

Network of Minority Health Research Investigators (NMRI)



2023
Newsletter



National Institute of
Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Diseases

In accordance with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) guidance to either postpone large meetings or transition to a virtual platform for public safety because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2022 NMRI Annual Meeting was held virtually. In-person meetings resumed in 2023.



A Message from **DR. RIVERS**

The Network of Minority Health Research Investigators (NMRI)

was established 21 years ago to address the pressing need to increase the representation of minority health researchers among NIH grantees. The Director of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) took the lead in addressing the need for greater diversity in the biomedical research community by establishing the Office of Minority Health Research Coordination (OMHRC) in June 2000. NIDDK formed the Network in 2002 to foster communication among biomedical research investigators and technical personnel interested in minority health research. Both the OMHRC and the NMRI are important aspects of NIDDK's commitment to expand opportunities and address health disparities.

Although more than 20 years have passed, NMRI continues to—

- Encourage minority health investigators to conduct research in areas related to NIDDK's mission, including diabetes; endocrinology; metabolism; digestive diseases; nutrition; and kidney, urologic, and hematologic diseases.
- Promote two-way communication between NIDDK and NMRI members.
- Provide purposeful and authentic mentoring experiences that allow junior members to grow and more senior members to give back.
- Recommend strategies to support and advance underrepresented individuals and others in biomedical research.
- Advance scientific knowledge and contribute to reducing and eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities.

The Network provides its members opportunities to connect with researchers with common interests; receive advice on grant writing, submission, and evaluation in mock study sections; obtain mentorship from established senior members; and solicit review and feedback from senior members on specific aims.

The impact of NMRI goes beyond the 1,000 investigators who have participated in workshops since 2002; it shows in members' ongoing commitment to support, mentor, and continue working to make a difference.

Best wishes for a successful year of research, mentoring, and reigniting the community spirit during time spent together at this workshop!

Robert Rivers, Ph.D.

Acting Director, OMHRC, NIDDK, NIH

AWARDS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

David B. Allison, Ph.D., Indiana University, was named 2023 Fellow of Sigma Xi Society, elected as a U.S. member of the International Statistical Institute, and inducted into the Academy for Health and Lifespan Research and was a recipient of the American Physiological Society's 2023 Bodil M. Schmidt-Nielsen Distinguished Mentor and Scientist Award.

Angela Bermúdez-Millán, Ph.D., M.P.H., is Associate Professor, Department of Public Health Sciences, UConn Health.

LaPrincess C. Brewer, M.D., M.P.H., is Associate Professor of Medicine, Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, Division of Preventive Cardiology, Mayo Clinic.

Susan D. Brown, Ph.D., University of California, Davis, was selected 2023 Fellow of the Society of Behavioral Medicine and received an NIDDK Mid-Career Investigator Award to establish the Empowering Mentees to Become Exemplary Researchers (commonly known as EMBER) program.

Gregory W. Buck, Ph.D., was Interim Department Chair of Life Sciences from September to December 2023 at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and received the 2023 Council on Undergraduate Research Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor Award.

Zulema Cabail, Ph.D., The State University of New York (SUNY), received a 2023 American Society for Cell Biology Travel Award and the 2022 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Rotonya M. Carr, M.D., University of Washington, was appointed to the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases Board of Directors as Councilor and will ascend to President-Elect in 2025.

Laura Cortes, Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), received a UCLA Leveraging Institutional Support for Talented, Underrepresented Physicians and/or Scientists (LIFT-UP) Award, a Burroughs Wellcome Fund Postdoctoral Enrichment Program Award, and an Iris Cantor-UCLA Women's Health Young Investigator Award.

Leonor Corsino, M.D., M.H.S., Duke School of Medicine, received the 2023 Duke Medical Alumni Association's Transformational Leadership Award and the 2023 Feagin Leadership Program Alumni Network Award.

Anthony J. Covarrubias, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor, Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics, UCLA, and is Co-Principal Investigator on a UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center seed grant to explore the role of targeting senescent cells as a novel therapy in cancer. He was invited lecturer at the 2023 UCLA LIFT-UP Grant Seminar.

Deidra Crews, M.D., Sc.M., The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, was elected to the National Academy of Medicine and also was elected the 2024 President of the American Society of Nephrology (ASN).

Ilse S. Dæhn, Ph.D., Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, received an U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program Award to study blocking the pathologic crosstalk between podocytes and endothelial cells in focal segmental glomerulosclerosis.

Carla M. Davis, M.D., Baylor College of Medicine, received funding from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for three projects: controlling and preventing asthma progression and severity in kids with omalizumab; a Phase 2 randomized double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial to evaluate the efficacy of dupilumab in subjects with eosinophilic gastritis; and Systems Biology of Early Atopy (commonly known as SUNBEAM). She also was selected as Secretary/Treasurer of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology and will ascend to the presidency for 2026–2027.

Clarissa J. Diamantidis, M.D., M.H.S., is Professor of Medicine, Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

Estelle Everett, M.D., UCLA, received four awards in 2023: funding for the National Center for Engagement in Diabetes Equity Research; Study of Women, Infant Feeding and Type 2 Diabetes After GDM Pregnancy; LIFTUP; and UCLA–University of California, Irvine Center for Eliminating Cardiometabolic Disparities in Multi-Ethnic Populations (commonly called UC END DISPARITIES). She was selected as a Member of the American Diabetes Association's Membership Advisory Group (MAG), as MAG Liaison to the Technology Interest Group Leadership Team, and as Early Career Representative on the Health Care Delivery & Quality Improvement Interest Group Leadership Team.

Trudy Gaillard, Ph.D., RN, is the Dr. Vanessa Von Wertheim Endowed Chair in Chronic Disease Prevention and Care and is a Senior Faculty Fellow, Population Health Initiative, Florida International University.

Pablo García, M.D., is Assistant Professor, The University of New Mexico.

Senta K. Georgias, Ph.D., is a tenured Associate Professor, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, and received an NIDDK Mid-Career Development grant (K26).

Rasheeda Hall, M.D., M.B.A., M.H.S., Duke University School of Medicine, received an NIH National Institute on Aging ROI to study the integration of geriatric care into dialysis clinics.



Antentor O. Hinton Jr., Ph.D., Vanderbilt University, received four awards in 2023: University of Vermont Lerner College of Medicine, Cardiovascular Research Institute Early Career Visiting Professorship and Rising Star Award; American Society of Cell Biology Mentoring Keynote Award; United Negro College Fund (UNCF)–Ernest E. Just Black in Cell Molecular Developmental Biology Leadership in the Life Sciences Award; and UNCF-UNCF and Ernest E. Just Black in Microscopy & Partnering to Advance Imaging Research for Underrepresented Minority Scientists Program Leadership in the Life Sciences Award. He was selected for the 2023 Keystone Symposia Fellows Program.

Lina Huerta-Saenz, M.D., Penn State College of Medicine, was selected as a Pennsylvania State Health, Department of Pediatrics, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council Member and received the 2023 Health Equity Research Award presented during the Penn State College of Medicine’s 2023 Pediatric Research Day.

Stephanie Ibemere, Ph.D., RN, Duke University, was selected 2023 Fellow of the NIH Pragmatic Trials Collaboratory Fellowship Program and is a collaborator on the Hybrid Effectiveness-Implementation Trial of Guided Relaxation and Acupuncture for Chronic Sickle Cell Disease Pain (commonly called GRACE) Trial.

