



EMORY
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE

Department of
Surgery

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



opportunity to

INNOVATE

FROM THE CHAIR

“Sometimes, when we have become accustomed to viewing things from a single perspective, we may fail to recognize the potential of new opportunities.”

As we reflect on the last few years, it is evident that our world has undergone significant transformations. The COVID-19 pandemic, which once consumed so much of our thoughts and actions, has now become a background concern in healthcare, much like the flu. However, in the wake of this global crisis, we find ourselves confronted with new financial challenges, and the need to adapt to the new world order of healthcare delivery.

One of the major shifts we have experienced is the growing reliance on contract labor, which has completely shifted the paradigm of healthcare costs. Of course, while patient care and education are at the forefront of our mission, we must consider how we can keep our business operations viable. We now find ourselves needing to pivot and explore innovative solutions to navigate this changing landscape.

If there is one crucial lesson we learned from the pandemic, it is the ability to make swift decisions and adapt to unexpected circumstances. Now, we must apply this lesson to what lies ahead. Out of uncertainty and chaos emerges the opportunity for growth and we must be open to new processes and unconventional thinking, while striving to enhance the care we provide to our patients and their families. These changes will demand flexibility, optimism, and a willingness to take risks and embrace the extraordinary. Sometimes, when we have become accustomed to viewing things from a single perspective, we may fail to recognize the potential of new opportunities.

Despite the obstacles we find ourselves confronted with, 2022 was one of the best years for the Department of Surgery. This success can be attributed to our exceptional faculty members, who have earned national recognition and 20 well-deserved internal promotions. Our research programs remain robust, and our educational initiatives continue to shape and educate our trainees at the highest level.

These are challenging times, but I remain incredibly optimistic about our future, with great confidence in the collective strength of our department. We are poised to rise above the hurdles and improve our practices in ways we have yet to discover. The advancement of our field will come from the exceptionally bright new leaders within our department—those who have recently been promoted and are prepared to tackle the challenges with their fresh perspectives and innovative ideas.

John F. Sweeney, MD
Joseph Brown Whitehead Professor of Surgery and Chair
Department of Surgery
Emory University School of Medicine



