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*From the Editors:*

At it's core, the Boston Children's Postdoc Association was built to bring people from different scientific, national, and racial backgrounds together to bring awareness to and advocate for the postdoc community here at Children's. Our research community is diverse, with over 60% international postdocs. Racism and discrimination have no part in science, and we strive to strengthen our equity, diversity, and inclusion in our events and policies.



To submit comments, articles, or ideas for future newsletters, please contact: [Postdoc-publicaffairs@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:Postdoc-publicaffairs@childrens.harvard.edu). For more information on the postdoc association, find us at:

**Childrens.org**  
**Twitter (@BCHPostdoc)**  
**Facebook**  
**LinkedIn**

Check out our newsletter online!



**2020-2021 Annual Survey**

by Julie Sesen

This year, 212 fellows responded to the BCH Postdoc Association Annual Survey earlier this year. From these 212, 55 were Clinical Fellows (CFs) which represents about 9% of the total CF and 157 were Research Fellows (RFs) which represents about 19% of total RF. The average age of the fellow respondents was 32 and was equivalent among CF (31) and RF (33). The average age of the fellow respondents was 32 and was comparable between CF (31) and RF (33). Overall, women and men were fairly balanced in our survey, with 120 identifying as female, 83 identifying as male, and 1 identifying as non-binary. Interestingly, genders were very unbalanced in the CF group, with 80% of respondents identifying as female versus only 20% identifying as male. When we asked about the sexual orientation, the majority responded being "hetero" versus 10 "gay", 4 "lesbian", 7 "bisexual" and 10 preferred not to answer or specify (**Figure 1**).

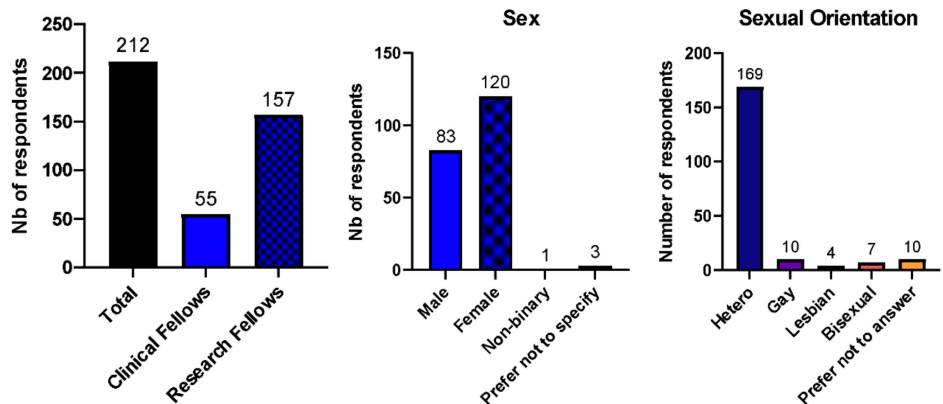


Figure 1. BCH Postdoc Association Annual Survey results - Number of respondents, Sex and Sexual Orientation

The fellows at Boston Children's Hospital represent a wide array of ethnicities from all over the world, with 96 fellows (46%) responded being Caucasians, 45 fellows (21%) responded being East Asian, 33 fellows (15%) were from South/Southeast Asia, 19 claimed to be Hispanic (9%), 7 were from North Africa/Middle East (3%). Of note, we found that the African/Black/African American, and Native American and Pacific Islander/Hawaiian communities are highly underrepresented in each group in this data. Some fellows (4) recognized having multiple ethnicities and 2 preferred not to specify (**Figure 2**).

