows – Drs. Kristzina Escallier, Kasey Grewe, Melanie Kusonruka, and James Madrian – faced as they trained during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their fearless attitudes in this environment.

Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology Program Director Reed Harvey, MD, shared his gratitude for his warm relationships with the four fellows – Drs. Candy Ezimora, Sean Mofidi, Christine Stypula, and Andrew Wu – and appreciation of the opportunity to have such a fulfilling role as program director.

Liver Transplant Anesthesiology Program Director Christine Nguyen-Buckley, MD, shared the bios of Drs. Courtney Scott and Colby Tanner, and described the breadth of their experience in anesthesiology for abdominal transplants.

Obstetric Anesthesiology Interim Program Director Jason Hirsch, MD, introduced graduating fellow Krista Cascia, MD, describing her growth as a trainee and celebrating her decision to accept our offer to stay on as faculty.

Pain Medicine Fellowship Director Jakun Ing, MD, MPH, congratulated the six fellowship graduates: Drs. Brittany Aeschlimann, Jason Daughety, Elizabeth Feenstra, Frederick Li, Mark Motejunas, and Ava Socik. He shared humorous bios, and the fellows’ future plans.

Pediatric Anesthesiology Fellowship Program Director Wendy Ren, MD, FAAP, described Drs. Stephen Acosta and Tracie Lo as embodying “the virtues of the ideal pediatric anesthesiologist – dedicated, kind, always ready to greet you with a smile, and give their patients 110% every day.”

Regional Anesthesiology & Acute Pain Medicine Fellowship Director Eva Boyd, MD, shared a colorful description of the fellows’ daily experience, during which they could easily surpass their goal of 10,000 steps! She congratulated Drs. Gary Chan, Gregory Sheehan, and Kelsey Wang.

In closing the fellowship graduation program, Dr. Turner honored our dedicated Fellowship Programs staff, Lucine Torosian and Susan Kim, whose hard work has contributed so much to the fellows’ success.
Congratulations to Our 2021 Graduates

On the helipad on their last day!

Dr. Mariam Sarwary, Dr. Susan Alaei, and their proud parents

Dr. John Shin and Dr. Albert Lee, Medical Student Educator of the Year

Dr. Nicole Andonian with her family

Dr. Mariam Sarwary, Dr. Susan Alaei, and their proud parents
WELCOME TO UCLA, CLASS OF 2025!

UCLA
DEPARTMENT OF ANESTHESIOLOGY
& PERIOPERATIVE MEDICINE
RESIDENCY CLASS OF 2025
MC2108 (8:20 – 8:30 AM) – Anesthesia for Inferior Vena Cava Resection in Patient with Carcinoid Syndrome
Alexander Tran, MD, Christine Nguyen-Buckley, MD

QI PROJECTS
Q101 – Quality Improvement Projects: Sunday, October 10th, 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM
(Location: Exhibit Hall)
Tanner Tripp, MD, Shanpeng Li, MD, MS, Linda Li, MD

MC2110 (1:50 – 2:00 PM) – Anesthetic Management of VV-ECMP Patient Undergoing Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy
Peter Schneak, MD, Marisa Hernandez-Morgan, MD

MC1140 (2:00 – 2:10 PM) – Use of Regional Anesthesia in the Setting of Hypertrophic Obstructive Cardiomyopathy
Mariam Sarwary, MD, Pamela Chia, MD, MS, Natale Nam, MD

MC1168 (2:20 – 2:30 PM) – Asleep-awake-asleep Craniotomy in a Patient with Coronary Artery Disease and Heart Block
Liping Wang, MD, Joe Hong, MD

MC1211 (2:50 – 3:00 PM) – Postoperative Cardiac Arrest after Transurethral Resection of the Prostate
Vivian Wung, MD, Christine Nguyen-Buckley, MD

MC2081 (Monitor 01 – 8:10 – 8:20 AM) - Successful Resection of Thyroid Cancer Involving the Trachea and Cricoid Cartilage: Complex Ventilation Strategy and Constant Intraoperative Communication
Karen Sibert, MD, FASA, Liping Wang, MD

MC2108 (8:20 – 8:30 AM) – Anesthesia for Inferior Vena Cava Resection in Patient with Carcinoid Syndrome
Alexander Tran, MD, Christine Nguyen-Buckley, MD

MC2110 (8:20 – 8:30 AM) – Lumbar Epidural Considerations in a Patient with Lamellar Ichthyosis
Ryan Gamin, MD, Sapna Satyanarayan-Victor, MD

MC2111 (8:20 – 8:30 AM) – Lumbar Epidural Considerations in a Patient with Lamellar Ichthyosis
Ryan Gamin, MD, Sapna Satyanarayan-Victor, MD

MC2352 (10:50 – 11:00 AM) – Rapid Metabolism of Local Anesthetic during Labor Epidural
Philip Morway, MD

MC2002 – Medically Challenging Cases II: Sunday, October 10th, 7:30 – 9:30 AM
(Location: Exhibit Hall)

MC3245 (Monitor 11 – 1:00 – 1:10 PM) - Consideration Of Patient Personal Well-being In Anesthesia Planning: Anesthesia Management For A Combined Sceleral Buckle and Vitrectomy In A 40 Year-old, G5P0 Woman
Andrew Siskorsky, MD, Zhiuang Fang, MD

MC3251 (1:10 – 2:00 PM) – A Red Herring and a Legendary Case: Healthy Young Female Presents with Hallucinations and Winds up on ECMO
Maryte Gylys, MD, MBA, Logan Woodhouse, MD, Kasey Grewe, MD, Christopher Ortiz, MD, PhD, Matthew Vandiver, MD, PhD

MC3330 (10:50 – 2:00 PM) – Anesthesia for Tracheoplasty in Mounier-Kuhn Syndrome
Nicole Nguyen, BS, Benjamin Kwittken, MD, Jason Lee, MD

MC3439 (2:50 – 3:00 PM) – Anesthetic Considerations when Common Anesthetics are Contraindicated
Douglas Campbell, MD, Pamela Chia, MD, MS

Q2071 (4:20 – 4:30 PM) – Quality Improvement: Enhancing Regional Anesthesia Experience for Patients, Surgeons, and the Acute Pain Service
Pamela Chia, MD, MS, John Kleinman, MD