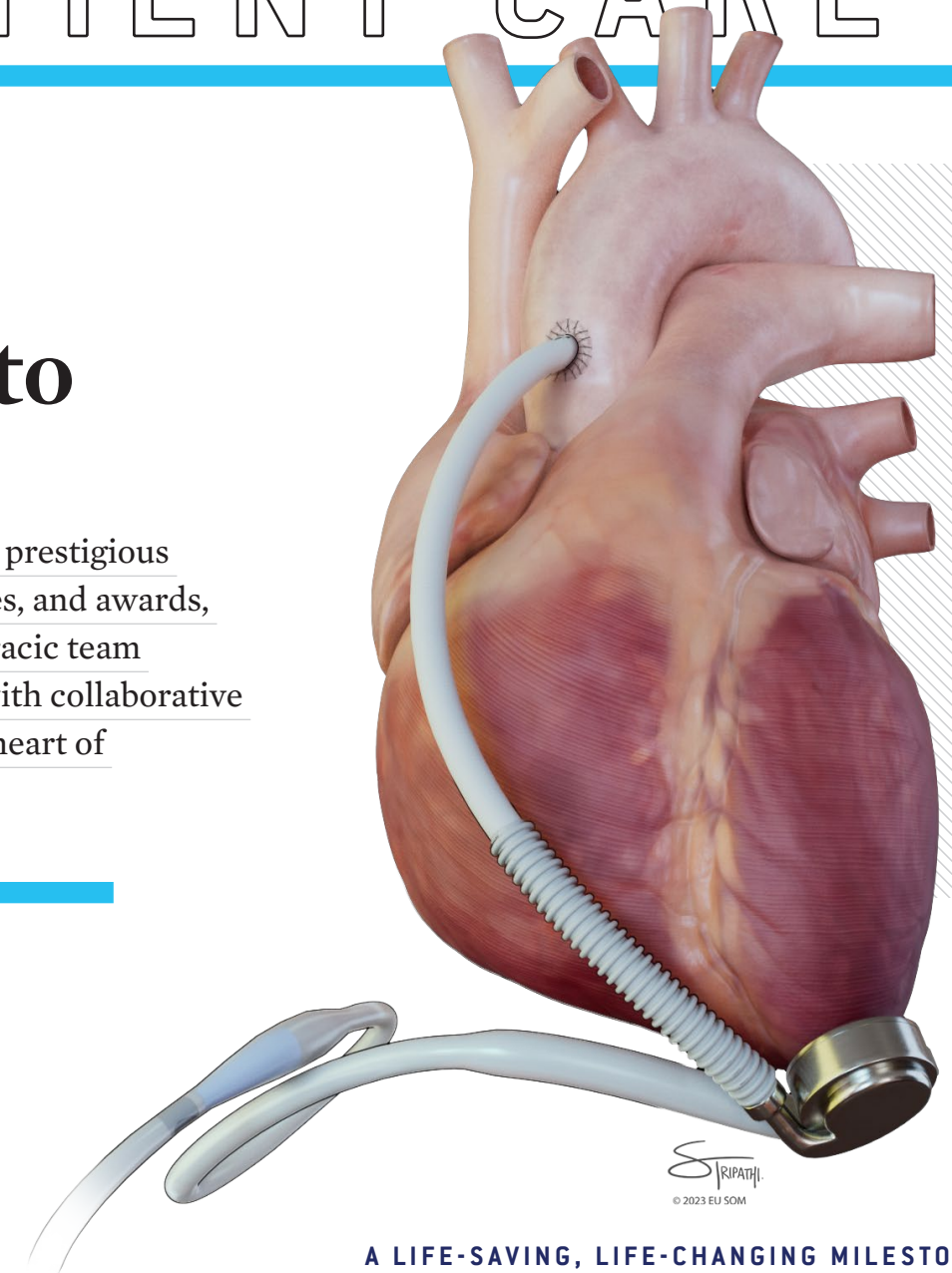
John F. Sweeney

PATIENT CARE

Taken to Heart

Commemorated by prestigious rankings, milestones, and awards, Emory's cardiothoracic team continues to lead with collaborative patient care at the heart of their work.

LVAD illustration by Satyen Tripathi, Senior Medical Illustrator, Emory Visual Medical Education



A LIFE-SAVING, LIFE-CHANGING MILESTONE

On July 29, 2022, the Emory Heart and Vascular Center completed the implantation of its 500th left ventricular assist device (LVAD). Each procedure is a collaborative effort, and this milestone underlines Emory Healthcare's position as a national leader and the number one LVAD implanting center in the country.

Also simply referred to as a ventricular assist device (VAD), it provides mechanical circulatory support to the heart by pumping blood from the ventricles to the rest of the body. The implantation of this device is an option for patients who have a history of heart failure, or some who experience heart failure for the first time.

Initially, attempts are made to manage a patient's heart health with medications administered through an IV or with pills that can be taken at



Department of Surgery

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On the cover: A transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) procedure is performed at Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital. Story on page 7.

Find the report online at surgery.emory.edu/about-us/annual-reports.html





Cardiothoracic surgeon Tamer Attia with a HeartMate 3™ LVAD.

► home. If these methods are not enough, a multidisciplinary team meets to consider more advanced therapies, including LVAD implantation or heart transplant surgery. That team is comprised of 30–40 medical professionals, including surgeons, cardiologists, LVAD coordinators, pharmacists, nutritionists, social workers, infectious disease experts, and palliative care specialists.

Tamer Attia, MD, PhD, cardiothoracic surgeon in Emory’s Department of Surgery, says that before the decision is made to move forward with the LVAD procedure, there is a very extensive evaluation of options. Then, of course, the procedure must be explained and presented to the patient and their family.

“It’s not like any other traditional therapy,” says Dr. Attia. “It’s a life-changing therapy.”

The implantation operation itself can take five to seven hours. What comes next can be a long journey that requires a significant amount of adjustment and support. Each LVAD patient must have at least one or two people, typically family members, who are able and willing to care for them for several weeks following the surgery. Both the patient and their families are trained extensively by the Emory team on the care that is required and the life changes that will need to be made.

“It’s important that the patients and their families are fully educated to understand what they will be going through and make sure that they are capable of taking care of it all,” says Dr. Attia.

Once implanted, the device emerges from below the ribs and above the belly button, weighs around seven pounds, and needs to be plugged in every night. Typically, full recovery takes two to three months — longer, for some patients — and involves frequent visits to the hospital to follow up with their health care team. Significant progress has been made in creating a sense of normalcy for LVAD recipients, though there are new routines and rules that require adjustments.

Patients will find that some activities they once enjoyed may become off-limits or require a measure of re-learning. Due to the

102

Number of LVAD procedures performed by Emory Healthcare in 2022

30-40

Number of medical professionals comprising LVAD multidisciplinary team

90%

Approximate percentage of Emory patients still alive one year following LVAD surgery

machinery, swimming or being submerged in water is no longer safe. Patients must always have reasonable access to a power source to plug in, so hiking and camping may not be feasible. With time, they can drive and move around on their own.

