

RESEARCH EDUCATION CORE

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FOX CHASE
CANCER CENTER
TEMPLE HEALTH



FALL HIGHLIGHTS

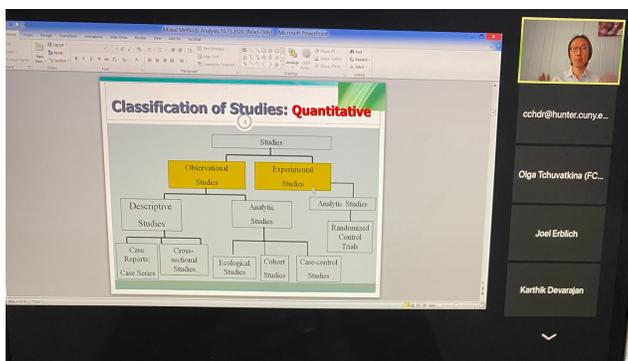


Mentors and trainees came together during the Fall to participate in various activities supported by the Temple University, Fox Chase Cancer Center and Hunter College (TUFCCC/HC) Partnership.

Scientific Conferences: From October 2nd to October 4th, eleven trainees and mentors attended the virtual 13th American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Conference on The Science of Cancer Health Disparities in Racial/Ethnic Minorities and the Medically Underserved. Six of our trainees and mentors also attended the virtual American Public Health Association’s (APHA) Annual Meeting and Expo from October 24th to October 28th. For more details, see pages 2-3.

Trainee accomplishments: Congratulations to our trainees who received AACR Scholar in Training and Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Awards! In addition, Cicely Johnson, PhD received a Diversity Supplement Award from the NIH/NCI, and Ahmet Doymaz was awarded a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship! Congratulations to all!

REC Webinar Series: On October 23rd, 2020, Ming-Chin Yeh, PhD, Professor at Hunter College presented a webinar on “Mixed Methods Analysis” as a part of our REC Webinar Series.



Ming-Chin Yeh, PhD, Hunter College, presents on Mixed Methods Analysis for trainees



Wenyue Lu, Temple University, presents at the AACR Conference on the Science of Cancer Health Disparities in Racial/Ethnic Minorities and the Medically Underserved

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13TH AACR CONFERENCE ON THE SCIENCE OF CANCER HEALTH DISPARITIES IN RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITIES AND THE MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED



The 13th American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Conference on The Science of Cancer Health Disparities in Racial/Ethnic Minorities and the Medically Underserved took place virtually from October 2-4, 2020.

The goal of this conference is to not only advance the understanding of cancer health disparities occurring in the United States, but also to eliminate these disparities through innovative research techniques and coordinated efforts of academia, industry, government, and the community. For two days, attendees learned about ground-breaking research to reduce health disparities across different communities.

Eleven trainees and mentors from the TUFCCC/HC Partnership presented fifteen posters on topics including treatment adherence, colorectal cancer screening, community-based intervention, and biological pathways contributing to cancer outcomes.