Cynthia Ann Jackson, Ph.D., is Adjunct Faculty, Fisk University.

José E. Manautou, Ph.D., University of Connecticut, is Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Current Opinion in Toxicology* and President of the International Union of Toxicology.

Khadijah A. Mitchell, Ph.D., M.S., is Assistant Professor, Cancer Prevention and Control Program, Fox Chase Cancer Center.

Tanecia Mitchell, Ph.D., is a tenure-track Associate Professor, Department of Urology, The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB).

Kimberly Danae Cauley Narain, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., UCLA, was selected for the Diplomate of the American Board of Obesity Medicine.

Jordan Gabriela Nestor, M.D., Columbia University, was selected as 2023 ASN–Harold Amos Faculty Development Program Scholar and anticipated earning a master’s in patient-oriented research from the Mailman School of Public Health in early 2024.

Javier A. Neyra, M.D., M.S., is Associate Professor of Medicine, Associate Director Nephrology Research & Training Center, and Co-Director of Critical Care Nephrology at UAB. In 2023, he received the David G. Warnock, M.D., Endowed Professorship in Academic Nephrology and an NIDDK R01 grant to study artificial intelligence to predict outcomes in patients with acute kidney injury (AKI) on continuous renal replacement therapy.

Orhan K. Oz, M.D., Ph.D., is Division Chief of Nuclear Medicine, Department of Radiology, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, and received the 2023 Golden Apple Award in Nuclear Medicine Residency.

Teresita Padilla-Benavides, Ph.D., Wesleyan University, was selected as a Member of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology’s Maximizing Access Committee for the 2023–2026 term.

Armando Peña, Ph.D., Indiana University, was a recipient of the Indiana University 2024 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Building Bridges Award.

Fatima Rivas, Ph.D., Louisiana State University, received a 2023 PhRMA Foundation Faculty Starter Grant in Drug Discovery.

Matthew A. Romero, Ph.D., is a Postdoctoral Fellow, UCLA, and received a LIFT-UP Award.

Omar T. Sims, Ph.D., is Director of Hepatology Research, Department of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, Department of Quantitative Health Sciences, Cleveland Clinic.

Matthew R. Sinclair, M.D., M.H.S., is Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Nephrology, Department of Medicine, Duke University School of Medicine.

Carmen Tekwe, Ph.D., Indiana University, was elected as the American Statistical Association Biometrics Section’s Council of Sections Representative for a 3-year term.

Ebele Umeukeje, M.D., M.P.H., is Co-Director of the newly launched Vanderbilt University Medical Center Program for Health Equity Research.

Fern J. Webb, Ph.D., University of Florida, received the 2023 Citizen of the Year Award from the Psi Mu Nu Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated of Duval and Clay Counties Florida.

Joni S. Williams, M.D., M.P.H., Associate Professor of Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), received MCW’s 2023 President’s Inclusive Excellence Award and was awarded an NIH/NIDDK R01 grant and an NIH/*Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development U54 as Co-Principal Investigator.

Nicole C. Wright, Ph.D., M.P.H., was promoted to Vice Chair of Academic Affairs, Department of Epidemiology, UAB, and Program Director of the UAB M.P.H. Program in 2022. In 2023, she was elected Fellow of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ASBMR).

MEMBER COLLABORATIONS

NMRI scholars are encouraged to network and identify opportunities for junior and senior Network members to collaborate.

Angela Bermúdez-Millán, Ph.D., M.P.H., UConn Health, was invited guest speaker at the Health Career Opportunity Programs (HCOP) Summer Seminar: Household Food Insecurity and Health Outcomes. **Marja M. Hurley, M.D.**, UConn Health, organized the HCOP seminars.

Gregory W. Buck, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology, Biomedical Sciences Program Coordinator, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, was a featured guest speaker at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center's 2023 Graduate Research Day.

Zulema Cabail, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Biological Science Department, SUNY, was an invited speaker in the Research Training Initiative for Scientific Enhancement Program Seminar Series at Universidad Central del Caribe.

Anthony J. Covarrubias, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics, UCLA, collaborated with **Claudio Villanueva, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, UCLA, and his laboratory to edit the *PIXL* gene in adipocytes and with **Pearl J. Quijada, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, Integrative Biology and Physiology, UCLA, and her laboratory to explore tumor suppressor *p53* biology in senescence.

Leon McDougle, M.D., M.P.H., Chief Diversity Officer, The Ohio State University (OSU), Wexner Medical Center, and Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, OSU College of Medicine, was an invited panelist at the [Fourth Summit: Geroscience for the Next Generation](#), organized by the NIH Geroscience Interest Group and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). He was an invited speaker at the March 2023 American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Medical Mistrust Virtual Forum and keynote speaker at the January 2023 UCLA PAC-12 Health and Well-being Summit on understanding and addressing barriers to health equity. (The video can be accessed on the [PAC-12 Networks' YouTube channel](#).)

Ariana R. Pichardo-Lowden, M.D., is a member of the Advisory Committee of the KL2 grant awarded to Lina Huerta-Saenz, M.D., Penn State College of Medicine.

Stephanie Ibemere, Ph.D., RN, Duke University, is collaborator of the Hybrid Effectiveness-Implementation Trial of Guided Relaxation and Acupuncture for Chronic Sickle Cell Disease Pain (commonly called GRACE) Trial.

Kimberly Danae Cauley Narain, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., Assistant Professor In-Residence, General Internal Medicine and Health Services Research, UCLA, was featured in the September 2023 UC Population Health Inaugural Report managed by the University of California (UC) Office of the President's UC Population Health. She was an invited speaker at the October 2023 "An Effectiveness Evaluation of a Pharmacist-led Primary Care Intervention among Hispanic Patients with Diabetes" event held at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, University of Pennsylvania.

Armando Peña, Ph.D., Indiana University, the community network *Lactancia para Los Hoosiers* (Lactation for Latino Hoosiers), and his team at Indiana University collaborated with Eskenazi Health to begin to develop a framework that could guide a community-engaged research approach to test exclusive breastfeeding interventions against diabetes risk factors in the Latino community.

Matthew A. Romero, Ph.D., Postdoctoral Fellow, UCLA, collaborated with **April D. Pyle, Ph.D.**, on the publication titled "Enhancing' Skeletal Muscle and Stem Cells in Three-Dimensions: Genome Regulation of Skeletal Muscle in Development and Disease" in *Current Opinion in Genetics and Development*.

NMRI
22nd Annual
Workshop
April 17–19, 2024
Bethesda, MD

Purpose of the NMRI Annual Workshop

Mentorship programs, such as the NMRI, act as beacons to attract new biomedical researchers to areas of research supported by NIDDK. The first Annual NMRI Workshop was held shortly after the establishment of the Network, and then regional meetings were convened. The purpose is to connect senior and junior members of the Network and emerging health scientists from underrepresented minority groups to facilitate grant application development, navigate the tenure process, and learn how best to balance faculty commitments. The goals are to strengthen the mentor–mentee relationships and foster collaboration among members with similar research interests. The Annual Workshop also provides a forum for junior members and trainees to share their research and receive feedback from both their mentors and peers.

