Mission

The goal of the Division of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics is to encourage healthy physical, motor, social, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual growth for children younger than 8 years who have developmental and/or behavioral conditions. The staff endeavors to help parents understand their children’s development, behavior, and developmental disorders and/or the long-term consequences of medical conditions, such as premature birth or genetic disorders. The division recommends treatments that will allow children to meet their potential. The Child Development Unit (CDU) places special emphasis on children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD); attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); Fragile X, neurofibromatosis; or genetic, fetal, or birth-related neurodevelopmental disorders.

The division’s mission is:

• To provide exemplary service to children with developmental and/or behavioral concerns, children at risk for long-term developmental challenges, and the families of those children

• To provide training in child development, developmental disabilities, behavioral health, and developmental-behavioral pediatrics to students and practitioners from a wide variety of disciplines

• To complete research aimed at improving quality of life or improving the understanding of developmental and/or behavioral conditions

• To generate and disseminate new knowledge about prevention, identification, etiology, impact, and treatment of developmental and behavioral conditions

• To provide expertise to the hospital, medical school, and community regarding prevention, identification, and treatment of developmental and behavioral conditions in childhood

• To collaborate with community agencies and programs in an effort to improve services for children with developmental or behavioral conditions and their families

• To advocate for the needs of children with developmental or behavioral conditions and their families at all levels
OVERVIEW OF DIVISION

The CDU includes the Autism Center and Fragile X Clinical and Research Consortium, and it provides evaluation and selected treatments for children with a wide range of developmental and behavioral disorders. Patients in Western Pennsylvania and surrounding areas now have rapid access to service.

The Fragile X Clinical and Research Consortium has continued to expand its base of patients. The clinic follows more than 100 patients with Fragile X, providing multidisciplinary care and access to local and national treatment protocols. Pittsburgh is one of 28 sites in the United States participating in the Fragile X Clinical and Research Consortium.

The LEND Program of Pittsburgh is one of 52 training grants within 44 states funded through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The LEND center offers a multidisciplinary clinic, opportunities for research, and training in community advocacy. Problem-based learning and a focus on family-centered care are primary mechanisms to create the next generation of leaders who will provide care to children with special needs and their families. The funded LEND faculty represents 14 different training disciplines, including medicine, psychology, audiology, speech-language pathology, public health, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, and the program has students from many of those disciplines each year. This year, the LEND Program of Pittsburgh has 17 long-term trainees. The LEND Program leads a multicenter Case Control Study Supplement to examine outcomes for LEND trainees.
During fiscal year 2017, CDU physicians and nurse practitioners consulted with 2,144 children.

Note: Volume includes medical patients seen at the Oakland and Pine Center sites.

RESEARCH AND OTHER SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

Ira Bergman, MD, PhD

RESEARCH

- “Replicating Recombinant Vesicular Stomatitis Virus,” specifically targets cancer cells and treats cancer by direct killing and by stimulating the immune system to recognize and kill cancer cells
- “Viral Immunotherapy to Eradicate Subclinical Brain Metastases,” U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), 2015
- “Memory Anti-Tumor T Cells Resist Inhibition by Immune Suppressor Cells,” anticancer research, 2015

STUDY SECTIONS

- Chair, Peer-Reviewed Cancer Research Program, Pediatric Brain Tumor Review Panel, DOD
- Chair, Tuberous Sclerosis Complex Research Program, Clinical and Population Studies Review Panel, DOD
- Chair, Visionary Postdoctoral Fellowship, DOD

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

- Research Advisory Committee, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC
- Magnetoencephalography Oversight Board, UPMC

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/ SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

- Child Neurology Society
- American Academy of Neurology
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Association of Immunology
- American Association of Cancer Research
- American Pediatric Society/Society for Pediatric Research