Q2140 (4:50 – 5:00 PM) – Reduction of Perioperative Blood Transfusion during Liver Transplantation
Christina Ma, MD, Joseph DiNorgia, MD, MS, Christopher Wray, MD, Victor Xia, MD, Christine Nguyen-Buckley, MD

POIN-CTOUP-POINT
PC01 – Peer Review: Does it Improve Patient Care and Safety?: Saturday, October 9th, 7:45 – 8:45 AM Location: Upper 6DE
Emily Methangkool, MD, MPH – Peer Review is Necessary for Patient Safety

PC02 – Scope of Practice: Can a Nurse Anesthetist Really Do My Job?: Saturday, October 9th, 10:15 – 11:15 AM
(Location: Upper 23ABC)
Karen Sibert, MD, FASA - Moderator

60-MINUTE PANELS
PN315 – Art into Science: The Intersection of Evidence and Pediatric Airway Management in Modern Practice: Monday, October 11th, 2:30 – 3:30 PM (Location: Upper 3)
Lisa Lee, MD – Predictors of Difficult or Impossible Mask Ventilation: What Can We Learn from a Machine?

PN401 – Through the Looking Glass and Beyond the EEG. In Vivo Imaging of Neuronal Activity During Wakefulness and General Anesthesia: Tuesday, October 12th, 7:30 – 8:30 AM (Location: Upper 8)
Andrew Hudson, MD, PhD – Isoflurane differentially affects the activity of parvalbumin and pyramidal neurons in superficial cortical layers in vivo

Q2105 (3:00 – 3:10 PM) – Anesthesiology and Conscious Sedation: Case Studies and Pearls
Andrew Sikorsky, MD, Zhuang Fang, MD

Q2106 (3:10 – 3:20 PM) – Anesthesia for Patients Undergoing Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy
Peter Schneak, MD, Marisa Hernandez-Morgan, MD

Q2107 (3:20 – 3:30 PM) – Anesthesia for Patients Undergoing Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy
Peter Schneak, MD, Marisa Hernandez-Morgan, MD

Q2108 (3:30 – 3:40 PM) – Anesthesia for Patients Undergoing Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy
Peter Schneak, MD, Marisa Hernandez-Morgan, MD
Awards, Honors, and Recognition

Congratulations to Dr. Eghbali’s Lab on NIH Grant News!

Mansoureh Eghbali, PhD, received excellent news in July regarding two of her research team’s recent NIH RO1 grant submissions — one was awarded funding and another received a fundable score.

This new funding will lend further support to the Eghbali Laboratory’s renowned research program studying pulmonary hypertension (PH), a terminal cardiopulmonary disease where patients exhibit a chronic increase of blood pressure within the lungs. This increase results in a severe loss of quality of life and shorter life-expectancy for patients, as it exhausts the right ventricle by forcing it to overwork. To date, no cure exists for pulmonary hypertension and therapeutic options remain limited, especially because the origin of the disease remains unknown.

The “UTY” Gene and the Y Chromosome

The foundation of the R01 grant just funded is a previous publication, in collaboration with Arthur Arnold, PhD, demonstrating that the male-specific Y chromosome gene is protective against experimental forms of PH (Umar et al., 2018, American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine). In this proposal, then-graduate student Christine Cunningham identified the “Uty” gene as the protective gene encoded by the Y chromosome, and found that targeting the shared receptor of these proinflammatory chemokines. The research team found that targeting the shared receptor of these proinflammatory chemokines, using a commercially available and FDA-approved small molecule inhibitor, rescues PH development in two preclinical rodent models. Their work also highlights the importance of another downstream Uty pathway in understanding clinical sex differences found in PH treatment efficacy.

Investigating the Gut-Lung Axis

The foundation of the other R01 grant submission that received a fundable score is a previous publication demonstrating that mice develop PH when fed a diet rich in oxidized lipids (Ruffenach et al., 2020, Hypertension). This new proposal is a collaboration between the Eghbali Laboratory and the laboratory of Srinivasa Reddy, PhD, of UCLA’s Department of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology. This grant will be the second joint R01 project between Drs. Eghbali and Reddy in their eight-year collaboration.
The goal of their new proposal is to investigate the “gut-lung axis” to uncover how dietary oxidized lipids cause PH through the intestines. While the gut and lungs are anatomically distinct, there are complex pathways and “crosstalk” between their microbiota that can alter immune responses and affect the course of respiratory diseases.

Gregoire Ruffenach, PhD, who joined Dr. Eghbali’s lab in 2015, has been the major driving force for this project and very instrumental in the success of this application. Dr. Ruffenach discovered IFI44 (IFN inducible protein 44) as the only gene significantly up-regulated in the small intestines and lungs of mice on an oxidized lipid diet, and found also in the lungs of PH patients. Their preliminary findings, a combined effort of Dr. Ruffenach and Ellen O’Connor (a PhD student in Dr. Reddy’s lab), suggest that ingestion of oxidized lipids activates IFI44 in immune cells within the intestine which migrate to the lungs, triggering endothelial cell death and PH. Interestingly, silencing this gene prevents development of PH in mice on an oxidized lipid diet.

“Our Best of Abstracts: Basic Science”

Another project of Dr. Ruffenach’s has been honored by selection for oral presentation at the ANESTHESIOLOGY 2021 Annual Meeting. The abstract is titled, “15-HETE Induces Pulmonary Hypertension: The Role of the Inhibitory Protein AP15”. His co-authors are Ellen O’Connor, BSc, Srinivasa Reddy, PhD, and Dr. Eghbali. Dr. Eghbali serves as the Director of our Physician-Scientist Training Program and of our Basic Science Environment.

“Faculty Promotions”

Congratulations to Soban Umar, MD, PhD, on his promotion to Associate Professor-in-Residence, and to Christine Trieu, MD, Michelle Harvey, MD, John Shin, MD, and Sachin Gupta, MD on their recent promotions from Assistant to Associate Clinical Professor!
Dr. Michela Ottolia Wins NIH R01 Grant

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute awarded an NIH/NHLBI R01 grant to Michela Ottolia, PhD, to investigate a novel regulatory mechanism of cardiac function. Dr. Ottolia and her research team will investigate how changes in intracellular sodium tune cardiac contractility and excitability by affecting the activity of the plasma membrane transporter sodium-calcium exchanger. These studies will be conducted in collaboration with Ariel Escobar, PhD, at UC Merced School of Engineering.