NMRI 21st Annual Workshop Sponsors

The NMRI would like to acknowledge the following organizations for sponsoring the NMRI 21st Annual Workshop Networking and Collaboration Reception:

- American Physiological Society
- Council on Undergraduate Research

The NMRI would like to thank the professional societies that sponsored travel awards to the NMRI 21st Annual Workshop:

- American Association of Immunologists (AAI)
- American Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ASBMR)
- American Society of Nephrology (ASN)
- Endocrine Society (ENDO)
- Women in Nephrology (WIN)

Annual Workshop Travel Award. Attending the NMRI Annual Meeting is a great way to learn more about the Network. Scholarships are available to support attendance.

Are you a nephrologist or kidney researcher?

The ASN offers a limited number of travel awards to attend the **NMRI Annual Workshop**. Application materials are available on the ASN website: www.asn-online.org/grants/travel/nmri.aspx.

Never attended an NMRI workshop? Junior faculty member? Have an abstract to present?

Limited travel awards are available through the generosity of our professional society sponsors for eligible members to attend the NMRI Annual Meeting. For more information, contact Ms. Winnie Martinez, NIDDK, winnie.martinez@nih.gov.

AAI Travel Award Recipient

Bolni Nagalo, Ph.D.

ASBMR Travel Award Recipients

Nilsson Holguin, Ph.D.

Gabriela Loots, Ph.D.

ASN Travel Award Recipients

Adebowale Adebisi, Ph.D. Dinushika Mohottige, M.D.

Amrendra Ajay, Ph.D. Itunu Owoyemi, M.B.B.S.

Flor Alvarado, M.D. Naveen Punchayil
Narayanankutty, M.D.

Eliott Arroyo, Ph.D.

Aminu Bello, M.D., Ph.D. Keia Sanderson, M.D.

Anika Lucas, M.D. Ebele Umeukeje, M.D., M.P.H.

Karla Márquez Nogueiras, Ph.D. George Vasquez-Rios, M.D.

Bessie Young, M.D.

Anberitha Matthews, Ph.D.

ENDO Travel Award Recipients

Nazila Jamshidi

Ben Wokas, M.B.A., CAE

WIN Travel Award Recipients

Klarissa D. Jackson, Ph.D.

Kimberly Danae Cauley Narain, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H.

Karla M. Márquez Nogueiras, Ph.D.

Teresita Padilla-Benavides, Ph.D.

Abdulsalam Soofi, Ph.D.

Utibe-Abasi S. Udoh, Ph.D.

Report from the NMRI 21st Annual Workshop



Highlights of the NMRI 21st Annual Workshop follow. A full meeting summary is available via the NMRI member profile online portal or upon request. For more information, contact Ms. Winnie Martinez, NIDDK, winnie.martinez@nih.gov.

WELCOME

The NMRI met for its 21st Annual Workshop April 19–21, 2023, at the Bethesda Marriott Hotel in Bethesda, Maryland. Participants ranged from predoctoral and premedical students to tenured professors. Their research areas of study included diabetes, epidemiology, endocrinology, health disparities, hematology, nephrology, nutrition, and obesity. This year's activities began with a premeeting leadership workshop on April 19, 2023, and attendees heard from NMRI leaders about the importance of executive leadership development, the basic elements of leadership development, the power of mentoring, and the proposed NMRI Leadership Excellence to Advance Diversity in Executive Research (LEADER) Program. For more information, contact Ms. Winnie Martinez, NIDDK, winnie.martinez@nih.gov.

Abсалon Gutierrez, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Chair of the NMRI Planning Board, welcomed participants to the NMRI 21st Annual Workshop, the first in-person NMRI Annual Workshop since the COVID-19 pandemic. He expressed appreciation to **Winnie Martinez**, Program Director, OMHRC, NIDDK, NIH, for organizing this in-person meeting. **Robert Rivers, Ph.D.**, Acting Director, OMHRC, NIDDK, NIH, also welcomed participants to the workshop and encouraged reconnecting and engaging with fellow NMRI members to establish long-lasting relationships. He expressed appreciation to his mentor and the former Director of OMHRC, **Lawrence Y. Agodoa, M.D.**, who played a critical role in establishing the NMRI. Dr. Agodoa retired from NIDDK in 2022 after 35 years of service to NIH. Dr. Rivers also thanked Ms. Martinez for her ongoing efforts supporting the OMHRC and NMRI and all who have worked to shape the Network, including the NMRI Boards. Dr. Rivers remarked that the Network provides its members opportunities to network with researchers with common interests; receive advice on grant writing, submission, and evaluation in mock study sections; obtain mentorship from established senior members; and solicit a review of specific aims and feedback from senior members.

Dr. Gutierrez highlighted NMRI collaborations with professional societies and organizations. These include the ASBMR, ASN, American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases, and Endocrine Society, all of which have supported attendance to NMRI meetings by providing travel awards. The American Gastroenterological Association also is connected to the Network, and efforts to establish new collaborations

are ongoing. He described opportunities to engage with the Network, including the NMRI Boards, and the NMRI Community and Faith-Based Research (CFBR) Subgroup composed of researchers conducting studies in community- and faith-based settings. Dr. Rivers remarked on how the laboratory and community influence each other to create cross talk that helps facilitate new collaborations.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Keith E. Whitfield, Ph.D., President, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), presented on "Part of the Solution" and reflected that he was the first African American in many of his endeavors. He was the first African American to be (1) a Ph.D. student in psychology at Texas Tech University, (2) a postdoctoral researcher in quantitative genetics at the University of Colorado Boulder, (3) faculty in the Department of Biobehavioral Health at The Pennsylvania State University, (4) Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Wayne State University, and (5) President of UNLV. Dr. Whitfield explained that mentorship is a critical aspect of career development in academia. Junior and mid-level scholars need specialized mentoring to help them transition to the next levels. He emphasized the importance of thinking about one's own career, mentoring the next generation of scholars, and teaching mentorship. Dr. Whitfield described his research program, which focuses on differences in aging in individuals, twins, and families using various methodologies and approaches (primary and secondary data) to better understand the variability at the individual level. He oversaw data collection for a study in Moscow on adult twins and conducted and completed studies on African Americans in Baltimore, Maryland.

As the first African American in many endeavors, Dr. Whitfield emphasized not being afraid to stand out despite challenges, such as a lack of similarity in history, differences in educational preparation, and differences in family history and background. He added that mentoring ethnic minorities in this new information age involves social networks, and mentorship teams should comprise individuals external to one's university. Dr. Whitfield highlighted his formula for success, which he refers to as the four "Ps": perseverance, prayer, patience, and pay it forward. He closed with four take-home messages: Do not be afraid to be a pioneer. Good ideas are like buses: One is always coming along. Listen as much as you speak. There is no perfect or preordained career path of direction.

STRATEGIES FOR GRANT WRITING

Francisco Villarreal, M.D., Ph.D., Professor, University of California, San Diego, discussed strategies for grant writing, focusing on the NIH R01 process, which is equivalent to the Merit Review Award Program at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Investigator-Initiator Research Award at the DOD. He detailed the general guidelines of the NIH R01 and highlighted that applicants can attend NIH-supported, American Association of Medical College-supported, and institutional workshops to guide their grant writing and development of specific aims. He shared some key advice: Allow sufficient time to conceptualize the research. Plan and prepare for the writing. Consider applying to multiple agencies (e.g., VA, DOD), with slight modifications to the research plan. Leverage existing resources and networks, including the NMRI. Be prepared to revise and resubmit applications if the first proposal is not successful.