HONORS

- Best Doctors, Pittsburgh Magazine, 2009–2017
- Five-Star Excellence Award, Professional Research Consultants, 2015 and 2016
- Best Doctors in America, Woodward/White, Inc.
- U.S. patent application 11/227,778, titled “Targeting Viruses Using a Modified Sindbis Glycoprotein”
Miya Asato, MD

Miya Asato is the program director of the Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Fellowship. The fellowship is one of eight accredited programs in the United States that provides clinical and research training to physicians who wish to specialize in neurodevelopmental disabilities. This multidisciplinary specialty includes pediatrics, neurology, and developmental and behavioral medicine. There are four fellowship trainees in different stages of training. Asato also serves on the national level as a leader for training in neurodevelopmental disabilities and is the Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Special Interest Group leader for the Child Neurology Society.

Asato is director of the LEND Program. This competitive training grant is funded through the HSRA and currently funds 17 graduate-level trainees in allied health disciplines so they can gain leadership training related to neurodevelopmental disabilities. The LEND Program in Pittsburgh has been continuously funded for more than 20 years and is one of 52 programs across the United States. Primary training activities of LEND include a yearlong leadership course and a multidisciplinary clinic.

RESEARCH

Neurobehavioral Status in Pediatric Epilepsy. This five-year National Institutes of Health (NIH) faculty-development grant examines cognitive and psychiatric comorbidities in children with medically treated epilepsy utilizing magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) methods, including functional MRI and diffusion tensor imaging, diagnostic psychiatric interviewing, and cognitive testing.

Reward Processing in Adolescence. This NIH-funded, longitudinal study assesses developmental changes related to the effects of incentives on the ability to suppress task-inappropriate responses, using eye movements as a model system, as well as functional and structural MRI.

Innovating Strategies and Replicating Promising Practices Program. This project, funded by the HRSA, is assessing cognitive changes associated with epilepsy medical treatments using computerized cognitive testing.

Non-Research Funding. The LEND Program at the University of Pittsburgh is a multidisciplinary graduate-level training program for leadership and clinical training in neurodevelopmental disabilities, funded by the HRSA. In addition, Asato is conducting the following studies: “Infection Unmasking Symptoms of Underlying Progressive External Ophthalmoplegia–Related Disease” and “Supporting Transition Education for Families of Youth With Autism Spectrum Disorder.”

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

- Professional Advisory Board, Epilepsy Foundation of America
- Scientific Selection and Program Committee, Child Neurology Society
- University of Pittsburgh Graduate Medical Education
- Medical Advisory Board, Epilepsy Foundation of Western/Central Pennsylvania
- Epilepsy section, American Academy of Neurology
- Medical advisor, Emma Bursick Memorial Fund
- Psychosocial Task Force, American Epilepsy Society
- Non-Epileptic Seizures Task Force, American Epilepsy Society
- Epilepsy Research Benchmarks Committee, American Epilepsy Society/NIH
- Local Advisory Board, Office of Child Development, University of Pittsburgh
- Neurology Education Committee, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh
- CDU Education Committee, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh
- Graduate Medical Education Subcommittee on Program Director Development, University of Pittsburgh

EDITORSHIPS

- Editorial Board, Journal of Pediatric Epilepsy
- Editorial Board, Epilepsy and Behavior

MAJOR LECTURESHIPS AND SEMINARS

- UPMC Graduate Medical Education 2016 Leadership Conference
- “Epilepsy in Children: Growing up Healthy,” Clinic for Special Children Epilepsy Family Day, Strasburg, Pa., August 2017
- “Unknown Until Genome,” 46th Annual Child Neurology Society Meeting, Kansas City, Mo., October 2017
- “Co-Management of Pediatric Epilepsy: Primary Care and Specialty Care Partnership Model,” poster presentation, American Public Health Association annual meeting, Atlanta, Ga., November 2017
- “Epilepsy and Medical Transition,” Transition Conference, Department of Neurology, UPMC, Pittsburgh, Pa., December 2017
PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

• American Academy of Neurology
• American Epilepsy Society
• Child Neurology Society
• Association of Pediatric Program Directors