Dr. Tomohiro Yokota Wins American Heart Association Award

Assistant Project Scientist Tomohiro Yokota, PhD, secured a prestigious Career Development Award from the American Heart Association. Dr. Yokota investigates the molecular mechanisms of chamber-specific postnatal heart growth in the right and left ventricles. One of the most prominent features in cardiac physiology is the marked differences in size and function between the left and right ventricles in the adult heart. However, fetal hearts largely have equivalent sizes and function during fetal development before birth. The left ventricle’s dominance develops rapidly during the perinatal transition in newborn hearts, in order to support the drastically different hemodynamic loads between the peripheral and pulmonary circulations. This chamber-specific postnatal growth is the cornerstone of postnatal heart development. However, the underlying molecular mechanisms are almost entirely unexplored.

The goal of Dr. Yokota’s research is to fill an important gap in current knowledge by uncovering novel signaling mechanisms critical to perinatal heart remodeling and maturation, especially with regard to chamber specificity.

Dr. Umar Wins ATS Early Career Research Achievement Award

Associate Professor-in-Residence Soban Umar, MD, PhD, is the 2021 winner of the Early Career Research Achievement Award, presented by the American Thoracic Society’s Assembly on Pulmonary Circulation.

Commenting Dr. Umar for his academic excellence, the Assembly leadership noted: “Dr. Umar received his Medicine degree with honors from Nishtar Medical University in Pakistan. He completed his Ph.D. in cardiovascular physiology and molecular cardiology from Leiden University in the Netherlands with a focus on molecular mechanisms of pulmonary hypertension and right heart failure. He went on to complete his Postdoctoral training in cardiopulmonary pathophysiology from UCLA with a focus on the role of sex hormones and sex chromosomes and epigenetic regulation of pulmonary hypertension. He completed his residency training in Anesthesiology from UCLA in 2016 and has been serving as a faculty member in the Department of Anesthesiology since. Dr. Umar is a physician-scientist who works as a clinical anesthesiologist and is the principal investigator of an NIH-funded basic and translational cardiovascular research laboratory. He has received funding from the American Thoracic Society (ATS), Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research (FAER), UCLA Cardiovascular Theme, and The National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Umar has published > 50 high-quality research papers and has an h-index of 25 with over 2100 citations of his work to date. His valuable contributions to pulmonary vascular disease and right heart failure research have resulted in numerous honors and awards. The Umar Laboratory’s research is focused on investigating the pathophysiology and molecular mechanisms of primary and secondary forms of pulmonary hypertension and associated right ventricular dysfunction using cutting-edge multi-omics approaches with a long-term goal to devise novel, effective and targeted therapies.”

Dr. Umar is our residency’s Associate Program Director for Resident Research. He has been active in our outreach to area high schools, guiding tours through his laboratory to give students an inside look at basic science research. Congratulations, Dr. Umar!

Clinic Scientists Win FAER Mentored Research Training Grants

Two Assistant Professors-in-Residence in cardiothoracic anesthesiology, Louis Saddic, MD, PhD, and Matthew Fischer, MD, have been awarded two-year FAER Mentored Research Training Grants. Dr. Saddic will receive funding for his proposal, “The Mechanistic Exploration of Estrogen Driven Attenuation of Thoracic Aortic Aneurysms Using Proteomics”, and Dr. Fischer for his proposal, “Methylation Quantitative Trait Loci Mapping and Methylome Wide Association Study of Post-Operative Atrial Fibrillation After Cardiac Surgery”.

The FAER Mentored Research Training Grants help anesthesiologists develop the skills and preliminary data for subsequent grant applications and the research publications needed to become independent investigators.

Back-To-Back “Excellence in Teaching” Awards

UCLA Anesthesiology professors took home the David Geffen School of Medicine’s Kaiser Permanente Award for Excellence in Teaching – not once, but back-to-back, in 2020 and 2021! Adjunct Associate Professor of Anesthesiology and UCLA Simulation Center Interim Executive Director, Yue Ming Huang, EdD, MHS, won the accolade in 2020. Elizabeth Tsai, MD, an Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center, received the award in 2021. Considered the most prestigious education award granted by the David
Depth, breadth, and rigor of the course, four additional placements, rate upon graduation of 100%. Owing to the degree of any biomedical PhD program, and a job tremendously successful; MCIP has the lowest time-biotechnology industry. Dr. Wang’s boot camp has been interdisciplinary nature of academic research and for the preparing graduate students for the fast paced, highly discussion sections, and grant writing—with the goal of active-learning sessions, problem-oriented graduate students. The course offers a combination created and oversees a two-quarter 12-credit didactic Physiology (MCIP) PhD program. In this position, he has created and oversees a two-quarter 12-credit didactic Physiology (MCIP) PhD program. In this position, he has...
Welcome to Our Newest Faculty Members

By Darnell Bagsik

Colby Tanner, MD
Dr. Tanner completed medical school at Loma Linda University, and anesthesiology residency and liver transplant fellowship at UCLA. He has joined our team with a clinical focus and research interest in liver transplantation as well as end-stage liver and renal disease. A father of three, Dr. Tanner enjoys sports (when he can find time) including fishing, cycling, and snowboarding.

Krista Cascia, MD
Dr. Cascia completed medical school at Rosalind Franklin University, and residency and obstetric anesthesiology fellowship at UCLA. During her fellowship year, Dr. Cascia helped manage the maternal high-risk service. She continues her clinical focus in obstetric anesthesiology, and her academic interests include resident education, specifically in obstetric anesthesia simulation and curricula. She enjoys hiking, baking, and spending time with her husband and young daughter.

Hewenfei Li, MD
Born in Chengdu, China, Dr. Li completed medical school at the University of Utah and anesthesiology residency at UCLA. She has joined our team with a clinical focus in multispecialty anesthesiology. Dr. Li’s research interests involve obstetric and thoracic anesthesia. A former international tennis champion, she loves pets, traveling, and reading.