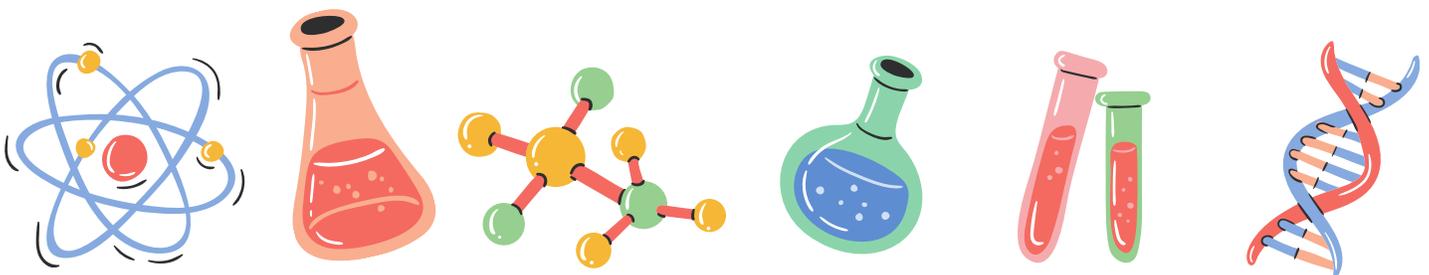
Timmy Lin, a 2019 Summer Cancer Research Institute trainee, presented his poster titled *“The Association Between Modifiable Lifestyle Behaviors and Depression Among Asian Americans with Chronic Hepatitis B (CHB) by Medication Status,”* which was based on research he completed with his mentor Dr. Grace Ma. In this study of 289 participants with chronic hepatitis B (CHB), no significant difference was observed in mean depression scores between those who were currently on CHB medication compared to those who were not taking any CHB medication. His research, however, did find that participants on CHB medication who are physically inactive were at increased risk for developing depression. These findings suggest the importance of incorporating physical activity into one’s routine to promote and support mental health.

In addition to the large number of posters presented, Dr. Grace Ma was invited to serve as a panel member on *“Hot Topics in Cancer Health Disparities”*. During this panel, Dr. Ma discussed her research on *“Improving Monitoring and Treatment Adherence Among Underserved Asian Americans with Chronic Hepatitis B through a Patient Navigator-Led Intervention”* and *“Multilevel Pathways of Colorectal Cancer Screening Among Low-Income Vietnamese Americans: A Structural Equation Modeling Analysis”*.

For more information on our trainees' abstracts please visit: <https://bit.ly/3lDqO7M>

“AACR showcased a wide-range of cancer health disparities research efforts that were intriguing and inspirational for my long-term goal of pursuing a career in cancer health disparities.” -

Timmy Lin, Temple University



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL MEETING AND EXPO



The American Public Health Association's (APHA) Annual Meeting and Expo took place virtually from October 24-28, 2020.

The theme of this year's conference was "Creating the Healthiest Nation: Preventing Violence." Researchers from across the globe came together virtually to share their scientific findings and inspire new approaches for improving community public health. Six of our mentors and trainees presented seven posters at this year's APHA Annual Meeting and Expo. Topics included liver cancer prevention, sex differences in smoking behavior, and palliative care awareness.

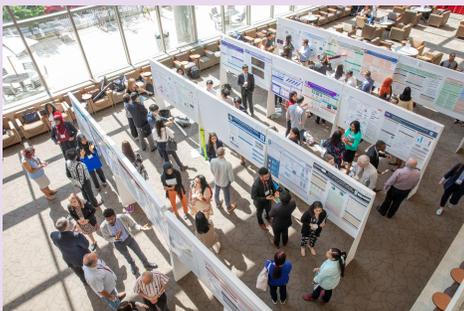
Lin Zhu, PhD, Temple University Early Stage Investigator, presented her poster on "*Liver Cancer Prevention Campaigns in Multi-Ethnic Communities in New York City*", based on a collaborative research project with SPEECH members, Ming-Chin Yeh, PhD (Hunter College), Olorunseun Ogunwobi, MD, PhD (Hunter College), Marilyn Fraser, MD (Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health), Yin Tan, MD, MPH (Temple University), and Grace Ma, PhD (Temple University). This study used educational campaigns to increase liver cancer prevention awareness in multi-ethnic communities across New York City. Campaign activities included handouts, stickers, and PowerPoint presentations at organizations such as the YMCA and senior centers. Of the 106 individuals exposed to the campaign, a majority of individuals reported that they were interested in learning about ways to prevent liver cancer, likely to discuss liver cancer with loved ones and healthcare providers, and intend to implement changes in their eating habits and physical activity. These findings suggest that community campaigns can successfully raise awareness of liver cancer in a multi-ethnic population in New York City.

