

Biomedical Genetics Section

Newsletter

Welcome to the Biomedical Genetics Quarterly Newsletter

Congratulations

Shoumita Dasgupta on her new role.

**Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion at the Chobanian & Avedisian
School of Medicine**

"Congratulations on this new appointment which is well-deserved and suited for you. I am confident your leadership will greatly advance the Department's and School's efforts in this area" Dr. Farrer



Congratulations

**Rebecca Panitch
on her thesis defense!**



Biomedical Genetics Section Updates

Meet the People

We are pleased to welcome new additions to the Biomedical Genetics team!



Daniel Goldstein

Daniel Goldstein recently earned his master's degree in Bioinformatics from Boston University and is now working as a Data Analyst in Dr. Gyungah Jun's lab in the Biomedical Genetics Section. His research focuses polygenic risk scores derived from gene co-expression networks preserved in blood and brain. His findings demonstrate for the first time that blood/brain module-based risk scores can differentiate subjects with increased risk for Alzheimer's disease according to biological pathways or mechanisms underlying their risk. Daniel is currently writing a manuscript on this research and aims to publish by early next year. Prior to his time at Boston University, Daniel worked as a lab manager at SUNY Binghamton, where he taught undergraduate and graduate students about biomedical engineering laboratory methods and technologies.



Habbiburr Rehman

Habbiburr Rehman, A Postdoc Associate, joined the Biomedical Genetics Section of the Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine to work under Dr. Xiaoling Zhang and Dr. Wendy Qiu. Habib's Ph.D. research focus, analyzing follow-up data (cancer, transplant, etc.) by applying various parametric survival models using frequentist and Bayesian estimation methods. Currently, he is working on U-19 project 2 under the guidance of Dr. Xiaoling Zhang and Dr. Wendy Qiu to identify the association between the risk of Alzheimer's disease and various genetic and inflammatory factors by applying numerous statistical approaches.



Alexander Knyshev

My current research interests lie in genomics and bioinformatics. I hold an MS in Biology (Saint Petersburg State University, Russia), and PhD in Entomology (University of California, Riverside). My PhD and early postdoc work was focused on insect evolutionary genomics, in particular, designing bioinformatic pipelines to process and combine data from WGS, RNA-seq, and target capture to accurately elucidate evolutionary relationships between species. I then switched to analysis of mammal WGS data, while doing my postdoc at University of Rhode Island, where I looked at how properties of different genomic regions might explain the amount of observed discordance in evolutionary signal.

As a Postdoctoral Associate at BU, I am now working with Dr. Xiaoling Zhang on the circular RNA project. Among my areas of interest is investigation of the possible association between the expression of mitochondrion-encoded circular RNAs and Alzheimer's disease.

Say “Good-Bye” to Jaeyoon

Jaeyoon Chung, was a valued Research Assistant Professor of Biomedical Genetics. He worked with Dr. Farrer. Jaeyoon’s research is focused on understanding the causes of complex disease including dementia and stroke and the cerebral vascular impact on cognitive impairment, using analytic approaches in genetics and genomics.



Biomedical Genetics Section Updates

Evans Day - Junior Faculty Research Merit Awardees

Dear Biomedical Genetics faculty,

Please join me in congratulating Rick on his Evans Junior Faculty award. As mentioned by David Salant at the Evans Days awards dinner, there were many faculty under consideration for this award, several fold more than the number of awardees. This very prestigious award is accompanied by a substantial grant from the DOM over a 2-year period.

Lindsay



Department of Medicine
Chairman's Office

Colleagues,

We are delighted to announce the AY 23 Evans Junior Faculty Research Merit Awardees.

The awardees for AY 23 are: Nicole Spartano, Ph.D. (Endocrinology), **Rick Sherva, Ph.D. (Biomedical Genetics)**, Seppo Rinne, M.D. (Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine), Gene Kwan, M.D. (Cardiology), and Anica Law, M.D. (Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine).

These individuals were selected based on their very strong research accomplishments and exceptional promise as investigators! We had 24 very highly qualified applicants for the award, far more than in previous years! Although difficult to select awardees from such a talented pool of faculty, we can be assured that the number of highly talented faculty portends a very bright future for research in the Department of Medicine.

We would like to thank Drs. Deborah Anderson, David Center, and Katya Ravid for their diligent and thoughtful service on the selection committee.