INTRODUCTION TO PEER MENTORING

Absalon Gutierrez, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, explained that peer mentorship can be defined as a process for two or more people of similar ages, experience levels, or both to work together to help each other grow. Peer mentoring is less formal than the traditional mentoring relationship, but it still is structured. A peer mentor is a friend, coach, or companion. Peer mentoring is a dyad consisting of a senior faculty member who mentors a junior faculty member who shares the same goals, expectations, and levels of commitment. The dyad relationship is designed to address the drawbacks of the power differential and the potential of the mentee to become overly dependent on the mentor. A peer mentoring program has several components, including formation and realization of your own dreams, small group dynamics, facilitation of learning, as well as reflective practice, mindfulness, and self-awareness exercises. Peer mentoring involves knowing your passion, helping others grow, providing motivation, being patient, building relationships, and empowering others. Dr. Gutierrez noted that peer mentoring can be used as tool for career development and highlighted the C Change Mentoring and Leadership Institute at Brandeis University as a model to emulate.

PEER MENTORING: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Participants attended one of eight informal small group discussions focused on mentoring and career development. Discussion tables consisted of four topics: basic science, clinical research, public health, and translational science. Meeting participants attended the small group discussion of their choice. Moderators facilitated each discussion table.

SPECIFIC AIMS REVIEW

Junior investigators had the opportunity to participate in a special session with one of several senior NMRI investigators who had offered to serve as reviewers. During these meetings, reviewers and junior investigators discussed research proposal aims and scope.

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME REMARKS



Griffin P. Rodgers, M.D., Director, NIDDK, welcomed participants to the NMRI 21st Annual Workshop. He reminded participants that as a component of HHS, NIH consists of 27 Institutes and Centers, including NIDDK, and is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research. NIH and its researchers investigate the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. Within NIDDK's mission is the conduct of research to address some of the most common, chronic, costly, and consequential diseases affecting Americans, including diabetes, obesity, chronic kidney disease (CKD), end-stage renal disease (ESRD), and a range of digestive and liver conditions. Health disparities are major factors in the diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, and outcomes for individuals with these diseases. NIDDK is committed to understanding the underlying causes of health disparities and addressing social determinants of health to achieve health equity through its research.

Dr. Rodgers called attention to the [NIDDK Strategic Plan for Research](#) and the crosscutting themes of improving women's health, strengthening biomedical research workforce diversity and training, and reducing health disparities and increasing health equity. He emphasized that achieving health equity by reducing health disparities among racial and ethnic minority populations and others who are underserved is critical to NIDDK's mission. In pursuit of this goal, NIDDK has established the Health Disparities and Health Equity Research Working Group of the NIDDK Advisory Council to the Director, which is producing a report with innovative recommendations to advance NIDDK's health equity and health disparities research programs. Additionally, in 2021, NIDDK launched the Scientists Helping to Accelerate Research Potential (commonly called SHARP), which is a pilot mentoring program geared toward supporting the careers of underrepresented junior faculty.

Dr. Rodgers reminded participants that NIDDK supports research training and career development programs for the next generation of biomedical researchers by building a ladder to traverse the many obstacles faced by junior scientists interested in research careers. He highlighted NIDDK programs and activities that support critical moves from undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral study to junior faculty and independent faculty career levels, including the special payline for first competitive renewal applications for R01 awards to early stage investigators, the "Life After K" workshop, and the Diversity Supplement Program. Several NIDDK programs managed by the OMHRC—such as the Short-Term Research Experience to Unlock Potential (STEP-UP), Aspirnaut™ (a K-20 science, technology, engineering, and math pipeline program for diversity), the Medical Student Research Program in Diabetes, and the NMRI—support students at these career levels. OMHRC also supports the Professional Society Programs to Promote Diversity (R25), with the goal of recruiting and retaining diverse individuals to pursue careers in the biomedical workforce that reflect NIDDK mission areas.

In closing, Dr. Rodgers remarked on NIDDK's support for the NMRI, a key element of its program to increase biomedical workforce diversity. The Network currently has approximately 200 members, of whom 21 percent are senior members. More than 1,000 members have attended the NMRI Annual Workshop during the past decade, and members have received several grants, had numerous publications, and been well represented at national and international conferences.

NIH MOCK STUDY SECTION PARALLEL DISCUSSIONS—SESSION I

This session provided the opportunity for participants to attend mock study sessions for different types of NIH awards—R01 Basic/Clinical, K01 Basic/Clinical, and R21 Basic/Clinical. During these sessions, session leaders were given sample grant applications to review and critique. Meeting participants attended the session of their choice. The discussion leaders were **José Romero, Ph.D.**, Associate Physiologist, Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School; **Jian Yang, Ph.D.**, Scientific Review Officer, NIDDK; **Mark Lawson, Ph.D.**, Professor, University of California, San Diego; **Jason Hoffert, Ph.D.**, Scientific Review Officer, NIDDK; **Absalon Gutierrez, M.D.**, Associate Professor of Medicine, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston; and **Michele Barnard, Ph.D.**, Deputy Branch Chief, Review Branch, NIDDK.

NIH MOCK STUDY SECTION PARALLEL DISCUSSIONS—SESSION II

Session I repeated and provided participants the opportunity to switch discussion rooms.

ROUNDTABLE PARALLEL DISCUSSIONS—SESSION I

Participants attended one of four roundtable discussions focused on various topics that can be challenging to early-career academics, including negotiating with administrations, managing teams and collaborators, managing a basic science laboratory, and managing clinical research operations as well as compliance. Moderators facilitated each breakout room discussion. The discussion leaders were **Ayotunde Dokun, M.D., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, The University of Iowa; **Keith Norris, M.D., Ph.D.**, Professor of Medicine, UCLA; **Heather Tarleton, Ph.D.**, Professor and Associate Dean, Loyola Marymount University; **Ricardo Azziz, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A.**, Professor, Obstetrics & Gynecology, and Medicine, Heersink School of Medicine, and Professor, Healthcare Organization & Policy, School of Public Health, UAB, Executive Director, Foundation for Research and Education Excellence, and Research Professor, Health Policy, Management & Behavior, School of Public Health, University at Albany, SUNY; **Francisco Villarreal, M.D., Ph.D.**, Professor, University of California, San Diego; **José Romero, Ph.D.**, Associate Physiologist, Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School; **Bridgett Rahim-Williams, Ph.D., M.P.H.**, Associate Director, Research Integrity, University of North Florida; and **Sylvia Rosas, M.D.**, Associate Professor of Medicine, Joslin Diabetes Center/Harvard Medical School.

ROUNDTABLE PARALLEL DISCUSSIONS—SESSION II

Session I repeated and provided participants the opportunity to switch discussion rooms.

POSTER AND NETWORKING SESSION

All meeting participants were invited to view the posters submitted to the NMRI 21st Annual Workshop and to converse with their presenters. Judges examined the posters and discussed the described research with each poster presenter. Winners were selected in three categories—Basic Science, Translational Science, and Clinical Science—and awards were presented to the winning recipients in the final session of the workshop.