For more information on our trainees' abstracts please visit: <https://bit.ly/2JzFtDs>

"We might be physically distancing, but we are staying socially connected at this year's APHA. This year's online conference provided a great platform for us to exchange ideas on how to advance public health research and health equity during COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the online format, I was able to review more posters and attend more live presentation sessions than in previous years. I am inspired by the public health community's solidarity for underrepresented and underserved communities and the will to galvanize change"- Lin Zhu, Temple University



**ABSTRACT DEADLINE:
APRIL 1ST, 2021**



**SAVE THE DATE
3RD SPEECH REGIONAL
CANCER HEALTH DISPARITY
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
MAY 13TH, 2021**



*For more information please visit:
speechregionalpartnership.org*

TRAINEE AWARDS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Congratulations to Aisha Bhimla, PhD, MPH who received an AACR Scholar-in-Training Award! The Scholar-in-Training Award is a highly competitive award that recognizes and supports junior investigators attending the AACR Cancer Health Disparities conference. Aisha presented her work on *“The Effects of Neighborhood Ethnic Density and Psychosocial Factors on Colorectal Cancer Screening Behavior among Asian American Adults”*. In her study, Aisha explored how neighborhood ethnic composition influences colorectal cancer screening behavior in Asian Americans while exploring interactions with psychosocial predictors such as knowledge, self-efficacy, and barriers with colorectal screening behavior. Of the 1,057 Filipino, Korean and Vietnamese Americans surveyed, results showed that residing in an ethnically dense neighborhood was associated with lower odds of colorectal cancer screening, and among those residing in a high ethnically dense neighborhood, greater barriers to screening were associated with lower odds of having obtained a CRC screening. Therefore, future studies should examine disparities in built environment, including the socioeconomic and cultural factors that characterize ethnically dense neighborhoods.

In addition, Aisha was the recipient of a research award for Best Student Poster Presentation in the Physical Activity section for her poster *“Examining the Relationship between Perceived Neighborhood Characteristics and Physical Activity Behavior among Asian Americans in an Urban Environment”* at APHA. Aisha’s research, with her mentor Dr. Grace Ma, PhD, examined perceptions of neighborhood walkability and its association with active transportation, recreational, and overall physical activity among Asian Americans living in an urban environment. 240 Asian Americans residing in Philadelphia County participated in Aisha’s study. Land use mix-diversity and access were positively associated with greater levels of physical activity, while residential density and lack of cul de sacs were associated with a decreased level of physical activity. Physical barriers to walking and perceived lack of cul-de-sacs were associated with a decreased likelihood of engaging in active transportation, activity for the purpose of traveling to and from places. Residing in mix-diversity land use areas was positively associated with greater amounts of walking and/or cycling for recreation, but those who perceived a higher crime rate had lower amounts of these activities. Aisha’s findings can be utilized to develop strategies to increase physical activity behavior within neighborhoods in order to improve the overall health of these populations.



“I had the opportunity to attend APHA for a fifth time this year, and although it was my first time virtually, it was an enriching experience to learn about the research being done in the field of public health on a global, national, and local level. I was truly humbled to receive the best student poster award within the physical activity section for my dissertation work, and I’m forever grateful for the opportunities that APHA provided to me as a student. My academic career has grown significantly due to the leadership and enriching opportunities offered by APHA.” - Aisha Bhimla, Temple University



Ahmet Doymaz was awarded a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship Award. The Fulbright was established by Congress in 1946 to serve as an exchange program to provide students with opportunities to participate in international graduate studies, advanced research, and university teaching worldwide. Ahmet has accepted a position in Dr. Gunter Meister’s lab at the University of Regensburg in Germany. In this new position, Ahmet will have the opportunity to biologically characterize micro peptides generated from lncRNA using knockout mouse models. While at Hunter College, Ahmet worked closely with his mentor, Dr. Frida Kleiman, with whom he participated in efforts to understand the role of Alternative Polyadenylation (APA) in the regulation of gene expression during the cellular response to DNA damage. During his successful undergraduate career, Ahmet was a CUNY Macaulay Honors student, maintained a 4.0 GPA, received a perfect score on his MCAT, and was named Hunter College’s Valedictorian. As he looks toward the future, Ahmet is currently applying to MD/PhD programs. Congratulations Ahmet!