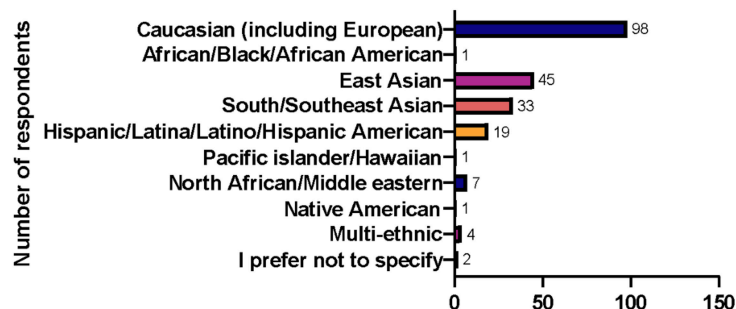


Figure 2. BCH Postdoc Association Annual Survey results - Ethnicity

# Hey Fellows! Have a break before you break down!

by Alexis Caulier

In our competitive and sometimes stressful environment, we work more to go faster and further. Many of us fear that taking breaks might slow down our work and decrease our productivity. What would be the of leisure in a hectic postdoc's life? Boston Children's Hospital gives us **twenty days off per year in addition to ten hospital holidays**, however 30% of fellows (clinical and research included) are not aware of the policy (Figure 4). Strikingly, **75% of us don't fully use this time off and took less than ten days off in the past year**. Is it a personal choice, or do we feel the weight of our institution's expectations? **50% of both clinical and research fellows feel obligated to work on weekends**, highlighting the shadow of work pressure even if they are not clearly told to do so.

Two-third of us estimate they work 40-60 hours a week, **but 30% work more than 60 hours a week** (Figure 5). Staying healthy and competitive with such hours is highly challenging. Indeed, recent work has emphasized the risk of long working hours on global health. A study lead on 20-35-year old workers showed an increase in the risk of developing stress, depression or suicidal thoughts especially when working more than 50 hours a week (Park et al. 2020, Plos One), this applies for 60% of us. Similar results were found when individuals worked more than 48 hours a week (Alfonso et al. 2017, Occup Med). Additionally, a recent 20-year meta-analysis concluded that long working hours negatively affect both physiological and mental health, including sleep issues, fatigue, and injuries related to exhaustion (Alfonso et al. 2017, Occup Med). Especially, cumulative long working hours might increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and stroke (Fadel et al. 2019, Stroke, Fadel et al. 2020, J Am Heart Assoc). Aside from health issues, long working hours seem to worsen our self-esteem. When we asked "How appreciated do you feel in your position as a postdoc", we found **on average most postdocs raged their experience 8/10**, suggesting that they felt happy in their posi-

From all the respondents, a small majority were married (52%) or in a domestic partnership/civil union (4%) compared to 45% being single. In contrast to this data, we found that only 23% of fellows have children. In fact, 78% of fellows noted that **during their time at Boston Children's Hospital, they have needed to postpone life events such as getting married or having children due to their work requirements or financial status**. In fact, childcare is the most important form of support or benefits that fellows would like to see expanded (ranked 4.1/5). The PDA Postdoc Association will present these data to the Research Executive Committee in October and continue to advocate for expanding these benefits. Full Annual Survey data analysis will be available upon request at [postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu).

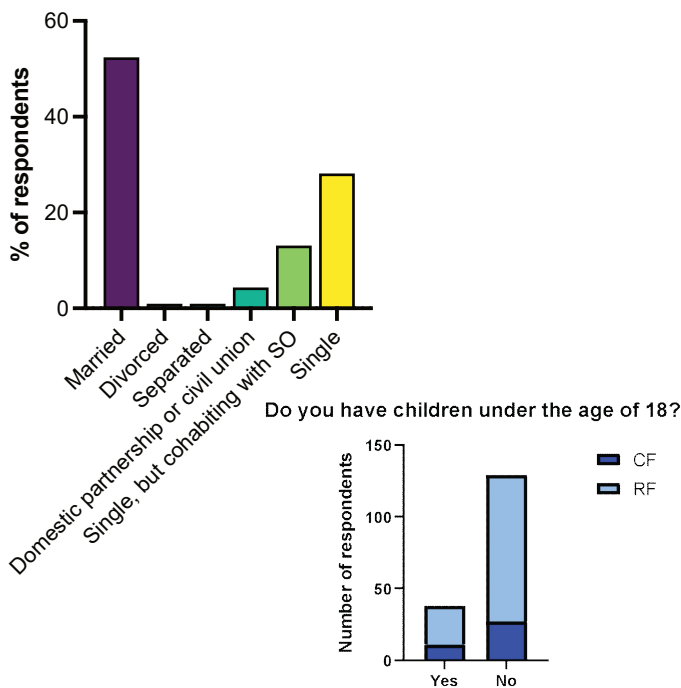


Figure 3. BCH Postdoc Association Annual Survey Results relationship and parental status