HONORS

• Philip Troen, MD, Excellence in Medical Student Research Mentoring Award, 2015
• Best Doctors, Pittsburgh Magazine, 2016
• American Academy of Neurology Transforming Leaders Program awardee, 2017

Diego Chaves-Gnecco, MD, MPH, FAAP

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

• Salud Para Niños, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC’s first bilingual (Spanish and English) bicultural pediatric clinic
• Reach Out and Read Advisory Board, Leyendo Juntos (Reading Together)
• Board of Directors, Jewish Family and Children’s Service Legal Services for Immigrants and Internationals (LSII)

EDITORSHIPS

• Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Journal Universitas Medica

MAJOR LECTURESHIPS AND SEMINARS

• “Autism: Diagnosis and Treatment. Managing the Challenges of Clinical Practice,” 42nd Annual Refresher Course in Family Medicine, University of Pittsburgh Center for Continuing Education in the Health Sciences, Pittsburgh, Pa., March 2015
• “Unnatural Causes: Place Matters” and “In Sickness and in Wealth,” discussant, Global Health Film Series, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, Pittsburgh, Pa., April 2015
• “Providing Health Care to an Invisible Community: Salud Para Niños,” 2015 Health Career Scholars Academy, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa., July 2015
• “Catalyze,” Second Toast to Diversity, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Pittsburgh, Pa., September 2015
• “Providing Health Care to an Invisible Community: Salud Para Niños, 14 Years Making a Difference in the Community,” Health Sciences Diversity “Diversity in Practice” Speaker Series, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa., September 2015
• “Contributions and Connections of Latino and Ibero-America to Medicine,” University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Pittsburgh, Pa., October 2015
• “Keeping Our Children Healthy and Safe,” Navigating Pittsburgh Summit, Pittsburgh, Pa., November 2015
• “Providing Health Care for an Invisible Community: Entering Our 15th Year of Services—Focus on Education,” pediatric grand rounds, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, February 2016
• Child Welfare Summer Institute, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, June 2017
• “Se Puede Cultivar la Curiosidad,” guest panel, City of Asylum @ Alphabet City, Pittsburgh, Pa., November 2017
• “Bilingualism and Child Development,” grand rounds, Children’s Institute, December 2017

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS
• American Academy of Pediatrics
• Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics
• National Hispanic Medical Association
• American Society of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics
• C.F. Reynolds Medical History Society
• Sociedad Colombiana de Pediatría
• Sociedad Colombiana de Historia de la Medicina

HONORS
• Best Doctors in America, Woodward/White, Inc., 2013 to the present
• Best Doctors, Pittsburgh Magazine, 2013 to the present
• Hispanic Heritage Leadership Award, Hispanic Heritage Foundation and the National Football League, 2015
• Certificate of Appreciation–Founding Faculty Advisor, Latino Student Medical Association, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, 2016–2017
• Fuerza Award, Association of Latino Professionals for America, Pittsburgh chapter, sponsored by Café con Leche, 2016
• F. Edwards Rushton CATCH Award, American Academy of Pediatrics, 2017

Robyn Filipink, MD
RESEARCH
• Site principal investigator (PI), “Effects of AFQ056 on Language in Young Children with Fragile X Syndrome”
• PI, Fragile X Clinical and Research Consortium Registry
• PI, Fragile X Syndrome Registry

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS
• UPMC Autism Taskforce, 2016 to the present
• Pediatric Neurology Education Committee, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, 2006 to the present
• Clinical Competencies for Child Neurology and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, 2014 to the present
• Affiliated faculty member, LEND, 2013 to the present
• Fragile X Clinical and Research Consortium, 2010 to the present
• Co-investigator, NeuroNEXT, University of Pittsburgh

MAJOR LECTURESHIPS AND SEMINARS
• Movement Disorder Case Conference, first Friday of each month, 60-minute live case presentation of a patient with a movement disorder

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS
• American Academy of Neurology
• American Academy of Pediatrics

Jenna M. Gaesser, MD
Jenna Gaesser is an assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh, associate director of the Neonatal Neurology Program, codirector of the Neurofibromatosis Clinic, and codirector of Advanced Practice Provider Development and Utilization in the CDU.

