

JULY 2023 | ISSUE 10

BIOMEDICAL GENETICS SECTION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Biomedical Genetics Section Updates



We are excited to welcome a new faculty member, **Dr. Lei Hou**, to the section on August 1st!

Fulbright Specialist Award - Dr. Shoumita Dasgupta in Cairo, Egypt



The folks from Fulbright came to BU for an informational session a few years ago, making Dr. Dasgupta aware of the opportunity for a short-term exchange program. Dr. Dasgupta applied, was matched with Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt, and traveled there for the month of June. Ain Shams University recently switched their medical school program from 6 years of education plus 1 year of clinical to 5 years of education plus 2 years of clinical. They have over 3,000 medical students in the school.

The host university was very open, honest, and welcoming to Dr. Dasgupta's and other outside perspectives on the changes they are making to their program. Dr. Dasgupta said that it was an outstanding experience to learn so much about medical education in a setting that was simultaneously completely different and incredibly similar to ours.

Read more about the Fulbright Specialist Award [here](#).



The first photo shows Dr. Dasgupta, Mira Mashali (rising M2 at BU), and the leadership at Ain Shams University. Mira was able to meet a number of the faculty and students - she was an outstanding representative of BU and plans to return to Ain Shams for an away rotation. The second shows hieroglyphs of medical instruments that Dr. Dasgupta saw during her tour of Kom Ombo temple, and the bottom photo is at the Hanging Church in Cairo with the host Prof Soha Ashry and other members of the Medical Education Department.



alzheimer's 
association

Novel loci for Alzheimer's disease identified by a genome-wide association study in Ashkenazi Jews

On June 1st, 2023, Dr. Farrer and other researchers including Dr. Li and Dr. Farrell, had their study published in The Journal of Alzheimer's Association. The study identified several genetic risk factors for AD, including some previously known (APOE, TREM2) and several novel ones that are strong biological candidates (RAB3, SMAP2, ZNF890P, SPOCK3, GIPR).

[Read More](#)

We want to congratulate Dr. Gyungah Jun on the U19 grant that the new study, *Asian Cohort for Alzheimer's Disease (ACAD)*, received which she is one of the co-PI's for.

congrats!

Asian Cohort for Alzheimer's Disease (ACAD)

07/01/2023 - 06/30/2028 U19AG079774 (Chang/**Jun**/Park/Wang)

Total Cost: \$42M

The project represents the first major Alzheimer's disease genetics cohort for Asian Americans and Asian Canadians, populations currently underrepresented in Alzheimer's disease research. Researchers will look to identify risk variants in the Asian American and Asian Canadian population, compared to other populations and to those living in Asia. Based on these analyses, their goal is to develop blood biomarker benchmarks and a polygenic risk score model to measure the risk for Alzheimer's disease specifically among Asian Americans and Asian Canadians. They also will examine non-genetic biomarkers in combination with lifestyle and clinical information to look for clues to other contributing factors to Alzheimer's disease.



Biomedical Genetics Journal Club

Dates & Time: every other Wednesday 2-3PM-- next meeting is July 26th

Location: Rm E246 of the Evans building (Zoom connection is also available)



Biomedical Genetics journal club is a great resource for anyone who is interested in discovering new methods or trying to keep up with the latest technologies. Meetings are led by graduate students within the Biomedical Genetics Section, but everyone is encouraged to attend. We typically discuss topics related ongoing research in the Biomedical Genetics Section. (e.g. sequencing technologies, GWAS, machine learning).

Please email sahelijo@bu.edu for more information on upcoming talks in-person, or if you would like to join by Zoom.



BUMC News and Events

FY24/25 Fringe Benefit Rates Announced



Office of Research

The University has negotiated new fringe benefit rates with the Department of Health & Human Services for fiscal years 2024 and 2025. The revised Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement dated 3/27/2023 can be found [here](#).

New Flexible Work Guidelines



Human Resources recently finalized new Guidelines for Flexible Staff Work Arrangements. These new guidelines support institutional goals, including staff recruitment and retention and enterprise continuity, while providing the highest quality residential campus experience to our students and sustaining momentum in research. [Read More](#)

Payroll changes: Monthly to Semi-Monthly



If you are currently paid monthly, beginning in August 2023 you will receive one-half of your monthly pay on the 15th of the month and the remaining half on the last day of the month. If either pay date falls on a weekend or holiday, you will be paid on the prior business day. With this new schedule you will be paid 24 times a year rather than 12 times. [Read More](#)

COVID-19 Paid Absences Ends



With COVID-19 public health emergencies ending on May 11, 2023, the COVID-19 Paid Absence Program has ended as of June 1, 2023. You will, of course, remain eligible to use your regular available accrued sick leave and Paid Family and Medical Leave benefits for absences.

[Contact Human Resources](#) with any questions.



Ally Launches for New Blackboard Courses



Blackboard Ally is now automatically enabled for new Blackboard courses. Ally is BU's new tool supporting inclusion and accessibility, which allows students to download course materials in alternative formats like audio, HTML, and electronic braille. Ally includes a dashboard showing instructors how accessible content is, which is only visible to the instructor and serves to offer guidance for improving accessibility and inclusion.

[Read More](#)

BUMC Reads Program: Disability Visibility (Virtual)



The Reads Program is open to all BUMC staff and faculty. This fall they will hold 4 book discussion sessions where you can share thoughts on issues of disability, accessibility, and lived experiences, and learn ways to initiate conversations on ableism and disability justice. Free books for the discussions are available first come, first serve.

WEDNESDAYS 5-6PM

September 13th Part 1: *Being*

October 11th Part 2: *Becoming*

November 8th Part 3: *Doing*

December 6th Part 4

[Learn More / Sign Up](#)


 SAVE THE DATE

Department of Medicine

Evans Days

October 19-20, 2023



Evans Days Speakers:

Wilkins Visiting Professor

Barbara Kahn, MD

George R. Minot Professor of Medicine,
Harvard Medical School
Vice-Chair for Research Strategy,
Department of Medicine
Senior Faculty and Former Chief,
Division of Endocrinology,
Diabetes and Metabolism,
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Institute Member, Broad Institute of
MIT and Harvard

Ingelfinger Visiting Professor

Gbenga Ogedegbe, MD, MPH

Dr. Adolph & Margaret Berger
Professor of Population Health
Director, Institute for Excellence
in Health Equity (IEHE)
NYU Grossman School of
Medicine, NYU Langone Health



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](#)!