TRAINEE AWARDS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Congratulations to Cristina Zambrano and Fayola Levine for receiving AACR Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Awards. This competitive award recognizes minority scientists attending the AACR Cancer Health Disparities conference and encourages them to pursue careers in cancer research.

Cristina Zambrano presented her research on “*Gender Differences in Dietary Behavior and Urinary Gallic Acid Concentrations in Racial Minorities in New York City*”. Cristina’s study assessed dietary behavior and urinary concentrations of gallic acid (UGAC), an antioxidant found in various fruit and vegetables, among racial minorities in New York City. In their study of 91 participants, Cristina and her mentor Olorunseun Ogunwobi, MD, PhD, found gender differences in dietary behavior and urinary gallic acid concentrations, with female participants reporting a higher daily fruit intake compared to males. They also reported older age and Asian race to be associated with higher fruit intake. These findings, as well as the significant association between higher fruit intake and UGAC, suggest that gender differences in both dietary behavior and UGAC may contribute, in part, to the gender differences observed in cancer incidence and prevalence within racial minority groups.



Fayola Levine presented her work on “*PVT1 Exon 9 Transcript Regulates Claudin 4 Expression and Migration in Triple Negative Breast Cancer*”. Fayola’s research focuses on the Plasmacytoma Variant Translocation 1 (PVT1) gene and its regulatory role in triple negative breast cancer. Working with her mentor, Olorunseun Ogunwobi, MD, PhD, Fayola observed that PVT1 exons 4A, 4B, and 9 are significantly upregulated in claudin low triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) cells and significantly downregulated in claudin high TNBC cells, in comparison to ER+ breast cancer cells. Fayola and Dr. Ogunwobi were able to confirm that claudin expression, specifically claudins 1, 3, 4 and 7 are significantly higher in claudin high TNBC cells and significantly lower in claudin low TNBC cells. Inhibition of PVT1 exon 9 expression in the claudin low TNBC cells led to a significant reduction in migration. Claudin 4 expression was increased in cells with knock down of PVT1 exon 9 suggesting that PVT1 exon 9 regulates claudin 4 protein stability in claudin low triple negative breast cancer cells. Fayola’s findings indicate that PVT1 exon 9 regulates claudin expression and migration in claudin low triple negative breast cancer cells and may have implications for clinical outcomes in triple negative breast cancer.



Dr. Cicely K. Johnson will be supported by a Diversity Supplement Award to the U54 grant at Hunter College (Contact PI: Olorunseun Ogunwobi; MPI: Grace Ma) from the Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities at the National Cancer Institute. This new project will build upon Cicely’s prior pilot study on diet and colorectal cancer screening behaviors. In this supplement, Cicely plans to examine mental health and trauma as barriers to screening for colorectal cancer. The award includes funding for three years (2020-2023) to carry out this study under the guidance of Dr. Olorunseun Ogunwobi, Dr. Grace Ma, and Dr. May May Leung. Ultimately, Cicely aspires to become an independent investigator in the field of cancer research, specifically in cancer disparities, and to work towards a tenure-track academic position.