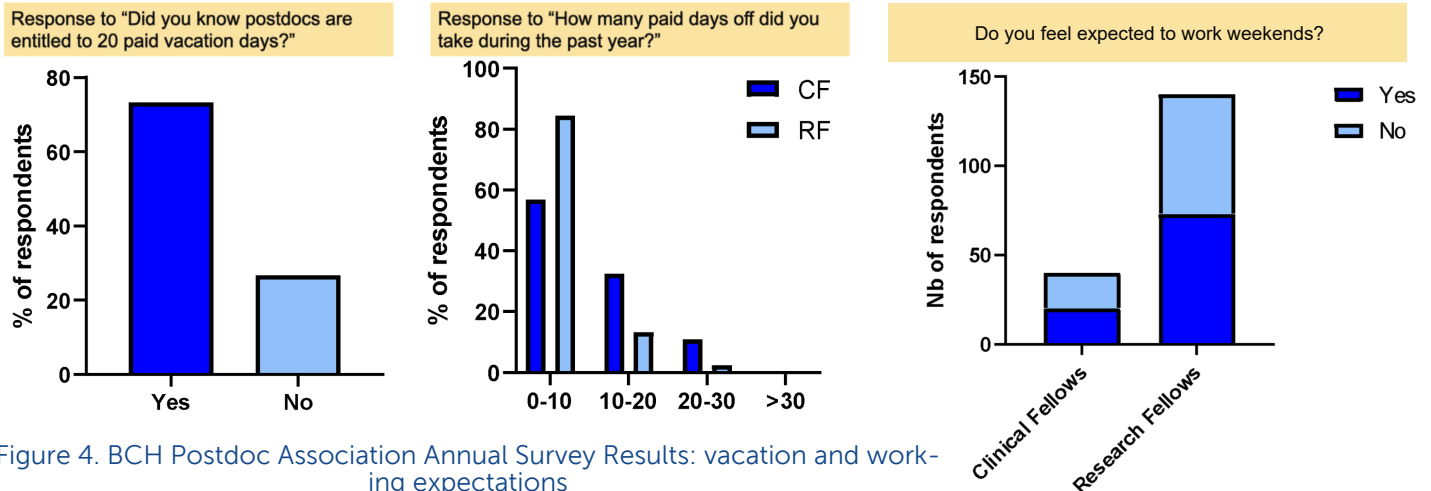
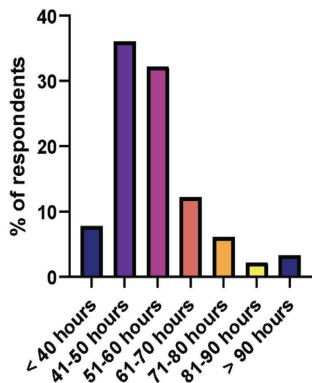


Figure 4. BCH Postdoc Association Annual Survey Results: vacation and working expectations

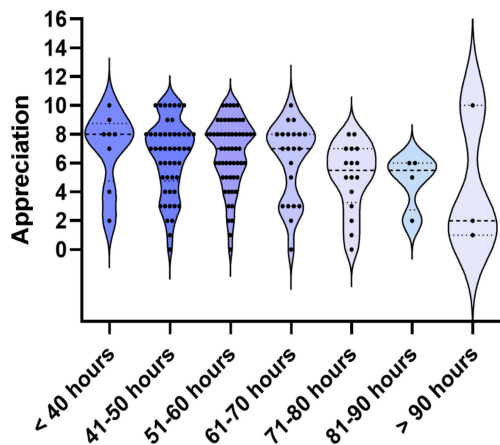
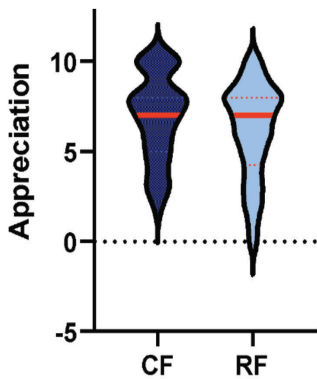
tions (Figure 5). However, we noted that **this appreciation decreased in fellows that reported long working hours**. This also emphasizes that working long hours might also be a response to a stressful environment for some of us, further perpetuating a vicious cycle.