Stefan Besada, MD
Dr. Besada completed medical school at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, and anesthesiology residency at UCLA. Born in Wurzburg, Germany, he was an undergraduate at UCLA with a major in anthropology. Dr. Besada has joined our team with a clinical focus in multispecialty anesthesiology. His academic interests include resident and medical student education, as well as mentorship. His hobbies include kayaking, hiking, and cooking.

Dane Saksa, MD, MBA
Dr. Saksa completed medical school and earned his MBA at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. Also a graduate of anesthesiology residency at UCLA, he has joined our team with a clinical focus in multispecialty anesthesiology. Dr. Saksa’s academic interests involve research in health services, global health, healthcare administration, and quality improvement.

John W. Patton III, MD, MBA
Dr. Patton graduated from medical school and earned his MBA at the University of California, Irvine. He then completed anesthesiology residency at Stanford University School of Medicine, and a fellowship in regional anesthesiology and pain medicine at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. His interests include healthcare cost containment, redefining value in healthcare, technology and innovation, and “big data.” Dr. Patton joined our faculty team in September with a clinical focus in multispecialty anesthesiology.

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Welcome to Our 2021-22 Fellowship Group!

Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

Mohammad-Ali Shaikh, MD
Dr. Shaikh is a Texas native who completed both his medical school training and anesthesiology residency at the University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas. Ready to shed some of his Texan roots, he is thrilled to move west to California and to join UCLA for a year of critical care medicine fellowship.

Sean Hickey, MD
Dr. Hickey grew up in Queens, NY and comes with dual Irish roots. He completed his medical school training in New York City at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, followed by residency in emergency medicine at Mount Sinai. Though LA-naïve, he is eager to move to the west coast and join UCLA. As an emergency medicine-trained physician, he will join us for a two-year fellowship in Critical Care.

Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology

Mohammad-Shahid Memon, MD
Dr. Memon is a native of the New York City area and comes with the New York City DNA. He attended New York University for medical school and returned to UCLA for further training in anesthesia and cardiothoracic anesthesia fellowship. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his family and playing soccer.

Libby Wang, MD
I grew up in Bakersfield, went to UC Berkeley where I studied biological engineering, and attended medical school at NYU. I did my residency training at UCLA and am so excited to be able to stay here to continue my fellowship training. In my spare time, I love to scuba dive abroad (Balik is my favorite) and bake cookies. Dr. Wang served as one of our three chief residents last year.

Stew Smith, MD
I was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio, and attended The Ohio State University for both my undergraduate and medical degrees. I walked-on to Ohio State’s football team before earning a scholarship and Academic All-Big Ten honors as linebacker under Urban Meyer, while also conducting 9 years of clinical research in anesthesia and pursuing business entrepreneurship. I then moved on to anesthesia residency at UCSF.

Kasey Grove, MD
“I’m originally from Portland, Oregon, and studied chemistry at Pomona College. I completed my medical school and anesthesiology residency at Columbia University and served as chief resident. I have just finished my ICU fellowship here at UCLA. My main interests include cycling, surfing, and cooking.” Dr. Grove wrote an article for The Atlantic last year about the horrors of working in the ICU during the worst of the COVID pandemic in New York City.

Hai Pham, MD, MS
Dr. Pham was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the US at age one. He landed in South Orange, NJ, and attended Montclair High School, where he was student body president and president of the student council. He completed his undergraduate education at Pomona College. I completed medical school at Mayo Clinic and anesthesiology residency at Stanford University, and I am excited to start my cardiothoracic anesthesiology fellowship at UCLA. In my spare time, I enjoy traveling (pre-COVID), playing and watching basketball (go Lakers!), trying to improve my golf game, and eating at new restaurants.

Liver Transplant Anesthesiology

Mansi Sheth, MD
Dr. Sheth’s hometown is Houston, Texas. She graduated from UCLA with a BS in Physiological Science and a minor in English. She went to the Keck School of Medicine at USC and completed her residency at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. In her free time, she loves to bike, play soccer and hang out with her cat, Sherlock. She is also always excited to talk about UCLA basketball with her fellow Bruins.

Elizabeth Kremen, MBBS
Dr. Kremen is a sixth-generation physician. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, medical school in Queensland, Australia, and residency at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center. Dr. Kremen has been a biophysics intern, research assistant, phlebotomist, EMT, patient advocate, and brand ambassador, all before going to medical school. A world traveler, she enjoys music, travel, and the culinary arts, health, sports, and fitness; has a passion for societal environmental impact, and hopes to make a difference.

Pediatric Anesthesiology

Jean Vo, MD
Dr. Vo emigrated from Montreal when he was in grade school, and French is his first language. He attended UCLA for his undergraduate studies, medical school in Florida, and came back to UCLA after completing residency at USC. Dr. Vo was a research intern at the Jules Stein Eye Institute during his undergraduate years, and worked as a research coordinator prior to medical school. He has presented research on household income and its relationship with childhood diabetes. Dr. Vo enjoys the culinary arts, health, sports, and fitness; has a passion for societal environmental impact, and hopes to make a difference.

Dr. Pham was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the US at age one. He landed in South Orange, NJ, and attended Montclair High School, where he was student body president and president of the student council. He completed his undergraduate education at Pomona College. I completed medical school at Mayo Clinic and anesthesiology residency at Stanford University, and I am excited to start my cardiothoracic anesthesiology fellowship at UCLA. In my spare time, I enjoy traveling (pre-COVID), playing and watching basketball (go Lakers!), trying to improve my golf game, and eating at new restaurants.

Elizabeth Kremen, MBBS
Dr. Kremen is a sixth-generation physician. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, medical school in Queensland, Australia, and residency at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center. Dr. Kremen has been a biophysics intern, research assistant, phlebotomist, EMT, patient advocate, and brand ambassador, all before going to medical school. A world traveler, she enjoys music, travel, and the culinary arts, health, sports, and fitness; has a passion for societal environmental impact, and hopes to make a difference.
Syed Jaffery, MD
I grew up in Durham, NC, and hopped over to Chapel Hill for college at the University of North Carolina (Go Heels!). I attended residency at UT Southwestern in Dallas for anesthesiology before coming to UCLA for Pain Medicine fellowship.