Basic Science Poster Awards

Karla M. Márquez Noguera, Ph.D., Postdoctoral Research Associate, Loyola University
"The Osmosensing Pathway of Polycystin 2 in Renal Cells"

Teresita Padilla-Benavides, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Wesleyan University
"CSRP2: A Novel Copper Binding Protein That Regulates Myoblast Proliferation"

Translational Science Poster Award

Utibe-Abasi S. Udoh, Ph.D., Assistant Investigator, Marshall University
"Biomarkers for Early Detection and Diagnosis of NASH-related Hepatocellular Carcinoma"

Clinical Science Poster Award

Kimberly Danae Cauley Narain, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., Assistant Professor, UCLA
"A Pragmatic Evaluation of a Primary Care-embedded Clinical Pharmacist-led Intervention among Hispanic Patients with Diabetes"

Dr. Lawrence Y. Agodoa Honorary Lecture of the Network of Minority Health Research Investigators

Deidra Crews, M.D., Sc.M., Professor of Medicine, The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, presented on "Centering the Margins to Achieve Kidney Health Equity" and began with her positionality statement regarding kidney health equity. She noted that the concept of "centering the margins" is based on the book *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, by Dr. Gloria Jean Watkins (better known by her pen name, bell hooks), which led to the center/margin theory. Dr. Crews explained that kidney disease has significantly affected socially marginalized populations. Black, Hispanic, and Native American people have higher rates of kidney failure than non-Hispanic White people. Racial and ethnic disparities in kidney health are not fully explained by genetic risk variants, including apolipoprotein L1 (APOL1) variants. People with lower incomes have higher rates of CKD. A challenge is that 9 in 10 people with CKD are not aware that they have the disease. CKD awareness is lowest among several groups at high risk for CKD. In 2020, Dr. Crews and

colleagues reported on the national trends in the prevalence of CKD among racial and ethnic and socioeconomic status (SES) groups from 1988 to 2016. They found gaps in CKD prevalence across levels of SES that persisted during this period. From 2003 to 2004 and from 2015 to 2016, CKD prevalence almost doubled among Mexican Americans. Other racial, ethnic, and SES groups did not experience appreciable increases in prevalence of CKD, but the gaps in prevalence were similar.

Dr. Crews noted that NMRI members collaborated to generate a conceptual model of the interrelationship between socioeconomic deprivation and CKD (Nicholas et al., 2016), which also can be a conceptual framework for marginalized populations and kidney disease risk. The model emphasizes three major areas that are key drivers underlying the disparate rates of kidney disease: residential segregation, discrimination, and being uninsured or underinsured. These drivers contribute to poor housing, chronic stress, and limited health care access and utilization, resulting in biological and clinical risk factors for health consequences, including CKD, ESRD, and premature mortality. In addition, recognition is increasing in the public health literature that structural inequities and racism underlie kidney health disparities.

Dr. Crews detailed four potential root causes of disparities in CKD: lack of access to high-quality, equitable health care; discrimination; residential segregation; and food insecurity. She proposed centering on marginalized Black/African Americans with kidney disease risk and described community-based interventions aimed at mitigating disparities in CKD. She also highlighted two efforts to improve access to healthy foods in Black communities: a PhotoVoice project, which is a participatory research study, and the Five Plus Nuts and Beans for Kidneys Trial, which leverages the results of an 8-week pilot intervention study.

In closing, Dr. Crews noted advocacy and policy changes related to kidney health. A symposium was convened to further discuss the PhotoVoice project findings and prompt change in Baltimore, Maryland. Invited representatives included policymakers who work in the food system, urban farm owners, and people who educate children about growing fruits and vegetables. Efforts also have been focused on publishing perspective articles to promote conversations on policies that may affect socially marginalized groups who either are at risk for or already have kidney disease, including people experiencing homelessness.

MENTOR/MENTEE SESSION

Before the second day of the workshop began, junior investigators had the opportunity to meet with one of several senior NMRI investigators who had offered to serve as mentors. During the session, each mentor met with his or her mentee to answer questions and give advice.

Advancing Clinical and Basic Science Gender Equity

Leon McDougle, M.D., M.P.H., Chief Diversity Officer, OSU, Wexner Medical Center, Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, OSU College of Medicine, presented on “Advancing Clinical and Basic Science Gender Equity” and described intersectional gender inequities in clinical and basic science careers. He emphasized that in 2018 and 2019, the percentage of women in academic leadership declined from 51 percent of first-year medical students to 18 percent of department chairs or deans. A 2016 report from NIH on increasing the diversity of the biomedical research workforce also highlighted a similar decline in women who are underrepresented as they move closer to full professorship. Only 26 percent of deans or senior associate deans in research are women. Dr. McDougle remarked on the importance of the focus of groups like the NMRI to begin reversing this trend and encouraged participants to review the research leadership landscape at their respective institutions. He highlighted initiatives to advance clinical and basic science global gender equity, including the Advocates & Allies for Equity program, organized by The Women’s Place, OSU. Dr. McDougle also called attention to some resources and opportunities to advance global gender equity in clinical and basic science, including the University of Iowa’s online active bystander toolkit, which has scripted content for responding to verbal harassment of patients, and NIH and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Innovation Equity Forum. This Forum—composed of more than 200 members, spanning 51 countries—aims to develop an opportunity map for women’s health research and development and provide a blueprint for high-potential innovative research on women’s health. Further details can be accessed in the [Women’s Health Innovation Opportunity Map 2023](#) report.

Roles of Scientific Societies and Professional Organizations

Workshop participants heard about the roles and activities of scientific societies and professional organizations that are important to the work of the NMRI.



Michelle A. Josephson, M.D., President, [American Society of Nephrology](#), and Professor of Medicine and Surgery, The University of Chicago, noted that the ASN supports career development for kidney professionals at all levels of training. These include the Kidney Students and Residents at Kidney Week Travel Award and the Kidney Tutored Research and Education for Kidney Scholars Award, both of which support medical students, residents, and doctoral candidates. Research fellowships for individuals holding M.D., D.O., and Ph.D. degrees include the Ben J. Lipps Research Fellowship Program Award and the William E. Mitch International Scholars Program Travel Award. The ASN also supports early-career professionals through the Transition to Independence awards; William and Sandra Bennett Clinical Scholars Program; Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program Award; and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Research Scholar Grant. From 2015 to 2023, the Diversity and

Inclusion (D&I) Committee provided travel awards to more than 100 NMRI Annual Workshop participants. In 2021, the D&I Committee launched a 5-year pilot ASN Loan Mitigation Program that focuses on individuals from communities historically underrepresented in medicine and is designed to pay off medical school loans. Six recipients received this award in 2022 and 2023.

Nilsson Holguin, Ph.D., Chair, [American Society for Bone and Mineral Research](#) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEI) Committee, and Assistant Professor, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, noted that the ASBMR mission is to advance excellence in bone, mineral, and musculoskeletal science worldwide and promote the translation of basic and clinical research to improve human health. The ASBMR sponsors a grant program providing support up to \$50,000 per year that focuses on early- and mid-career investigators. This program provides travel awards for individuals to train in different laboratories and to generate pilot data for new grant funding. The ASBMR's annual meeting is the world's largest and most diverse meeting in the bone, mineral, and musculoskeletal research field. The 2023 annual meeting provided \$100,000 in travel awards that were available to U.S. and international members. The ASBMR DEI Committee implemented a standing Diversity session at the ASBMR annual meeting and will continue hosting the Member Spotlight Series, convening member listening sessions on timely DEI topics, and implementing the Underrepresented Minority Mentorship Award and Underrepresented Scientists Proposal Pilot Program. A new program launched in 2023, the Excellence in Scientific Training and Professional Development (EXCEL) Cohort. EXCEL aims to help attract and retain underrepresented minority scientists in bone, mineral, and musculoskeletal research and will support three cohorts of 10 individuals each. This multipronged initiative will include the Leadership Education for Advancement (commonly called LEAD) Program, grant funding, and cultural awareness training.