Postdoctoral studies can be long, stressful, and overwhelming, potentially leading to anxiety and burn-out. Taking holidays or even short breaks from work have the potential to clear our mind, and might help us work better, develop new ideas and fresh enthusiasm to achieve our career goals without diminishing the quality of life. **Let's have a break before we break-down!**

On average, how many hours per week to you spend working on lab-related work?



How appreciated do you feel in your position as a fellow?  
Average appreciation rating around 8 for both CF and RF



*Boston Children's Hospital provides some Wellness programs and benefits to take a break, clear your mind and do some work out.*

*Check out these programs here:*

<http://web2.tch.harvard.edu/benefits/main-pageS3063P54.html>

- **Grokker:** Access anytime, anywhere to over 4,000 on-demand video classes focusing on: Nutrition, Mindfulness, Fitness, Yoga and Financial Wellbeing
- **KGA Employee Assistance Program:** KGA offers support for work life balance and any issue causing you stress.
- **Learn to Live (New for January 2021):** Online programs and clinical assessments for those covered under the Hospital's medical plans struggling with stress, depression, social anxiety, insomnia or substance use.
- **BodyScape Fitness:** Boston Children's Hospital subsidizes BodyScape Fitness memberships to \$50/month for full benefits-eligible employees.
- **BCH Postdoc Association Social events** organized by our Networking & Outreach Committee (NOC) and from the Office of Fellowship Training (OFT) are also another way to clear your mind and meet other postdocs, don't hesitate to join!
- If you feel that you need to talk to someone outside of your lab, the Postdoc Association is always here to help. Contact us at [postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu)

Figure 5. BCH Postdoc Association Annual Survey Results working hours and fellow appreciation. The more fellows work, the less appreciated they feel.

# Lack of representation of Clinical Fellows - We hear you!

By Julie Sesen

During the analysis of the Annual Survey, we noticed that Clinical Fellows (CF) are not well represented and not well involved in the PDA. Indeed, only 9% of all CF responded to the survey versus 19% for Research Fellows and most importantly, when we asked “how well do you know the BCH Postdocs Association?” only CF responded “Never heard of it” or not being sure to be part of it since it seems tailored to RF, consequently, when we asked you to rank the PDA from 1 to 10, all 55 CF responded “No Answer”. We hear you! And we will try to change that!

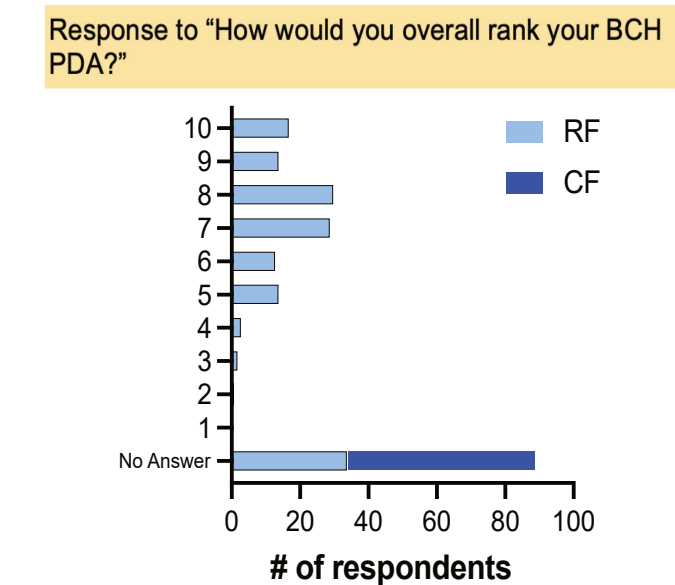
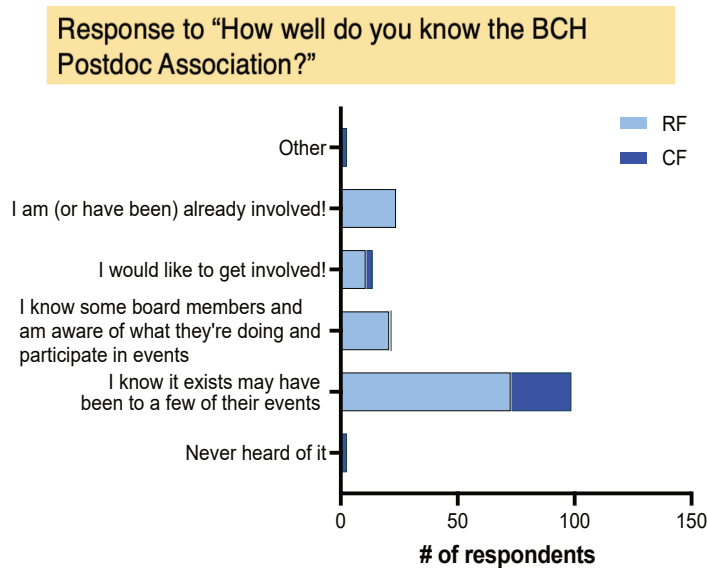