During my free time, I enjoy weight training, trying new restaurants, riding my Peloton, and taking day trips.”

Jerry Markar, MD Dr. Markar grew up in La Crescenta, near Los Angeles, and had a career in construction (installing fire sprinklers) before medical school. After undergraduate study at UCLA, Dr. Markar attended medical school at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He returned to UCLA for residency training, and is very happy to be staying on for a fellowship in Pain Medicine.

When not at work, Dr. Markar enjoys spending time outdoors with his wife and two young sons.

Sara Navab, MD Dr. Navab is a native Angeleno and a longtime Bruin. After an early career in the entertainment business in New York City, she attended medical school at UCLA and graduated from our UCLA anesthesiology residency. Her new co-fellows can look forward to her legendary holiday get-togethers, and to meeting her husband, anesthesiologist Kavah Navab, MD, and her three much-loved cats.

Daniel “Danny” Neuman, DO, MBA “I grew up in Overland Park, Kansas, and trained at the University of Kansas. My wife and I value new experiences filled with culture, food, and people. We also have a 70 lb. goldendoodle named Nelson, who pretty much runs the show.”

Hayley Osen, MD, MS A native of Pasadena, Dr. Osen completed undergraduate studies at Johns Hopkins and medical school at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. By her own account, she shed “tears of joy” at matching into our UCLA residency program (though we suspect the Michigan weather may have played no small part in her readiness to leave), and is delighted to be staying on for fellowship training.

Regional Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine

Heidi Bean, MD Dr. Bean grew up in the suburbs of Chicago and graduated from Rush Medical College in Chicago. She joins our team after completing residency training nearby at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. She enjoys running, pirate sailing, and watching history shows on YouTube. Dr. Bean looks forward to meeting and working with her new colleagues at UCLA!

Jeffrey Kim, MD, MS Dr. Kim was a UCLA undergraduate, went to Georgetown for a master’s degree in physiology and biophysics, and then finished medical school at the University of Arizona College of Medicine. He served as one of our three Chief Residents here at UCLA last year, and enjoys playing basketball and watching sports in his free time.

Claudia Hammi, DO Dr. Hammi was born and raised in San Diego where she also attended San Diego State for college. She then attended Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona for medical school, and completed residency training at UC Irvine. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her labradoodle puppy Maui, frequenting the beach, trying new restaurants, kickboxing, and baking. She’s interested in pursuing a career in academics and is excited to see which direction this year takes her.
In today’s social media-driven society, if you want to get your message out to the world beyond UCLA, you can’t expect to accomplish it solely with peer-reviewed publications. Our faculty members have become sought-after contributors on a variety of audio and video platforms. Here are some highlights.

Brain Health

Daniel Cole, MD, FASA, our Vice Chair and a past president of the ASA, was the featured guest on a segment of the ASA Central Line podcast focusing on brain health. A neuroscientist by training, Dr. Cole spent the first 20 years of his career doing bench research on brain health. During his term as ASA President in 2015, he led the development of the ASA Brain Health Initiative to tackle the huge problem of postoperative cognitive dysfunction in older adults.

“Anesthesia itself does not cause cognitive decline.” Dr. Cole said. Other factors are key components, including the underlying condition requiring surgery, and the inflammatory responses provoked by surgery or major illness. How can we as anesthesiologists lower the risk of postoperative cognitive decline? “It’s pretty controversial.” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension. “There is no optimal anesthetic,” Dr. Cole said, but “making sure that you’re not overdosing the patient” is important, along with avoiding hypotension.

Anesthesiology and Pain Management Success”, hosted by Dr. Sibert has also been a guest on the podcast “The Etherist, during one segment devoted to “How Physician Shortages Could Change the Future of Anesthesiology,” and another episode in April, “Risk the Experts,” where she discussed the evolving role of anesthesiologists in modern health care. She also explained her reasons for giving up on Twitter as a way of communicating her ideas and opinions about the specialty.

The Future of Anesthesiology

Karen Sibert, MD, FASA, our Director of Communications, has spoken on several podcasts about the future of medicine, whether or not we are facing a shortage of anesthesiologists, and how technology may change how we practice. She spoke with Kevin Pho, MD, the host of the well-known KevinMD blog, in an April 1 podcast called “Keep insulting doctors, and good luck finding a physician.” Dr. Sibert spoke on the Anesthesiology News podcast, The Etherist, during one segment devoted to “How Physician Shortages Could Change the Future of Anesthesiology,” and another episode in April, “Risk the Experts,” where she discussed the evolving role of anesthesiologists in modern health care. She also explained her reasons for giving up on Twitter as a way of communicating her ideas and opinions about the specialty.

Dr. Sibert has also been a guest on the podcast “Anesthesia and Pain Management Success”, hosted by Jason Harvey, and the “Patients at Risk” podcast, hosted by Drs. Niran Al-Agba and Rebekah Bernard.
Take Me Out to the Ball Game!

We joined more than 42,000 baseball fans on July 25 at Dodger Stadium for an all-department social event, cheering Will Smith’s eighth-inning home run as the LA Dodgers triumphed over the Colorado Rockies 3-2.

Chair Maxime Cannesson, MD, PhD, said the event was “a chance for our whole, multi-mission community to connect outside of the day-to-day responsibilities of our regular roles.”

Department members enjoyed a second “Dodger Day” on August 30, watching the Dodgers trounce the Atlanta Braves 5-3. To LA fans’ delight, the Dodgers’ wins this week move them into the top spot in the NL West.

Noting how difficult the past year of isolation has been for all of us, Dr. Cannesson credited administrative staffer Sally Alvarez-deCordova for being the “inspiration and spark” behind these events. He also thanked Olivia Vallejo, Carla Gonzalez, Kristin Christian, Knarik Piloyan, Eli Paray, and Chief Administrative Officer Stephanie Fisher for working on all the important details and logistics involved in making the events such a success.
Selected Recent Publications

Editor's note: Our department continues its tradition of academic accomplishment with these recent publications. Every citation selected for mention here represents the results of months or years of work, and of course represents the authors' successful responses to multiple editors’ questions and requests for revision. Congratulations to all our accomplished authors!