RESEARCH
• Gaesser’s research includes cardiac neurodevelopmental outcomes and the HEAL Clinical Trial.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS
• Child Neurology Society
• American Academy of Neurology

SERVICE
• Education Committee, Child Neurology Residency, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh

Sara Hamel, MD

MAJOR LECTURESHIPS AND SEMINARS
• Practicum in fundoscopic examination for pediatric residents

Kristin M. Hannibal, MD
Kristin M. Hannibal is clinical director of the CDU.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS
• Educating Practices in Community-Integrated Care,
• Medical Home Implementation Project, Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
• Clinical Effectiveness Committee, General Academic Pediatrics, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC
• Obstetrics Bundling Project, Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC
• Newborn Committee, Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC
PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS
• Academic Pediatric Association
• Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine
• Society of Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics, with participation in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Follow-Up Special Interest Group and Early Childhood Special Interest Group
• Fellow, American Academy of Pediatrics

HONORS
• Guest lectureship sponsor, Section on Breastfeeding, American Academy of Pediatrics
• Teaching award, Academic Pediatrics Association
• Level 3 certification, National Committee for Quality Assurance, 2016
• Outpatient Patient Satisfaction Award, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, 2017

Beth Heuer, DNP, RN, CRNP, CPNP-PC, PMHS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS
• Executive/Advisory Board, Neurofibromatosis Clinics Association

MAJOR LECTURESHIPS AND SEMINARS
• “Neurofibromatosis 1 and 2: What You Need to Know for Primary Care,” Pennsylvania Coalition for Nurse Practitioners 13th Annual Conference, Lancaster, Pa., 2015
• Neurofibromatosis Conference, Monterey, Calif., 2015
• “Neurofibromatosis 1 and 2: A Primer for Pediatric Nurse Practitioners,” National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) 36th Annual Conference on Pediatric Health Care, Las Vegas, Nev., 2015
• “Tic Talk: Everything You Need to Know About Tourette Syndrome for Primary Care,” NAPNAP 36th Annual Conference on Pediatric Health Care, Las Vegas, Nev., 2015
• “Tourette Syndrome,” Three Rivers NAPNAP 20th Annual Winter Pharmacology Symposium, Pittsburgh, Pa., 2016
• “Clinical Overview of NF-1,” Neurofibromatosis/Schwannomatosis Symposium, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, Pittsburgh, Pa., 2016
• “Sensational Pediatric Care: Helping the Child With Sensory Processing Difficulty,” NAPNAP 38th National Conference on Pediatric Health Care, Denver, Colo., 2017
• “Primary Care of the Child With Neurological Disorders,” Three Rivers NAPNAP 21st Annual Winter Symposium, Moon Township, Pa., 2017

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS
• Society for Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics
• NAPNAP
  • Professional Issues Committee, 2012 to the present
  • Chair, Professional Issues Committee, 2016 to the present
  • Developmental Behavioral Mental Health Special Interest Group, 2013 to the present
  • Secretary, Special Interest Group, 2014–2016
• Sigma Theta Tau, Eta Chapter
• Executive/Advisory Board, Neurofibromatosis Clinics Association, 2013 to the present
• American Association of Nurse Practitioners, 2011 to the present
• Pediatric Nursing Certification Board
  • Item writer, Primary Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Certification Exam, 2011–2014
  • Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist Steering Committee, 2015–2016
  • Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist Job Task Analysis Workforce Committee, 2016
• Pennsylvania Coalition of Nurse Practitioners, 2002 to the present
• Faculty, School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Robert Morris University
• Adjunct assistant professor of health and community systems, University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing

HONORS
• Inductee, Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

Anuja Vora Jindal, MD, MPH

Anuja Vora Jindal is an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh and specializes in neurodevelopmental disabilities.