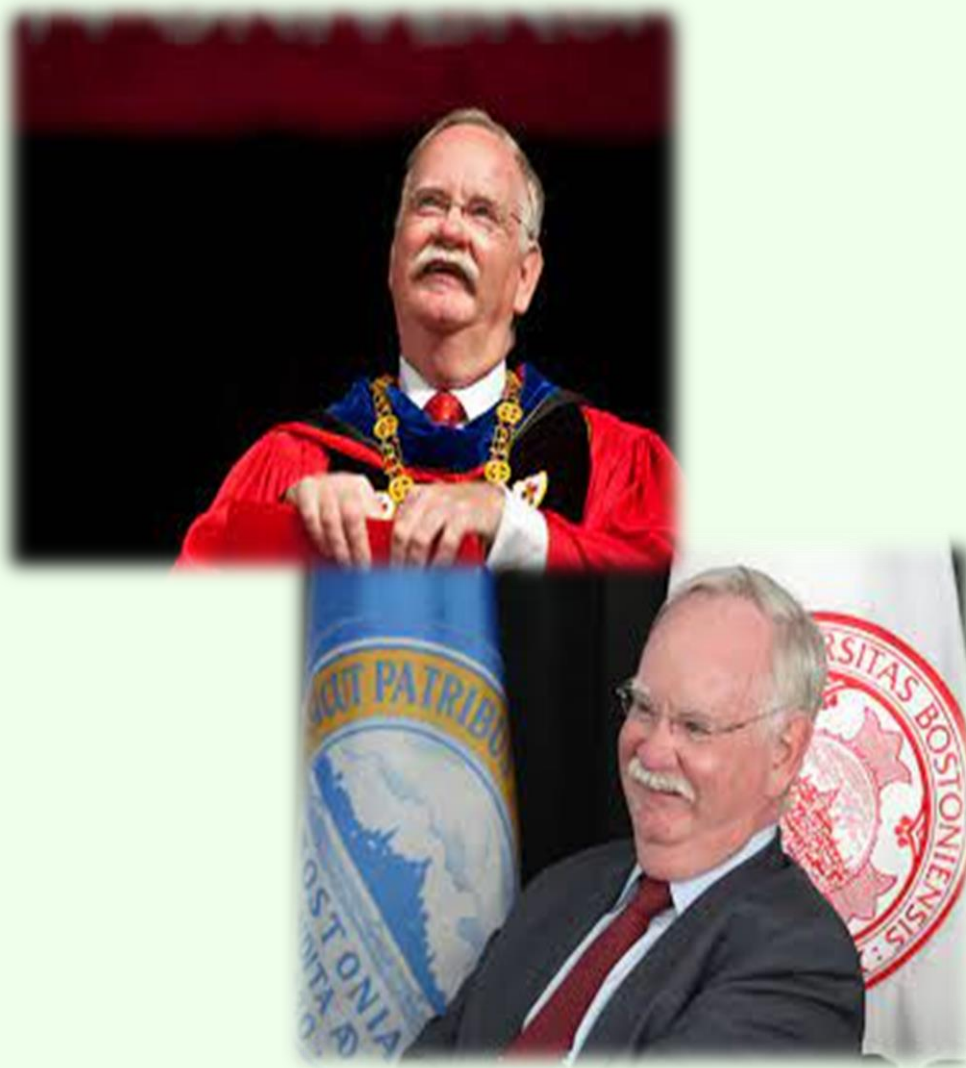
Please join with us in offering congratulations to our outstanding AY 23 Evans Junior Faculty Research Merit Awardees!

David Salant, M.D.
David Coleman, M.D.

Boston University News

Robert A. Brown, Boston University, President Steps Down after 17 years

If you look around Boston University, the impact of Robert A. Brown, president for the past 17 years, is everywhere—in the faces on campus, the buildings, and the teaching and research being carried out every day. The 10th president of BU, who announced Wednesday that he will step down at the end of the 2022-2023 academic year, built a legacy around making BU a leading urban research institution, with greater diversity, more rigorous academic standards, and greater accessibility through financial aid and Pell Grants. News about the search for Brown's successor is expected in the coming days, so for now, we will simply reflect on the fourth-longest-serving leader in 149 years of BU presidents. [Read More.](#)



Anthony “Tony” Hollenberg, MD, has been named the John Wade Professor and Chair of the DoM at BUSM, and Physician-in-Chief at BMC



Department of Medicine
Chairman's Office

To the Staff, Trainees and Faculty of the Department of Medicine:

As I arrive for my first day, I want to begin by saying what a great privilege it is for me to become the Chair of this dynamic and impactful Department. I would like to send my appreciation to David Coleman for his leadership and vision during his tenure as Chair. In addition, I am grateful for his generosity of time and insight as I transition into this role.

As I interviewed for this position, I was immediately drawn to the culture and values of the Department, Boston Medical Center and Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine. These values focus on outstanding care and health equity built on the foundation of a research-intensive Department that prioritizes training the next generation. Indeed, these missions of the Department put us in unique position as a leading light for academic departments nationally. Together, we will continue to move through the Covid-19 pandemic and the many challenges ahead including advancing racial justice, improving population health, addressing faculty and staff well-being and expanding the reach and impact of our research.