In this featured editorial in JAMA Insights, Drs. Vacas, Cole, and Cannesson discuss the fact that in the past decade, the population aged 65 years and older increased by more than 30%, and accounts for a disproportionate number of surgical procedures requiring anesthesia. Aging causes changes in the brain that contribute to an increased incidence of postoperative neurocognitive disorders (PNDs). They highlight risk factors and cite interventions that may improve outcomes.

The authors conclude: “Advances in surgery and anesthesia can improve function and quality of life for older patients, but not without potential risk to brain health. Postoperative neurocognitive decline is a meaningful concern to patients and represents a significant and expanding challenge to health care in the US and worldwide. Surgeons and anesthesiologists should assess, discuss, and optimize associated potential risks for each patient before surgery. Best practices and interventions can begin before surgery and extend well into the recovery period. To be most effective, these strategies require family engagement and the involvement of an interdisciplinary health care team and comprehensive systems of care.”


Patients with pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) have combined cardiothoracic surgery and liver transplantation (cCSLT) has been increasingly used as a treatment option for patients with both end-stage liver disease and advanced cardiothoracic disorders. The authors compared perioperative management and postoperative outcomes between patients undergoing cCSLT and isolated liver transplantation. Despite experiencing a complex intraoperative course, cCSLT patients had comparable 90-day survival to isolated liver transplantation patients. "Comprehensive planning before transplant, optimal patient/donor selection, the multiple-team model, and meticulous intraoperative management are critical to the success of cCSLT," the authors concluded.


As outcomes for surgical palliation have improved, women with single venicle congenital heart disease are surviving into their reproductive years and may become pregnant. The cardiovascular changes of pregnancy may stress the Fontan circulation and pose significant risk to the mother and fetus. Pregnant women with Fontan physiology were identified from the Ahmann/UCLA Adult Congenital Heart Disease Center database. A total of 37 pregnancies were identified between 2000 and 2019. Twenty live births from 19 patients were reviewed and compared for cardiac history, obstetric history, anesthetic management and cardiovascular outcomes. The authors concluded: “Epidual anesthesia is safe and effective for both vaginal and cesarean deliveries. Judicious fluid management is critical in minimizing postpartum cardiovascular complications. Many patients do not require higher level of care, invasive monitoring or central venous access during the peripartum period.”


The authors’ aim was to compare the agreement of the 2016 ASE/EACVI guidelines for grading diastolic dysfunction (DD) with the most commonly used intraoperative transesophageal echocardiography (TEE)-based diastolic function grading algorithm in cardiac surgical patients, and to describe the contribution of the echocardiographic variables used in the algorithms to any observed differences. They concluded: “The results of this study demonstrate that the incidence and grading of DD in cardiac surgical patients vary greatly depending on chosen technique and may be more descriptive of the algorithm selected than the actual pathophysiology. This is the first study, to our knowledge, that clearly provides an argument against using each method interchangeably to define DD.”


Dr. Andrew Hudson was part of a multidisciplinary working group for the Curing Coma Campaign tasked with assessing the state of the science to identify where gaps currently exist in understanding the mechanisms that produce disorders of consciousness. The group concluded: “In this white paper, we discuss research priorities that would enable us to begin to close these knowledge gaps. We propose that a fundamental step towards this goal will be to combine translational, multi-scale, and
multimodal data, with new biomarkers, theory-driven approaches, and computational models, to produce an inte-grated account of neural mechanisms in DOC. Importantly, we envision that reciprocal interaction between domains will establish a "virtuous cycle" leading towards a critical vantage point of integrated knowledge that will enable the advancement of the scientific understanding of DOC and consequently, an improvement of clinical practice."


"We have shown that endothelial-specific DHFR (dihydrofolate reductase) deficiency un-delves eNOS (endothelial NO synthase) uncoupling and formation of abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA). Here, we examined a novel role of microRNA-192-5p in mediating NOX-dependent DHFR deficiency and AAA formation. microRNA-192-5p is predicted to target DHFR. Intriguingly, homo sapiens–microRNA-192-5p expression was substantially upregulated in human patients with AAA. In human aortic endothelial cells exposed to hydrogen peroxide (H2O2), homo sapiens–microRNA-192-5p–specific inhibitor. Of note, microRNA-192-5p expression was markedly upregulated in Ang II (angiotensin II)–infused hpa-1 (hyperphenylalaninemia 1) mice, which was attenuated treat the number days on ventilators, optimize pain relief, and minimize side effects in adult and geriatric patients.


"The interest in applying machine learning in healthcare has grown rapidly in recent years. Most predictive algorithms relating to patient outcomes and cost savings. We propose a model for simulating the selection of patients over time by a clinician using a machine learning algorithm and quantifying the expected patient outcomes and cost savings. Using data on unplanned emergency department surgical readmissions, we show that factors such as the provider's schedule and postoperative prediction timing can have major effects on the pathway cohort size and potential cost reductions from preventing hospital readmissions." The authors concluded: "As this work evolves, we hope to transform this into a true patient trial to compare our simulated in-silico results against real in-vivo outcomes."


"The ideal combination of pharmaceutical agents would aim at improving symptoms while causing the least side effects. The aim is to improve patients' experience, decrease organ damage, increase quality of care and thereby decrease ICU length of stay. For the last 30 years, our institution has adopted a multimodal approach for our ICU patients in order to facilitate pain relief and sedation. The purpose of the multi-modal approach is to reduce the number days on ventilators, optimize pain relief, provide sedation while decreasing undesirable side effects, and improving the overall outcome. We found that out of all possible pharmacological agents available to us, the combination of low-dose ketamine with low dose fentanyl produces the desired analgesic and sedative effects with minimal side effects. The authors found that the combination of low-dose ketamine 2 mg/ml and fentanyl 5 mcg/ml, with or without midazolam as needed, at infusion rates of 3.15 mcg/h, enabled early extubation, provided good pain relief, and minimized side effects in adult and geriatric patients.