The journey can be challenging and with the amount of care it requires, the advanced heart failure team often becomes a steady and close presence in the lives of their patients. A comprehensive understanding of the patients’ lives and support structures can help the team better understand their needs and the coping mechanisms needed to not only help them survive but thrive.

In fact, after their recovery is complete, most LVAD recipients report having more energy than they had in the months and years before their surgery. They are thrilled to be able to participate in activities and experiences they couldn’t enjoy for a long time.

Ultimately, while the LVAD device requires some adjustments and navigation of challenges, it’s saving lives. According to Dr. Attia, approximately 90 percent of patients are still alive one year following their surgeries and most of them do well. Without the implant, the chances of their survival are much lower.

“Here at Emory, we have an exceptional team of caregivers,” says Dr. Attia. “We do this procedure in large numbers and our outcomes are exceptional. It’s a team effort.”

The LVAD procedure is an example of health care that requires true collaboration, not only among the medical team, but along with the patient and their own caretakers. ►

“It’s not like any other traditional therapy. It’s a life-changing therapy.”

— TAMER ATTIA



PATIENT CARE

In his nearly three-decade Emory career, J. David Vega has served as the lead surgeon for hundreds of transplant procedures.

“There’s so much chaos and conflict in the world. But then, you see what these families do in the face of unexpected, unspeakable tragedy. They make the ultimate gift, without expecting anything in return.”

— J. DAVID VEGA

THE HEART OF A HERO

On March 12, 2022, the Georgia Transplant Foundation (GTF) hosted its annual Celebrate Life Gala, following a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The long-overdue event, sponsored by Care Dx, Piedmont Transplant, and the Emory Transplant Center, was held to recognize distinguished members of the Atlanta transplant community as the 2022 Celebrate Life Honorees.

Among these honorees was J. David Vega, MD, professor of surgery and surgical director of the Heart Transplant Program at Emory University Hospital. Dr. Vega, who has served as the lead surgeon on hundreds of transplants since his arrival at Emory in 1996, was recognized as a “champion” in the community but, if you ask him, the true champions of transplant work are the donors and their families.

“Transplant work is a double-edged sword,” says Dr. Vega. “You have this unexpected tragedy on one end, but unimaginable joy on the other, thanks to a tremendous, altruistic decision.”

While humbly accepting the award at the GTF Gala, Dr. Vega took the opportunity to recognize his niece, Abby Bacho, who became an organ donor herself on Christmas Day 2012 at just nine years old, following a tragic car accident. With Abby’s father, Steve, critically injured and in a medically induced coma at the time, the decision rested solely in her mother’s hands. Natalie Bacho knew what her daughter would have wanted. Honoring Abby’s good nature and generous spirit, they made a gift that saved five lives.

Transplant work is personal and according to Dr. Vega, it’s a labor of love, requiring passion and a sense of fulfillment. It takes a dedicated multidisciplinary team working around the clock to ensure the best care for critically ill patients. The work is 24/7, often needed at night, and it is exhausting, but it has an immediate impact on people’s lives.

“There’s so much chaos and conflict in the world,” says Dr. Vega. “But then, you see what these families do in the face of unexpected, unspeakable tragedy. They make the ultimate gift, without expecting anything in return. They let the system work, and it’s donated to those in need. This, to me, is a truthful reflection of who we are and what we are capable of.” ▶



George Hanzel (right) performs a minimally invasive TAVR procedure, which requires only a small cut on the patient.

PATIENT CARE

A LEADER IN COLLABORATIVE CARE

To become a leader in healthcare requires collaboration and a commitment to outstanding patient care and quality. Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital stands in distinguished company, earning a three-star rating from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) and the American College of Cardiology (ACC) for its transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) program. Only a small number of institutions in the United States have received this recognition.

The STS/ACC TVT-R star rating system ranks the benchmarked outcomes of TAVR programs in the country and is one of the highest regarded measures of quality in health care.

“It’s a great achievement to be able to be a leader in the country in so many areas within cardiothoracic surgery,” says Michael Halkos, MD, chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery and director of the Cardiothoracic Center for Clinical Research at Emory’s School of Medicine. “But the true achievement is to be able to deliver those volumes with the exceptional quality for which we’ve been recognized.”

The TAVR procedure is minimally invasive and is used to replace a patient’s impaired aortic valve by inserting a catheter into their blood vessel to deliver a prosthetic heart valve. According to George Hanzel, MD, an interventional cardiologist and director of the Cardiac Catheterization Lab at Emory Saint Joseph’s Hospital, the procedure is becoming a top-choice method for treating valve dysfunction. Requiring only a small incision, TAVR allows patients to recover faster than open-chest procedures, leading to better patient outcomes and fewer complications.