MENTOR SPOTLIGHT: JENNIFER B. REESE, PHD



Dr. Jennifer B. Reese is Associate Professor (tenured) in the Cancer Prevention and Control Program at Fox Chase Cancer Center. She graduated summa cum laude from Barnard College in 2001 and received her PhD in Clinical Psychology from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, in 2008. She completed her Psychology Internship from Duke University Medical Center that same year. Dr. Reese obtained postdoctoral training at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, before arriving at Fox Chase Cancer Center in 2014. Dr. Reese's externally funded program of research addresses the problem of sexual sequelae of cancer treatments. She is currently PI of two clinical trials evaluating couple-based interventions aimed at improving sexual, relationship, and psychological outcomes for breast cancer survivors, one in survivors of early-stage disease (R01 CA222124), and one in women with metastatic breast cancer (RSG-20-029-01-CPPB). She recently completed a five-year American Cancer Society (ACS) Mentored Research Scholar Grant (MRS-14-031-01-CPPB) aimed at developing and evaluating patient- and provider interventions to improve patient-provider communication about sexual concerns in breast cancer. She is also the PI of an NCI-funded project focused on adapting and testing a technology-based intervention to improve communication about sexual health for breast cancer clinicians (R03 CA235238). Dr. Reese was recently appointed incoming Chair-Elect of the Scientific Network on Female Sexual Health and Cancer, Associate Editor of the journal *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, and Affiliate Editorial Board Member at the journal *Psycho-Oncology*. Dr. Reese enjoys the many challenges and rewards of mentoring, including watching students and trainees gain independence and confidence as they learn new skills. She enjoys the collaborative nature of research and hopes to continue to grow as a mentor in the coming years. Dr. Reese has two daughters, ages 9 and 6, and a "pandemic rescue puppy," all of whom do a good job keeping her busy. When she is not working or engaged in family activities, she might be found going for a run, walking the dog, hiking, or singing karaoke, but probably not cooking.



CAROLYN FANG, PHD APPOINTED ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR POPULATION SCIENCE

Dr. Carolyn Fang, Professor in the Cancer Prevention and Control Program at Fox Chase Cancer Center, has a new title to add under her belt. Dr. Fang has been appointed Associate Director for Population Science. In this leadership role, Dr. Fang will oversee the scientific programming for population science research initiatives, including advancing community-engaged research in cancer health disparities.

Dr. Fang's research focuses on how behavioral, biological and psychosocial factors can influence cancer risk, with a focus on Asian American populations. Dr. Fang has over 20 years of experience in conducting patient-focused and community-engaged research and is considered a national leader in the fields of biobehavioral oncology and cancer health disparities. Congratulations, Dr. Fang!



SUMMER CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTE APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN!

Applications for the 2021 Summer Cancer Research Institute (SCRI) are currently open!

The SCRI Program is an 8-week intensive summer program that takes place at the Temple University and Fox Chase Cancer Center campuses. SCRI is supported by the National Cancer Institute U54 and the TUFCCC/HC SPEECH Partnership. Undergraduate and graduate students, currently enrolled at Temple University or Hunter College, who are interested in pursuing biomedical, clinical or population-based cancer research are welcome to apply.

Participants will benefit from:

- Hands-on research training
- Mentorship from established investigators
- Participation in cancer seminars and skill-building workshops
- Written and oral science communication

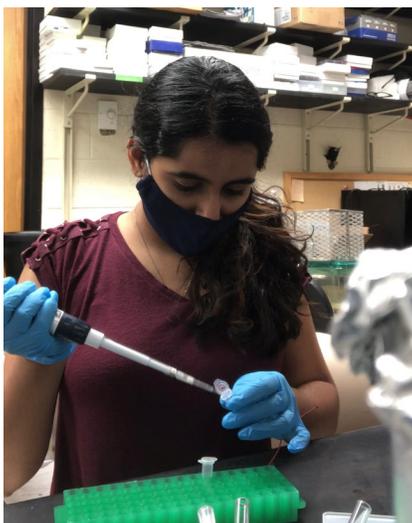
All participants will receive a stipend of \$3,000. Hunter College trainees will receive housing and transportation to Philadelphia.

Program Dates: June 7th - July 30th

Application Deadline: January 15th

At present, we anticipate that the 2021 SCRI will take place in person at the Temple University Health Science and Fox Chase Cancer Center campuses in Philadelphia, PA. We are closely monitoring health and safety guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and Temple University Health Systems. A final decision about the format of the 2021 SCRI program will be made in the spring.