The COVID-19 pandemic led to rapid adoption of telemedicine services for patients. This retrospective case series study describes the structure and implementation of telemedicine-based outpatient neurology clinics at the UCLA Medical Center. Nearly 7,200 patients were evaluated by telemedicine, and 9189 video visits were conducted between October 2018 and June 2020. The authors reported that the median telemedicine patient avoided a roundtrip driving distance of 33 miles and roundtrip travel time of 75 min. Within sample, median hourly earnings were $27/h. The median patient saved $18 on fuel and parking and $36 of time-based opportunity savings, for total savings of $54 per video visit. Eighty-six percent of patients reported that they were satisfied with their video visit experience, and their health care providers likewise reported high levels of satisfaction with telemedicine.
A anyone in the operating room areas at Ronald Reagan Medical Center over the past few weeks has had the opportunity to see clinical research in action. Two different research studies have been recruiting subjects in real time – one studying a way to protect anesthesia team members from infectious aerosols during intubation, and the other collecting video and pulse oximetry data on subjects with diverse skin tones to inform future research on remote vital sign monitoring.

**Keeping Infectious Aerosols Contained**

The first study’s aim is to quantify the effectiveness of the SLACC – the “Suction-assisted Local Aerosol Containment Chamber”. This is a clear, box-like personal containment device with a torso drape and protective arm sleeves that is designed to protect healthcare workers from droplet and/or aerosol contamination during intubation.

Inspired by the risks to personnel during the first surge of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, members of our department worked with the UCLA Bioengineering Division to develop the SLACC prototype in the spring of 2020. They published their initial report in *Anesthesia & Analgesia* in September 2020: “A Novel Negative Pressure Isolation Device for Aerosol Transmissible COVID-19”.

Now the team is conducting a prospective randomized controlled trial to test the efficacy of the intubation box, taking air samples under carefully controlled conditions. “Since we perform aerosol-generating procedures daily in the operating room, it’s an ideal place to test our box,” says John Shin, MD, Associate Clinical Professor and our Director of Medical School Education. “Patients who participate in our trial are randomized to either the SLACC group or the control group (no SLACC),” Dr. Shin explained. “In the SLACC group, patients undergo anesthesia induction and intubation with the SLACC placed over their head. During this period, we are measuring aerosol particles both inside and outside of SLACC to determine the efficacy of SLACC in containing aerosols.” The intubations are done under standardized conditions by members of the team, using video laryngoscopy.

Dr. Shin’s co-investigators in the study are four faculty members – Drs. Nir Hoftman, Jason Lee, Chiewlin Liew, and Soban Umar – and CA-3 resident Sebastian Kwon. They are collaborating with members of the Environmental Sciences Division in the Fielding School of Public Health. Supported by seed grant funding from our department, their aim is to complete the study with a total of 80 to 100 patients.

**Remote Heart Rate Monitoring**

As telemedicine has gained recognition and proved its utility during the pandemic, there is a growing need to make sure that contactless estimation of heart rate – a critical vital sign – is reliably accurate so that remote monitoring can be trusted. Unfortunately, the estimation of heart rate from facial videos to date has been less accurate with darker skin tones, which are more affected by differing light conditions.

Laleh Jalilian, MD, Assistant Clinical Professor, is collaborating with the Visual Machines Group laboratory of Achuta Kadambi, PhD, to gather a large-scale database of vital signs in subjects of different diverse skin tones, focusing on heart rate and blood oxygenation.

“As part of our study, participants are seated in front of a camera, with a pulse oximeter attached to their finger,” explained Pradyumna Chari, a graduate student in Dr. Kadambi’s lab. “Five one-minute videos are recorded and synchronized data from the camera and pulse oximeter are recorded, while the participant sits still.”
In their research proposal for the study, the authors noted, “Since communities of color are disproportionately affected by both COVID-19 and cardiovascular disease, there is a pressing need to deploy contactless HR sensing solutions for high-quality telemedicine evaluations.” Such technologies may help improve telemedicine setups and make remote diagnosis more precise.

The study is funded by a UCLA Innovation Grant, enabling the researchers to compensate volunteers with a $20 Amazon gift card. They are continuing to recruit additional subjects. Anyone interested can register and get further information here: https://www.jotform.com/21402076729149.
Following a very challenging 2020 and start to 2021, the UCLA nurse anesthesia team is coming out of the pandemic stronger than ever. This new strength is definitely needed with the new wave of cases coming post-pandemic, and our short-staffed situation following a year-and-a-half long hiring freeze. Luckily, we can finally welcome three of the new hires who have recently started work!

Ellen Lee, MSN, CRNA: Ellen joined the department’s team of nurse anesthetists in May. Ellen was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, and received her BSN from Southern Adventist University in Chattanooga, TN. After working in a vascular and thoracic ICU in Orlando, FL, and in the neuro ICU at Vanderbilt University, she went on to complete her MSN at the Middle Tennessee School of Anesthesia near Nashville, TN. After graduating, Ellen relocated to the Pacific Northwest and worked in a small anesthesia group in Portland, OR. Ellen recently moved to Los Angeles to be closer to family and friends due to the pandemic, and is excited to explore her new home! In her free time, Ellen loves cooking and spending time with her family.

Tseganesh Haileselassie, MSN, CRNA: Tseganesh is originally from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland, and worked both in clinical and research labs before going back to school to pursue nursing. Tseganesh worked at the UCLA Medical Center 4 East CCU, and then earned her Master’s in Nurse Anesthesia from USC. She has been practicing as a nurse anesthetist for ten years at Loma Linda University Medical Center. Tseganesh lives in Westwood with her anesthesiologist husband and their three children. When not working, she enjoys cooking and spending time with her family.

Cynthia Leaks, MSN, CRNA: Cynthia grew up in Amarillo, Texas, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Baylor University. She followed her fiancé to California, and then completed her BSN at Mount Saint Mary’s College. She worked at Kaiser Permanente Sunset, and then earned her Master’s in Nurse Anesthesia from USC. Cynthia has been practicing at Loma Linda University Medical Center for the past five years before joining UCLA in June. Cynthia lives on the USC campus with her husband and their two children. She loves to watch movies and shop on Amazon.

Despite the challenging year, our CRNAs always found a way to keep learning and educating our UCLA team members. Four of us (Gloria Nakyeyune, Brianna Ortbals, Ana Armenta, and Gillian Quian) gave an anesthesia machine lecture to the anesthesia technicians and hospital assistants at the Jules Stein Eye Institute. The staff members were very appreciative and felt that they were better able to understand anesthesia machines and how to troubleshoot them in emergencies!