Over the next few months, I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible and understanding your goals for our Department. Together, we will continue to honor our missions in order to best serve our community and advance solutions for unmet medical need.

Best Regards,

Tony

Department of Medicine, 72 E Concord Street, Boston, MA 02118

BU News Events

BU Held Flu and COVID Clinics at the beginning of November, while Bracing for RSV



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Respiratory syncytial virus has gotten an early, widespread start across the country, raising fears of a “triple epidemic”

While holding upcoming flu clinics and one for the COVID-19 bivalent booster, the University is bracing for a winter “triple epidemic” involving a third malady: RSV—respiratory syncytial virus—which has spiked early this year around the country. [Read More](#)

Why Do Some People Live to 100—and How?



Thomas Perls, director of BU’s [New England Centenarian Study](#), explains how and why some people live to 100 years old. While genetics plays a huge role in whether someone becomes a centenarian (or supercentenarian), Perls says we can still do four things to increase our chances of living

longer. Find Perls’ Life Expectancy calculator [here](#). Learn more about the New England Centenarian Study (NECS) [here](#). The study is funded by the National Institute on Aging, the William M. Wood Foundation, and the Martin and Paulette Samowitz Family Foundation. [Read More](#)

Could You Average 57,000 Steps a Day?



If you were among the 2,008 employees who took part in BU Employee Wellness’ just-ended 6-week 2019 Fitbit® Walking Challenge, chances are you were wondering about the identity of the one name that kept appearing at the top of the leaderboard throughout the competition. We’re talking about Jose, the mysterious walker who, by the time the competition had ended on May 20, had racked up an astonishing 2,424,470 steps (that’s an average of 57,000 steps a day) and managed to remain number one for the duration of the challenge. Who is he and how did he do it?

First, for some perspective on Jose’s step count, here are a few stats. [Read More.](#)

BUMC Events

Nov. 30 - Alan & Sybil Edelstein Lecture for Professionalism and Ethics in Medicine: "The Ethical Challenges of the COVID Crisis" (Virtual)

"The Ethical Challenges of the COVID Crisis."

Virtual program will feature a panelists of BUMC faculty and residents, moderated by David Edelstein, M and introductory remarks by Marcia Edelstein Herrmann, MD '78, [Greg Grillone, MD](#), and [Ken Grundfas](#). Please register at <https://trusted.bu.edu/EdelsteinLecture2022>.

Web Site: <https://trusted.bu.edu/EdelsteinLecture2022>

Contact: Nick Sims | nsims@bu.edu | (617) 358-9537

Date: Wednesday, Nov. 30 | 6-7 p.m.

Location: Zoom

Dec. 1 - PHX Health in Focus Film Festival

The mission of the Health in Focus Film Festival is to improve the health of populations by pairing compelling stories with thoughtful discussion. The schedule consists of three invited, feature-length films, a panel of three blocks of short films. Awards will be granted to the best short film, as selected by a jury, as well as a favorite and a young filmmaker.

- The world as it is – conditions that keep populations from being healthy and those that are characterized by unhealthy populations.
- Inequities – a focus on marginalized populations.
- Looking ahead – aspirations for the future of health.

Purchase Tickets Now. Events are free for current BU students, faculty and staff. Use code "BUCOMMUI

Web Site: <https://populationhealthexchange.org/learning-opportunities/health-in-focus/>

Contact: Frank Patino | phx@bu.edu | (617) 358-1397

Date: Thursday, Dec. 1

Location: 610 Commonwealth Ave.

Dec. 13 - COVID-19 ARC Special Keynote Lecture: Volker Thiel (Hybrid)

The COVID-19 ARC invites you to participate in a special keynote lecture given by Prof. Volker Thiel. This is scheduled as a hybrid meeting, with refreshments available in 670 Albany St., room 107/108.

More details and RSVP will be updated on the Evans Center IBR website.

Web Site: <https://www.bumc.bu.edu/evanscenteribr/>

Contact: Markus Bosmann | mbosmann@bu.edu | (617) 358-8244

Date: Tuesday, Dec. 13 | 11 a.m.

Location: 670 Albany St. or Zoom 107/108

Biomedical Genetics Section Holiday Festivities

~ We are happy to announce ~
this year our section will come together face to face for the holiday party
Friday, December 9 from 12-2pm in E201



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Resources

Don't Forget. Submit an *Announcement Request Form* and share your news in the next issue of the Biomedical Genetics Section Newsletter!

Do you have exciting news that you want to share in the next issue of our quarterly Biomedical Genetics Section Newsletter? Submit an [Announcement Request Form](#), located on the Resources page of our [website](#)!