To apply please visit: <https://bit.ly/2Suq9J2>.



INTERESTED IN BEING A MENTOR FOR THE SUMMER CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTE?

The Research Education Core is currently seeking mentors for our 2021 SCRI cohort! SCRI trainees work full-time (40 hrs/week) for an 8-week period over the summer. Trainees are supported through the TUFCCC/HC SPEECH Partnership grant.

If interested, or for more information, please contact Carolyn Fang, PhD (carolyn.fang@fcc.edu) or Olorunseun Ogunwobi, MD, PhD (ogunwobi@genectr.hunter.cuny.edu).

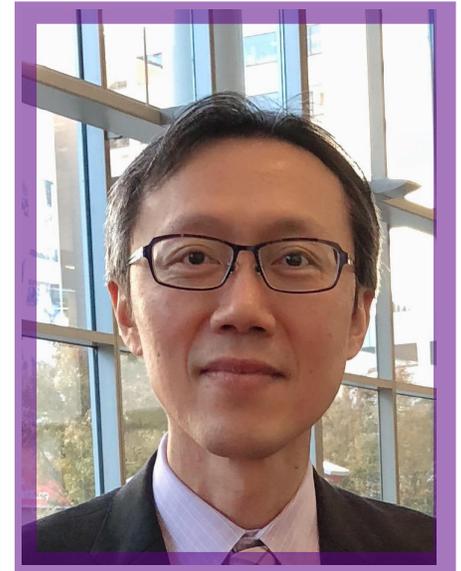
REC WEBINAR SERIES

On October 23rd, the Research Education Core and the Bioinformatics Core co-sponsored a webinar presented by Ming-Chin Yeh, PhD.

Dr. Yeh is a Professor in the School of Urban Public Health, Nutrition Program, at Hunter College. His research aims to develop innovative intervention strategies that promote a healthy lifestyle for disease prevention. In addition, Dr. Yeh is a Co-Investigator on two VA-funded randomized control trials testing the effectiveness of a personalized behavioral intervention to improve self-care, self-monitoring and modifiable risks in diabetic patient

In his webinar titled “*Mixed Methods Analysis*”, Dr. Yeh discussed mixed-methods analysis techniques, models of mixed-methods research, and comparative examples of qualitative and quantitative research.

Our next webinar will take place on March 10th, 2021 at 12:00 PM featuring Dr. Nora Engel and Dr. Kelly Whelan. Dr. Engel and Dr. Whelan will be discussing gender disparities in research. To register please visit: <https://forms.gle/EriuvuW1BwUrYEOH7>



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Research Education Core Leaders:

Olorunseun Ogunwobi, MD, PhD - Hunter College
Carolyn Fang, PhD - Fox Chase Cancer Center

For questions regarding the Research Education Core and any upcoming events, please contact one of our program coordinators:

Rubia Shahbaz, BA - rs1650@hunter.cuny.edu
Taylor Kazaoka, MPH - taylor.wood@fcc.edu

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SPEECH

**Synergistic Partnership
for Enhancing Equity in
Cancer Health**

SPEECH is a comprehensive regional cancer health disparity partnership between Temple University/Fox Chase Cancer Center and Hunter College (TUFCCC/HC), the U54 grant funded by the National Cancer Institute. The purpose of SPEECH is to reduce cancer health disparities among underserved minority populations in Pennsylvania-New Jersey-New York City (PNN) region, through cancer disparities research, community outreach, and career development for underrepresented early stage investigators and students.

FALL CANCER AWARENESS MONTHS

SEPTEMBER

Uterine Cancer
Leukemia
Lymphoma
Ovarian Cancer
Prostate Cancer
Thyroid Cancer

OCTOBER

Breast Cancer
Liver Cancer

NOVEMBER

Pancreatic Cancer
Lung Cancer
Stomach Cancer
Honoring Caregivers