UCLA’s CRNAs are involved in teaching opportunities both on campus and off campus. Nurse anesthesia students at the University of Southern California are taught a variety of clinical skills at LA County + USC hospitals. Recently, Gloria Nakyeyune, Gillian Quian, Brianna Ortbals, and Erica McCall volunteered to help the students at a simulation lab for central line and arterial line placements. Sarah Colosimo and Gillian Quian presented a session on pediatric airway emergencies for the perioperative staff at Santa Monica Hospital, and Gillian Quian gave a lecture on malignant hyperthermia for the perioperative staff at the Westwood Ambulatory Surgery Center. This year the department added one nurse anesthetist to every Saturday shift at Ronald Reagan Medical Center to assist with the increased caseload on the
weekends. In addition to this shift, three of us (Chris Weitekamp, Gloria Nakyeyune, and Brianna Ortbals) volunteered to help out on the Saturday of the annual Resident Retreat in May. To quote interim team captain Brianna Ortbals: “My three phones and pager didn’t stop ringing for twelve long hours! I was exhausted, but it definitely gave me more respect for board runners and team captains!”

Our social events sadly were very spaced out this past year, literally and figuratively. We managed to have a bike ride and beach meet-up, socially distanced, in the fall of 2020. Fast forward to spring — our team finally met up for a happy hour at Santa Monica Brewing Company. We have another beach day planned and are looking forward to department-wide social events such as the upcoming Dodgers games!

Our wellness coordinator, Lauren Fagan, put together goodies for all the CRNAs during National CRNA Week in January, and the department contributed Amazon gift cards. The wellness coordinator sends out “Wellness Wednesday” tips to the CRNA group to help encourage one another and to remind each other of the importance of taking care of mental, physical, and spiritual health. Lauren and Gillian Quian also schedule Zoom happy hours once a month to connect after a long day at work.

The CRNA team continues to grow, collaborate, and adjust to the constant curve balls thrown our way. We are excited to be a part of the UCLA family and make a difference in our patients’ lives daily.
Staff Recognition

Thanks to enthusiastic support from their colleagues, several of our dedicated administrative staff members received shout-outs on our MS Teams Administrative Staff Recognition Channel. Conceived earlier in 2021 by the Staff Recognition Committee, the recognition channel is part of a four-tier recognition plan for administrative personnel. Read more about the plan on page 53 of our Winter 2020-21 edition. All members of the administrative group are encouraged to express gratitude or send praise to colleagues on our group MS Teams Recognition channel. Additionally, each month, the committee enters the names of everyone recognized by their peers in a prize drawing at our monthly staff meeting. Sally Alvarez-Decordova, Kathy Hercules, Susan Kim, Jessyka Delgado, Darnell Bagsik, Areli Gonzalez, Eli Paray, Kristin Christian and Quenesha Caballero won prizes at recent meetings.

The third tier of the program allows faculty, residents, fellows, and researchers to nominate administrative staff members for semiannual recognition awards. All 31 administrative staff members received nominations! The committee randomly selected four prize winners: Christine Than, Areli Gonzalez, Quenesha Caballero and Patsy Olivo.

At our first Administrative Staff Retreat on May 27th, the committee recognized the entire team, spotlighting each person and reading one of the recognition nominations they had received. This fourth and final tier gives each person an opportunity to shine and be celebrated.

The Administrative Group also values balance – Bruin Pause Sweeps, our monthly sweepstakes to promote breaks during the workday, is still popular. Recent winners were Jennifer Scovotti, Quenesha Caballero, Areli Gonzalez, Jessyka Delgado, Sally Alvarez-Recordova, Eli Paray, Olivia Vallejo and Knarik Piloyan.

Celebrating Years of Service

Time flies when you’re having fun! Olivia Vallejo celebrated 10 years, and Wendy Ma, 15 years of service to UCLA in February. Stephanie Fisher achieved 20 years of service in June, and the administrative staff joined our monthly all-staff meeting with “Purple Rain” Zoom backgrounds to share our congratulations!

Milestones

Congratulations to business office analyst Knarik Piloyan, who completed an Executive Master’s degree in Health Administration at USC and celebrated at an in-person graduation. She plans to use the new skills and knowledge she acquired to grow her career.

We love celebrating our family members’ milestones, as well. Yazmin, daughter of Carla Gonzalez, graduated from Canyon High School with Academic Achievement this summer. Yazmin is interested in pre-medical studies. She currently attends College of the Canyons and plans to transfer to a university — preferably UCLA! Congratulations, Yazmin!

Just five days after her 11th birthday, Talia, the daughter of Quenesha Caballero, graduated from the 5th grade at ICEF View Park Preparatory Elementary and Middle School. The family celebrated with a late lunch/dinner at the Sugar Factory. Next, Talia moves on to Marina Del Rey Middle School and Performing Arts Magnet with a focus on dance and theater. We can’t wait to see what she’ll do next!

Administrative Staff Update

By Shevaughn Marchese
At The End Of a Long Day (Or Night), It's Great To Come Home To Our Families and Pets!

Ethan Olender, now age 1, with big sister Emma, 3 (Alex Olender)

2-year-old Arianna, daughter of Shevaughn Marchese, enjoys a family trip to the Los Angeles Zoo

Huckleberry, age 1, loves "hugs and misbehaving"! (Michael Wolfe)

Great Danes Paris, age 4, and Rome, 2 (Allison Leveque)

Allison Leveque, center, with husband Christian and son Cash, 18 mos.

Stacy Tsan welcomed her daughter, Finley, on February 20, 2021

Josephine King, on her 3rd birthday with a steak all to herself (Michael Sliff)

Ravi, age 14, with poodle Rosie and maltipoo Kushi (Lorraine Lubin)

Millie soaking up the sun (Darnell Bagsik)

Rose Cheung welcomed son Owen, on June 1

Isabelle Sloan Fagan, born April 3, is the adorable daughter of Lauren Fagan
At The End Of a Long Day (Or Night), It’s Great To Come Home To Our Families and Pets!

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Thank you!