RESEARCH
• Supporting transition education for families of youth with ASD, Association of University Centers on Disabilities, poster presentation, December 2016, ongoing study
• Neuropsychological outcomes in pediatric patients with genetically confirmed episodic ataxia type 2, Child Neurology Society, poster presentation, October 2016, ongoing study
• Nonsyndromic craniosynostosis mimicking pseudotumor cerebri syndrome, 2015, ongoing study
PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS
• Child Neurology Society
• American Academy of Neurology
• American Academy of Pediatrics

HONORS
• Outstanding Junior Member Award, Child Neurology Society, October 2013

Robert B. Noll, PhD

RESEARCH
Robert B. Noll is leading international efforts within the Children's Oncology Group to better understand the impact of pediatric cancer and its treatments on the quality of life of children facing the disease. The goal of the project is to improve quality of life for survivors of pediatric cancers. A second project is a randomized clinical trial for primary caregivers of children recently diagnosed with cancer to teach coping skills (Bright IDEAS Problem-Solving Skills) that alleviate distress, comparing an electronic approach to face-to-face training. A third project is disseminating Bright IDEAS Problem-Solving Skills training to psychosocial providers providing care in pediatric oncology programs in the United States and Canada. Finally, he is a member of three mentorship committees of funded K awards for junior faculty.

STUDY SECTIONS
• Alex's Lemonade Stand
• Wetenschappelijk Fonds Willy Gepts, Belgium

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS
• Professional Advisory Council, Mattie Miracle Foundation
• Steering Committee, Behavioral Science, Children's Oncology Group
• Steering Committee, Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, Children's Oncology Group
• Steering Committee, Supportive Care Committee, Children's Oncology Group
• Emeritus faculty, Cancer Control Committee, Children's Oncology Group

EDITORSHIPS
• Editorial Board, Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS/SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS
• Fellow, American Psychological Society
• Children's Oncology Group
• Society for Research on Child Development
• Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics
• Society for Pediatric Psychologists

MAJOR LECTURESHIPS, SEMINARS, AND WORKSHOPS
• “Neuropsychological Assessments Within the Children’s Oncology Group: A Model for Success,” International Neuropsychological Society, Denver, Colo., 2015
• “Psychosocial Research in Pediatric Oncology: What Have We Learned?” pediatric grand rounds, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 2016
• “Bright IDEAS: Building Evidence in Pediatrics for Family-Centered Behavioral Health Services,” pediatric grand rounds, Ruby Memorial Hospital, Morgantown, W.Va., 2017
• “Integration of Behavioral Health Into Pediatric Oncology: Can the Air Force and Navy Work Together?” pediatric grand rounds, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas, 2017
• “Meet With the Expert: Stress on Parents/Siblings,” concurrent roundtable at the 25th Annual Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario Multi-Disciplinary Symposium on Childhood Cancer, Toronto, Ontario, 2017

HONORS
• Greater Pittsburgh Psychological Association Legacy Award, 2018
TEACHING ACTIVITIES

The CDU has a vigorous program that trains approximately 40 pediatric residents and a number of medical students per year. Trainees spend four weeks taking part in CDU clinical evaluations and visiting other settings where children with disabilities are evaluated or served in the community. Other hospital-affiliated evaluation sites include children's rehabilitation services clinics, speech and audiology, neonatal high-risk clinics, and child life services. Community-based sites include several schools that provide special education services and programs for children with developmental and behavioral disabilities. The training emphasis is entirely outpatient, focusing on both normal and abnormal development, family-centered practices, culturally sensitive practices, understanding of systems of care, and care coordination. This type of training experience is unique in the residency training program as a whole and vital to preparing pediatricians for practice in a changing health care environment.

THREE-YEAR BIBLIOGRAPHY

2015


2016


2017