Gabriela Loots, Ph.D., Professor, University of California, Davis, and member, ASBMR DEI Committee, was available to address questions following the presentation.

Ben Wokas, M.B.A., Senior Manager, [Endocrine Society](#), commented that societies and associations, including the Endocrine Society, build broader communities, independent of geographical locations, to share knowledge to advance the understanding of their industry and what individuals do. The Endocrine Society builds community through online environments and platforms, where people interact, share clinical and research experiences, and exchange advice. The Society has various committees, work groups, and task forces to navigate the professional environment. **Nazila Jamshidi**, Manager, Diversity Program, Endocrine Society, remarked that the Society has a strong commitment to develop and support a diverse and inclusive network of clinician, researcher, and educator members and leaders who promote health and work to eliminate endocrine health disparities in our local, national, and global communities. The Committee on D&I sponsors various initiatives and programs to increase the visibility and status of minority professionals. The NIDDK-sponsored Future

Leaders Advancing Research in Endocrinology (commonly called FLARE) is a signature program to support training in endocrine research for underrepresented minorities. The Endocrine Society's awards program spans all career levels and includes travel awards, scientific achievement awards, summer research fellowships, and student and early-career awards.

SCIENTIFIC PRESENTATIONS

The workshop's three scientific presenters, who were selected from the pool of abstracts, were announced and presented with plaques commemorating achievements. These abstract winners were given the opportunity to present their research during the NMRI Annual Meeting. **Absalon Gutierrez, M.D.**, Associate Professor of Medicine, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, moderated the session, introduced the speakers, and invited them to present their research, which is summarized here. Full abstracts are contained in the 2023 NMRI Annual Meeting Program book and are available upon request from NIDDK Program Director Ms. Winnie Martinez at winnie.martinez@nih.gov.



Abdulsalam Soofi, Ph.D., Research Investigator, Research Assistant Professor, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, "The Role of Disrupted Iron Homeostasis in Acute Kidney Injury"

Dr. Abdulsalam Soofi presented his research that addresses AKI and iron-related disorders that continue to be major clinical challenges associated with significant morbidity and mortality. The aim of this research was to determine whether the modulation of local iron homeostasis by selective depletion of ferroportin (FPN) in renal proximal tubules alters the response to AKI. The overall hypothesis and specific aims were to generate conditional knockout mice to target iron trafficking proteins and determine their roles in AKI and molecular and genetic mechanisms in the regeneration of renal proximal tubular cells (PTCs). Dr. Soofi and his team selectively expressed Cre in PTCs with phosphoenolpyruvate carboxykinase promoter and confirmation by a red-green reporter (*ROSA26Sortm4(ACTB-tdTomato,-EGFP)* Luo allele (*Pepck-cre; mT/mG*) to produce genetically engineered PTC-specific FPN knockout (KO) mice models. Conditional KO mice were generated, and deletion of FPN was confirmed. Preliminary data indicate that FPN-KO mice subjected to AKI models developed pronounced iron deposition in PTCs. Damaged tubules led to worsening interstitial fibrosis, necrosis, and ferroptosis, and they failed to recover and regenerate compared to control mice of the same age, gender, and genetic background. These data also indicate that disrupting iron trafficking in PTCs by manipulating the expression of FPN increases AKI severity and impairs recovery. The findings may offer new insights into the role of local iron hemostasis and iron dysregulations in AKI and illuminate new therapeutic strategies for progressive kidney disease and other syndromes of iron overload.



Klarissa D. Jackson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, “Racial Disparities in Drug-induced Liver Injury: Ancillary Study of the Drug Induced Liver Injury Network (DILIN)”

Abbreviated Abstract

Dr. Klarissa D. Jackson presented her research, noting that this is an ancillary study of the DILIN. She explained that drug-induced liver injury (DILI) is ranked among the leading adverse drug reactions and remains a major challenge for drug development and patient safety. Two main types of DILI exist: acetaminophen-induced (intrinsic and predictable) and idiosyncratic (IDILI), which is rare and unpredictable. Black patients have been shown to experience IDILI disproportionately; however, the contributing factors remain unknown. The purpose of this study was to further explore racial/ethnic differences in IDILI in African ancestry (Black) and European ancestry (White) patients enrolled in the DILIN Prospective Study. Another aim was to identify African ancestry-specific genetic variants in absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion genes likely to be involved in the disposition of the implicated drugs. Dr. Jackson noted that these studies will provide a deeper understanding of the potential risk factors for DILI in Black patients.



George Vasquez Rios, M.D., Nephrologist, Renal Medical Associates, LTD, “Reducing Health Care Disparities in Kidney Disease: Novel Biomarker-enriched Risk Scores for Prognostication of Adverse Kidney Outcomes among African Americans”

Abbreviated Abstract

Dr. George Vasquez Rios’ research emphasized that CKD is a major public health problem, and that the burden of the disease falls disproportionately on African American individuals with high-risk *APOL1* variants. Despite the high risk, only a fraction of individuals with these variants will develop CKD in their lifetime, making it challenging to identify those at the highest risk and provide timely, targeted care. This research project addressed this critical knowledge gap by investigating abnormal pathophysiologic domains associated with CKD in 498 BioMe Biobank participants with two *APOL1* risk alleles. During a median follow-up of 6 years, the investigators performed *APOL1* genotyping (ancestral G0, G1, and G2) and measured plasma levels of biomarkers linked to inflammation and injury pathways, including TNFR1, TNFR2, KIM-1, MCP-1, YKL-40, IL-18, and suPAR. Sanger sequencing was used to confirm all genotypes. Dr. Vasquez Rios’ findings highlight the urgent need for accurate risk stratification tools to inform clinical decision-making when evaluating *APOL1* patients with high-risk variants. Measuring novel biomarkers could offer a promising solution to this challenge, allowing a more personalized approach to patient care, potentially enriching clinical trial design, and reducing health disparities.

UPDATES FROM THE NETWORK OF MINORITY HEALTH RESEARCH INVESTIGATORS

NMRI CFBR Subgroup Update

Marino Bruce, Ph.D., M.Div., M.S.R.C., Associate Dean and Clinical Professor, Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine, University of Houston, presented the CFBR Subgroup report and acknowledged Co-chairs **Lynda M. Brown, Ph.D.**, and **Fern J. Webb, Ph.D.** The CFBR Subgroup has been in existence for approximately 4 years and had its official kick-off meeting in April 2021. The interest in CFBR has been substantial, and approximately 30–40 NMRI members/attendees have expressed interest in this topic. A brief survey was conducted to collect contact information and areas of interest. Two parallel breakout sessions were convened of the reconstituted Subgroup. Participants heard a presentation on CFBR, and both sessions were well attended. Dr. Bruce highlighted common themes of interest that emerged from the discussions: (1) convening between the NMRI annual meetings; (2) mentoring for writing, funding, and best practices; (3) establishing a clearinghouse for journal articles, books, and funding sources; and (4) maintaining a community of support for those engaged in CFBR. Dr. Bruce noted the next steps: Disseminate the survey to the full NMRI membership, organize a second CFBR interim meeting for October 2023, work toward producing deliverables, facilitate collaboration through building community, and establish and implement protocols for documentation. He encouraged participants to complete the CFBR survey and attend the next Subgroup meeting.