Figure 6. How well do the fellows know the PDA?

For this reason, we decided to interview Kristin Bonello, MD, Clinical Fellow as the spokesperson for our fellow clinicians!

*Hi Kristin, Thanks for taking the time to meet with us and answer our questions to better understand the lack of representation of Clinical Fellow in the Postdoc Association and attending our events.*

*First of all, please tell us more about yourself. How long have you been at BCH and what is your position?*

I came to BCH in June of 2019. I am a third year cardiology fellow, or PGY-6. I work in the cardiology clinic, on the inpatient cardiology service, in the cardiac ICU, in the cath lab, and do cardiology consults! This is my last year of my general cardiology fellowship, but I will be staying another year as a senior fellow in imaging and in the outpatient division.

*How did you first hear about the BCH Postdoc Association?*

I think it was when I first arrived and we all got an email describing the Postdoc Association.

*Was it hard finding information or to be added in the DL-fellow mailing list?*

I can't remember if I was automatically added to the DL or if I signed up after I got that first email when I arrived here!

*How would you describe your involvement with the BCH Postdoc Association? Did you ever join an event?*

I read most of the emails and the events sound fun, but I haven't ever really been able to join an event just because of my schedule.

*Would you like to see more Clinical Fellows-related events organized by the PDA?*

Yes! I think that would be great!

*When discussing with other Clinical Fellows, are they aware of what the PDA is doing? If yes, do they join some events?*

I don't think most of the cardiology fellows have a good sense of what the PDA is doing or attending many events. I'm not sure if that is different for clinical fellows in other departments!

*How can the PDA do better to involve more Clinical Fellows?*

Sometimes I'm not sure if I "count" as a member of the Post-Doc Association as a clinical fellow, especially because some of the events are definitely more tailored to the non-clinical fellows. I think maybe more general, social-focused events exclusively mentioning the clinical fellows would be well received!

*Thank you so much for giving your opinion!*

## Fellow Spotlight: Alessandra Ferraro

by Julie Sesen

Every quarter we try to Spotlight a BCH postdoc fellow. For this round, we meet with Alessandra Ferraro!

Hi Alessandra, let's talk about you!



**What lab do you work in?**

Harrild Lab

**How long have you been a postdoc at BCH?**

A long time, 4 years!

**Can you briefly summarize your work?**

I study heart contraction and function in children with the use of ultrasound. In details, my research focus is on 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional pediatric echocardiography, with particular interest in speckle tracking echocardiography and 3-dimensional cardiac volumes quantification.

**Do you do any other activities within the BCH community?**

I am a proud member of the Postdoctoral Association and the Career Development Committee. Here, I challenge myself to do my best and have a positive impact on all our Research Community.