Planning Board

Absalon Gutierrez, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, provided a brief overview of the Planning Board and its activities. This Board consists of 10 members who serve a 2-year term that ends at the Annual Workshop. The Planning Board organizes the Annual Workshop, identifies speakers and topics, facilitates engaging new members to attend the workshops, promotes interactivity of the NMRI and its membership with other relevant scientific societies, and facilitates the development of active mentoring relationships between senior and junior members of the network. He acknowledged the 2022–2023 Planning Board and encouraged members to sign up for leadership roles in the Network. **Kirk Campbell, M.D.**, Chair-elect, Professor, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, thanked Dr. Gutierrez and the Planning Board for organizing an insightful meeting. He encouraged members to complete the evaluation survey, increase awareness of the Network among their peers and home institutions, and share news of accomplishments and personal anecdotes to be included in the 2023 NMRI Newsletter.

Oversight Board

Susanne Nicholas, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., Chair-elect, Professor of Medicine, David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA, provided an update on the 2022–2023 activities. She noted that **Rudy Ortiz, Ph.D., M.S.**, 2022–2023 Chair, Oversight Board, was unable to attend the meeting. Dr. Nicholas explained that the Oversight Board facilitates the development of active mentoring relationships between senior and junior members of the Network, advocates funding, recruits new members, and coordinates with professional societies and organizations to facilitate informal gatherings at scientific conferences, such as the NMRI Annual Workshop. She acknowledged current members of the Board and encouraged participants to consider joining. In 2022–2023, the Board worked on its short-term goals to increase membership, actively recruit more early-career investigators and trainees, establish sound partnerships and foster new relationships with many professional societies, and initiate and integrate a trainee committee.

Dr. Nicholas highlighted the demographics reported in the 2023 survey, noting that the trends were similar to the 2022 data. Twenty-three males and 40 females responded to the survey, with the highest participation in the 31–45 age group followed by the 46–55 age group. The highest degree categories were Ph.D. and M.D., the numbers of assistant and associate professors were nearly equal, and 58 individuals had not received a promotion or tenure. Dr. Nicholas reminded participants of the NMRI Mentorship Program, noting its purpose to identify a mentor for junior NMRI

members who need help to accomplish a goal. Mentors can help with publications, grants, plans to achieve promotions, and work-life balance. The mentorship selection process can be initiated in two ways when registering for the annual NMRI meeting: (1) Junior NMRI members can request a mentor from a previous NMRI meeting or from the NMRI Directory, or (2) senior NMRI members can volunteer to be mentors.

NMRI Leader Program

Patricia Heyn, Ph.D., Director, Center for Optimal Aging, Marymount University, provided a brief update of the NMRI LEADER program, noting that she and Dr. Azziz have branded LEADER. The program is modeled after the SUNY Hispanic Leadership Institute established in 2017 by Dr. Azziz. The LEADER program strategy will entail a four-pronged approach to training: organized instruction, individual aptitude and skill assessments, experienced support systems, and longer-term reassessment. Efforts are focused on exploring funding opportunities. Dr. Heyn encouraged suggestions and feedback from the NMRI members. Further details will be forthcoming.

CLOSING REMARKS

Winnie Martinez, Program Director, NIDDK, NIH, thanked participants for attending the NMRI 21st Annual Workshop and reminded members to complete the evaluation and to update their NMRI profiles to keep the Network Directory current and accurate. She announced that the NMRI West Region Workshop is being planned for fall 2023, and the platform is to be determined. The workshop was adjourned.

The NMRI on the Web

The NMRI website contains many resources for members:



NMRI workshops and meetings

Upcoming NMRI events are announced on the [NMRI website](#). Please visit this site for additional information about future meetings and access to past meeting reports, presentations, and other resources.

Resources for junior investigators and mentoring and career development

Information about the funding process, tips for reviewers, and mentoring and career development resources—including for the fields of endocrinology and hematology—are available on [NMRI's Suggested Resources](#) webpage.

The 2022 NMRI Membership Directory

Contact information for NMRI members is provided and available upon request. For more information, contact Ms. Winnie Martinez, NIDDK, winnie.martinez@nih.gov.

The NMRI Mentor/Mentee Program

This program gives young investigators the opportunity to work closely with senior investigators in research areas of interest to both the mentor and mentee. Forms to sign up to be a mentor or mentee can be requested on [NMRI Mentor/Mentee Program](#) webpage.

The NMRI newsletter

Previous editions are available on the [NMRI website](#).

NMRI

Frequently Asked Questions



Who is eligible for NMRI membership?

NMRI membership is available only to investigators who are—

- At the postdoctoral level or higher
- Interested in minority health research, including individuals from traditionally underserved communities (African American, Hispanic American, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders)
- Conducting research in diabetes; endocrinology; metabolism; nutrition; or digestive, kidney, urologic, or hematologic diseases
- U.S. citizens or individuals with permanent resident status

Medical students from underrepresented minority groups are welcome to attend NMRI meetings if they are conducting research in one of the NIDDK mission areas noted above.

How do I apply for membership?

Individuals who qualify should apply for membership on the [NMRI History and Mission website](#). Please click the “NMRI Online System” link to create an account and apply for membership.

Whom do I contact with questions about the NMRI?

Direct your questions or comments to NIDDK Program Director Ms. Winnie Martinez, who oversees the NMRI, at winnie.martinez@nih.gov.

Does the NMRI have a website with more information?

The NMRI maintains and frequently updates its [main website](#). The website contains information about the NMRI, including meeting announcements, and NIDDK funding opportunities. Summary reports from past NMRI meetings can be provided upon request by contacting NIDDK Program Director Ms. Winnie Martinez at winnie.martinez@nih.gov.

How can I find a mentor if I am an NMRI member?

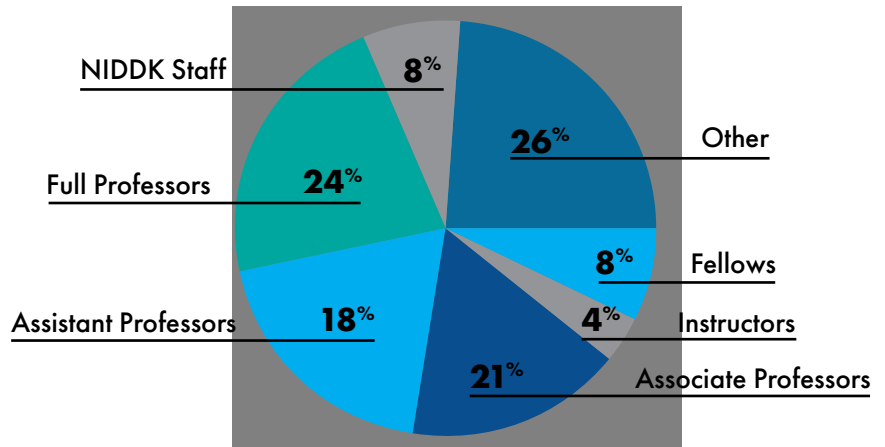
The NMRI Oversight Board, which created the NMRI Mentor Program, maintains a list of NMRI members who have volunteered to serve as mentors. The biographies and research interests of NMRI members are listed in the NMRI Membership Directory, which is available by request.

How do I sign up to be a mentor if I am an NMRI member?

If you are a member and would like to volunteer as a mentor, go to the [NMRI Mentor/Mentee Program page](#) and choose the Request a Mentee form.

Snapshot of the NMRI

Established in 2002, the NMRI has more than 900 participants and is growing. The NMRI 21st Annual Meeting attracted more than 90 attendees from across the biomedical research community. The attendees came from all levels of the biomedical research community.



NMRI 21st Annual Workshop Poster Abstracts

The posters submitted for presentation at the NMRI 21st Annual Workshop represented outstanding research conducted at a broad range of academic institutions. The poster authors and titles are listed below. Abstracts are available in the 2023 NMRI Annual Workshop Program book. To obtain a copy, contact NIDDK Program Director Ms. Winnie Martinez at winnie.martinez@nih.gov.



M.O. Ajulo, R.E. Udoh, E.O. Olorunsola, H.O. Ajulo: "Clinical Outcomes Experienced by Seropositive Ambulatory Patients Receiving Tenofovir, Lamivudine and Dolutegravir Combination Therapy in University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria"

Oumar Barro, Chelsea Dumbauld, Yumei Zhou, Mahesh Seetharam, Bolni Marius Nagalo, Mitesh Borad: "Oncolytic Properties of a Hybrid Vesiculovirus Expressing the Morretton Glycoprotein in Sarcoma"

Camille Clarke, Fayth Butler: "Expanding the Blue Zone: Evaluating Key Components in the Curricular Design of High-impact Lifestyle Programming among Minority Groups"

Janielle Cuala, Senta Georgia: "Utilizing Multimodal Imaging Techniques to Investigate Beta Cell Heterogeneity"

Klarissa D. Jackson, Paul B. Watkins, Paola Nicoletti, Huiman Barnhart: "Racial Disparities in Drug-induced Liver Injury: Ancillary Study of the Drug Induced Liver Injury Network (DILIN)"

Jeanne Dulie T. Kom, Daniel Gonzalez, Klarissa D. Jackson: "Physiologically Based Pharmacokinetic Modeling of Pioglitazone: Evaluating the Effect of the Cytochrome P450 2c8*2 Single-nucleotide Polymorphism"

Saria Lofton: "Developing a Culturally Tailored Food Is Medicine Intervention for Black Women with Hypertension and Obesity to Promote Healthy Eating and Blood Pressure Control"

Karla M. Márquez Noguerras, Ryne Knutilla, Virdjinia Vuchkovska, Ivana Y. Kuo: "The Osmosensing Pathway of Polycystin 2 in Renal Cells"

Reya Mokiao, Kristy Carlin, Michael Spencer, Bessie Young, Amanda Fretts: "The Social Determinants of Health of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Children: Analysis of NHPI NHIS 2014"

Kimberly Danae Cauley Narain, Gerardo Moreno, Douglas Bell, Lilian Chen, Chi-Hong Tseng, Rob Follett, Samuel Skootsky, Carol Mangione: "A Pragmatic Evaluation of a Primary Care-embedded Clinical Pharmacist-led Intervention among Hispanics Patients with Diabetes"

(Continued on next page)

NMRI Members Are a Vital Force in the Biomedical Research Community

We know about the 2023 NMRI Annual Workshop attendees, but we would like to update the career progress that has been made by all of our members. NMRI members, please complete the NMRI Questionnaire, www.scgcorp.com/NMRISurvey, and update your NMRI profile so we can analyze how the careers of our membership and our members' impact on the biomedical research community have grown over the Network's 21-year history.

(NMRI 21st Annual Workshop Poster Abstracts, continued)

Samnhita Raychaudhuri, Si Fan, Ujjwol Subedi, Diana Obanda: "The Cruciferous Vegetable Kale Protects against Dextran Sulfate Sodium-induced Colitis by Reducing the Proliferation of LPS-producing Bacteria and Augmenting the Integrity of the Gut Barrier"

Teresita Padilla-Benavides, Jaime Carrasco-Carrillo, Dave Klein, Odette Verdejo-Torres, Fa'alataitaua Fitiseanu, Michael Quinteros, Martha L. Jiménez-González, Lorena Novoa-Aponte, Luis Ortiz-Frade, Sarah J. Hainer: "CSRP2: A Novel Copper Binding Protein That Regulates Myoblast Proliferation"

Armando Peña, Alison M. Miller, Angela G. Campbell, Christina M. Scifres: "Mapping the Characteristics of Gestational Diabetes Prevention Lifestyle Interventions"

Alexandra Perez, Lizbeth Ramos, Gabriela Sastre-Perez, Abdallah Salman: "Use of Weight-inducing Medications in U.S. Adults: NHANES 2013–2018"

Pradeep Kumar Rajan, Utibe-Abasi S. Udoh, Juan D. Sanabria, Yuto Nakafuku, Sandrine V. Pierre, Juan R. Sanabria: "Normalization of the ATP1A1 Signalosome Rescinds Epigenetic Modifications and Induces Cell Autophagy in NASH-related Hepatocellular Carcinoma"

Ishfaq Rashid, Pramil Tiwari, Sanjay D' Cruz, Shivani Jaswal: "Predictive Validity of Pt-Global Webtool/PG-SGA, and Impact of Malnutrition on Renal Outcomes in Chronic Kidney Disease Patients: A Hospital-based Prospective Cohort"

Ishfaq Rashid, Pramil Tiwari, Sanjay D' Cruz, Shivani Jaswal: "Serum Phosphate Potentiates the Predictive Utility of Serum Alkaline Phosphatase in Non-dialysis Chronic Kidney Disease Patients—A Hospital-based Prospective Cohort"

Aisha L. Siebert, Veronica Gomez-Lobo, Emilie K. Johnson, Leena Nahata, Kyle E. Orwig, Louise C. Pyle, Selma F. Witchel, Courtney Finlayson, Monica M. Laronda: "Differences in Gonadal Tissue Cryopreservation Practices for Differences of Sex Development (DSD) across Regions in the United States"

Abdul Soofi, Vive Li, Jeff Beamish, Greg Dressler: "The Role of Disrupted Iron Homeostasis in Acute Kidney Injury"

Cara Stephenson-Hunter: "Patient and Provider Characteristics Associated with Under-referral to a Health System Diabetes Prevention Program in the Bronx, NY: A Retrospective Cohort Study"

Jocelyn M. Taylor, Kristen S. Pan, Vivian L. Szymczuk, Alison M. Boyce: "Craniofacial Lesion Progression in Patients with Fibrous Dysplasia"

Utibe-Abasi S. Udoh, Pradeep K. Rajan, Juan D. Sanabria, Mathew Schade, Jacqueline A. Sanabria, Onyinye Ugonabo, Yuto Nakafuku, Sandrine Pierre, Juan R. Sanabria: "Biomarkers for Early Detection and Diagnosis of NASH-related Hepatocellular Carcinoma"

George Vasquez Rios, Kinsuk Chauhan, Nidhi Naik, Pattharawin Pattharanitima, Lili Chan, Girish N. Nadkarni, Steven G. Coca: "Reducing Health Care Disparities in Kidney Disease: Novel Biomarker-enriched Risk Scores for Prognostication of Adverse Kidney Outcomes among African Americans"





National Institute of
Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Diseases