**What has been your most memorable or rewarding experience as a postdoc at BCH so far?**

I will forever remember the day I walked in my first lecture here at BCH and stared amazed at the great teacher I had in front of me. I recognize I did not know as much as I thought but, I wanted to hear what they were teaching me and learn more and more. At BCH, I learnt that the only way to do so was to honestly recognize your limitations and try to overcome them. This has been thanks to supporting mentors and great teachers, and this is the reason why I am here!

**What are your favorite things to do in Boston?**

Well, I would need a full page for this. After being here for a while I created few different traditions. However, let's start from something doable all year long. If you look at my picture you will probably guess: The Isabella Gardner Museum, which is my n.1 must do in Boston!

Why? Did you know that its building is a replica of a 15th century Venetian Palace? Moreover, it is filled with paintings and different artworks. This place will simply bring you to Europe while still being in Boston. However, fall activities (such as apple picking and hiking during foliage season), or just go to Salem (remember from history class the city where the witch trial took place? It is 30 minutes away by train!) during Halloween time, make Boston a place where it is hard to get bored. In addition, biking on the Esplanade and being able to go the beach while being in the city (have you ever been to Carson Beach? You can reach it with the T) give you something to do in each season!

**What is an interesting or fun fact about yourself?**

Growing up, I have always being confused between 'left' and 'right' in my native speaker language (Italian). So, I will 99% of the times turn right, if you ask me to turn left in Italian. However, if we are asking me in English, this will never happen. Weird human minds!

Thank you so much, Alessandra for sharing your story and giving us some great tips about Boston and its surroundings!

We wish you a lot of success in your Research and Happy Fall season!

If you also want to be spotlighted in the next newsletter and share your story with our community, please send us an email at:

[postdoc-publicaffairs@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:postdoc-publicaffairs@childrens.harvard.edu)

**Interested in a virtual scientific event or an online career development course but there's a fee?**

**The PDA will fund up to \$100 towards your registration fees!**

Please submit an application by emailing [postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu) with the following information:

- Full name and Lab
- Title of the course
- Date of the event (must be scheduled Jan-March)
- 4-5 lines about what motivates you to attend this course

# BCH Postdoc Achievements!

If you would like to share a recently published a paper or award recieved, contact us at [postdoc-publicaffairs@chil-drens.harvard.edu](mailto:postdoc-publicaffairs@chil-drens.harvard.edu) (provide your full name, lab, title and journal for publications and information on sponsor for awards). Congrats to the authors and awardees!

## Publications from BCH Postdocs

**Richard Smith**, Walsh lab (Genetics & Genomics) published: "Early role for a Na<sup>+</sup>,K<sup>+</sup>-ATPase (ATP1A3) in brain development" in PNAS. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Reyhaneh Nosrati** (Radiology) published 3 papers:

1. "Measuring transverse relaxation rates of the major brain metabolites from single-voxel PRESS acquisitions at a single TE" in Magn Reson Med. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

2. "Feasibility of using a single MRI acquisition for fiducial marker localization and synthetic CT generation towards MRI-only prostate radiation therapy treatment planning" in Biomed. Phys. Eng. Express. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

3. "Development of a novel framework to evaluate the localization accuracy of tomosynthesis-guided breast biopsy units" in American Association of Physicists in Medicine. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Yongfei Cai**, Bing Chen lab (Pediatrics) published: "Structural basis for enhanced infectivity and immune evasion of SARS-CoV-2 variants" in Science. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Eleonora Tamilia, Giulia Iandolo & Georgios Ntolkeras**, Fetal Neonatal Neuroimaging Science Center (FNNDSC) published: "Changes in the Functional Brain Network of Children Undergoing Repeated Epilepsy Surgery: An EEG Source Connectivity Study" in Diagnostics. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Jin Cui** (former BCH postdoc) & Huixin Xu (current BCH postdoc), Lehtinen lab (Pathology) published a review: "Macrophages on the margin: choroid plexus immune responses" in Trends in Neurosciences. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Filiz Yetisir** (FNNDSC) published: "Safety and imaging performance of two-channel RF shimming for fetal MRI at 3T" in Magnetic Resonance in Medicine. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Fulong Yu**, Sankaran lab (HemOnc) published: "CUT&RUNTools 2.0: a pipeline for single-cell and bulk-level CUT&RUN and CUT&Tag data analysis" in Bioinformatics. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Mengmi Zhang**, Kreiman lab (Ophthalmology) published 2 papers:

1. A review: "Beauty is in the eye of the machine" in Nature Human Behavior. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

2. "When Pigs Fly: Contextual Reasoning in Synthetic and Natural Scenes" in International Conference on Computer Vision (ICCV). 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Rima El Atrache** (Neurology) published: "Association between semiologic, autonomic, and electrographic seizure characteristics in children with generalized tonic-clonic seizures" in Epilepsy & Behavior. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Samantha Bento**, mentored by Edin Randall (Pediatric Pain Rehabilitation Center) wrote a piece for the Washington Post: "Some kids prefer remote learning. Why in-person is better, and how to help them transition." [\[Link\]](#)

**Leyla Yavuz Saricay** published: "Concurrent ocular pain in patients with neurotrophic keratopathy" in Ocular Surface Journal. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Esteban Orellana**, Gregory Lab published: "METTL1-mediated m7G modification of Arg-TCT tRNA drives oncogenic transformation" in Molecular Cell. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Amélie Julé**, Henderson lab published: "Th1 polarization defines the synovial fluid T cell compartment in oligoarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis" in JCI Insight. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Edina Szabo** (Anesthesiology, Critical Care and Pain Medicine) published: "Migraine: Interactions between Brain's Trait and State" in CNS Spectrums. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

**Sheri L. Peterson, Kimberly A. Wong, Silmara de Lima & Nicholas J. Hanovice**, Benowitz Lab (Neurosurgery) published: "Retinal Ganglion Cell Axon Regeneration Requires Complement and Myeloid Cell Activity within the Optic Nerve" in JNeurosci. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

## Awards to BCH Postdocs

**Wade W. Sugden**, North lab (Hem/Onc) won a K01 Mentored Research Scientist Career Development Award (awarded through NIDDK) for his project on "Mechanisms of Flow-driven Transcriptional Control of Hematopoietic Stem Cell Development by YAP". [\[Link\]](#)

**Reyhaneh Nosrati** (Radiology) won a "2020-2021 Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship" awarded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

**Alessandra Ferraro** (Cardiology) won the "TomTec Research Innovator Grant" from the American Society of Echocardiography Foundation. [\[Link\]](#)

**Brooke Krbec**, mentored by P. Ellen Grant, MD and Pei-Yi (Ivy) Lin, PhD (Newborn Medicine) won the Marshall Klaus Perinatal Research Award sponsored by the American Association of Pediatrics for her project: "Novel noninvasive bedside arterial monitoring for infants in the NICU". [\[Link\]](#)

**Genevieve Guyol**, mentored by Jonathan Litt, MD, MPH, ScD and Meg Parker MD, MPH (Newborn Medicine) won the Marshall Klaus Perinatal Research Award sponsored by the American Association of Pediatrics for her project: "School Readiness Among Children with Low Birthweight". [\[Link\]](#)

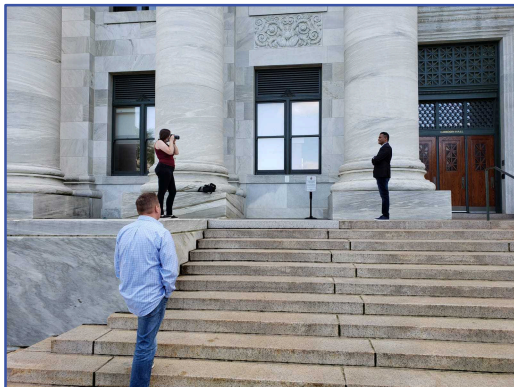
# BCH Postdoc Association Events!

## Recent Events

### NOC

- PDA Cruise (1<sup>st</sup> picture below)
- LinkedIn Headshot Social by Stephanie Ragland (2<sup>nd</sup> picture below)

### Board Annual Meeting (picture on the right)



### NATIONAL POSTDOC APPRECIATION WEEK

Don't miss the events organized for you this week by BCH Postdoc Association & OFT & HMS/HSDM Office of Postdoctoral Fellows

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> to Friday 24<sup>th</sup>

**BRAVO! Board – Celebrating Postdoc Achievements**

<https://postdoc.hms.harvard.edu/npaw-bravo-board>

Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>

**Building Resilience to Manage Work & Job Search Stress**

1-2:15pm (Zoom)

Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Ice Cream Truck Social**  
2-3pm

Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>

**How to Obtain & Conduct Informational Interviews with Sarah Cardozo Duncan**  
1-3pm (Zoom)

*Check your emails for more details*

Email us: [postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu)



@BCHPostdoc



Children's Hospital Boston  
Postdoctoral Association



BCH Postdoctoral  
Association

## Upcoming Events:

Look out for our emails and subscribe to our calendar to find out about new events: [tinyurl.com/BCHP-DACalendar](https://tinyurl.com/BCHP-DACalendar)

## Career & Development Committee (CD)

- How to Obtain & Conduct Informational Interviews with Sarah Cardozo Duncan- Sept 23<sup>th</sup> 1-3pm

## Mentoring

- All Star Mentoring event (November 8th)
- Fill out "Rate Your Mentor" survey → [Here](#)

## National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW) - Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> to Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>

## MEET OUR PDA BOARD ALUMNI !

Here is a small example of PDA Board alumni who succeeded in Academia and/or Industry. Don't miss your chance to grow your network, meet excellent mentors, gain organizational skills and improve your communication by joining the board of the BCH Postdoc Association!

### Boston Children's Hospital Postdoctoral Association Board Alumni

**Sarah Hersman-Stankowicz, PhD**

Former co-chair of Mentoring and PDA co-President 2017-2019  
Scientist in the Neural Circuits Group at Biogen



**Yang Lee, PhD**

Former member of Career development 2018 - 2020  
Now: Investigator, Therapeutic Sciences Synthetic Lethality GSK

**Nicholas Hanovice, PhD**

Former member of Mentoring and co-Chair of Public Affairs 2018-2021  
Now: Scientist in the Retinal Biology group at Generation Bio



**Alejo E. Rodriguez Fraticelli, PhD**

Former member of Career Development 2018  
Now: Group Leader of the Quantitative Stem Cell Dynamics Lab  
Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB) Barcelona - Barcelona, Spain

**Mike Lodato, PhD**

Former member of Career Development 2017 - 2019  
Now: Assistant Professor, UMass Medical School, Worcester MA, USA



**Colette Bichsel, PhD**

Former member of Career Development co-Chair of Public Affairs & PDA co-President 2017-2019  
Now: Scientist, Investigative - Research and Early Development (pRED)  
Roche Pharmaceutical - Basel, Switzerland

**Hani Harb, PhD**

Former co-Chair of Career Development & PDA co-President 2019-2020  
Now: Co-founder and CSO of Alcea Therapeutics & Research  
Group Leader in the Psychoneuroimmunology Laboratory at the Department of Psychosomatic and Psychotherapy at Justus Liebig University Giessen - Giessen, Germany



**Manoussa Fanny, PhD**

Former co-Chair of Career Development 2018-2019  
Now: Immunology Scientist at Xilio Therapeutics.

**Nidhi Malhotra, PhD**

Former co-Chair of Career Development: 2014-2016  
Now: Associate Principal Scientist, Merck



**Alessandro Di Giola, PhD**

Former member of Career Development & PDA co-President 2014-2019  
Now: Manager in the Ophthalmology and Neurology genetics group  
Regeneron Genetics Center

Interested in joining us?  
Contact us at [postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu)



**Boston Children's Hospital**

Postdoc Association

### Leaving soon?

Send us your personal email address at [postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu) to register as **BCH Alumni**, to keep in touch with us and share your career path with the postdoc community.

### OUR TEAM

**PDA EXECUTIVE BOARD:** Kimberly Wong and Sreya Ghosh (co-Presidents), Julie Sesen (Treasurer), Caroline Schuster-Kubaczka (Secretary)

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**LAYOUT EDITOR:** Maria N. Barrachina & Kimberly Wong