This three-star rating solidifies Emory Saint Joseph’s Hospital among the elite for the TAVR procedure, a distinction earned by the collaborative work between our health care providers. ■

“It’s a great achievement to be able to be a leader in the country in so many areas within cardiothoracic surgery.”

— MICHAEL HALKOS



IVYY Founder and Medical Director Randi Smith (right) discusses holistic patient care with IVYY Violence Intervention Specialist Chee'Tara Alexander (left).

PATIENT CARE

Containing the Spread of Violence

To stop the spread of an infectious disease, several steps must first be taken to understand how it started, what the risk factors are, how it spreads, and how it can be contained. Under a new program at the Marcus Trauma Center at Grady Memorial Hospital, this is how violence is also treated.

Like a disease, violence spreads across networks, neighborhoods, and society as a whole. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Atlanta communities have seen a steep increase in gun violence, affecting various victims, but especially young adults. Since May 2020, the number of trauma patients that have been admitted to Grady due to acts of violence increased by 50 percent. According to Randi Smith, MD, MPH, a trauma surgeon at Grady, gun violence in Atlanta has historically been addressed as a public safety issue, relying on law enforcement to resolve the problem. However, by treating violence as a complex public health crisis instead, the cycle can be better understood, addressed, and broken.

Dr. Smith has gained national recognition for her work in hospital-based violence intervention efforts. Now, she is spearheading a new violence reduction program at Grady known as Interrupting Violence in Youth and Young Adults (IVYY). The program has received funding in partnership with Dekalb County and Georgia State.

“Essentially, this is an evidence-based program focusing on providing resources and support for patients and their families after violence,” says Dr. Smith. “We do lots of work with patients, families, and staff so that they become vessels of trauma-informed care.”

The program focuses on patients ages 14 to 34 who are victims of violence or assault. Beginning at the hospital, they are met by a violence prevention advocate, known as a “Credible Messenger” — someone who has been personally or professionally impacted by violence. These advocates include fellow survivors and people from the Atlanta community who meet the patients at their bedsides to better understand their needs and provide added support and resources for them.

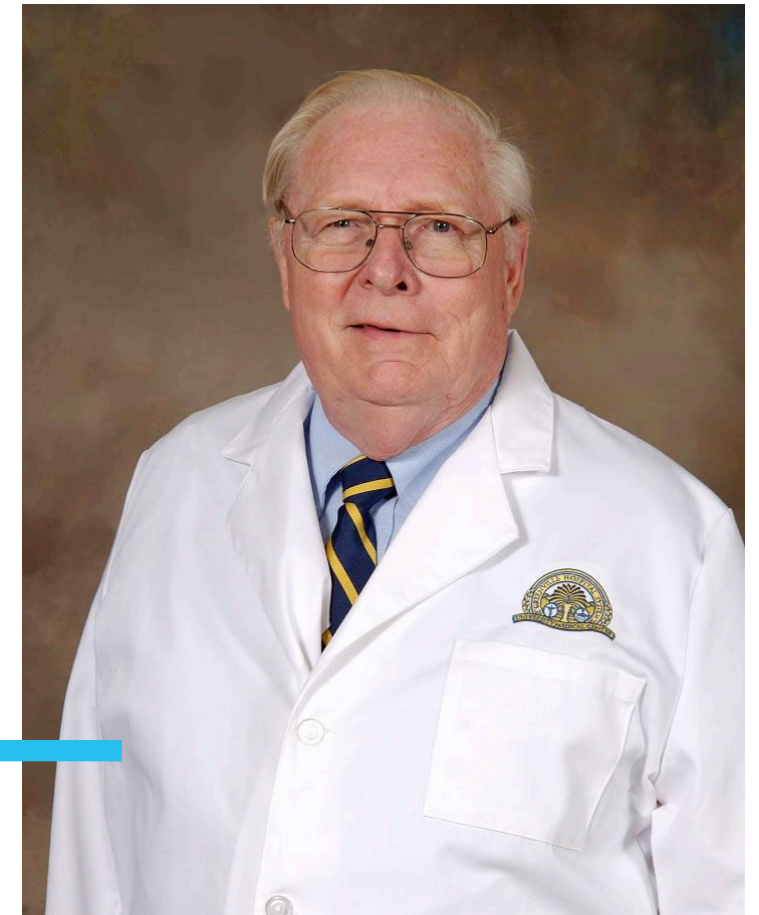
“We want people to know that trauma manifests in many different ways,” says Dr. Smith. “To deal with that trauma, they may need anything ranging from food or housing to mental health support or legal counsel.”

IN MEMORIAM

Legacies of Excellence

Celebrating the lives of three Department of Surgery legends

H. HARLAN STONE, MD



Harry Harlan Stone, MD, a member of the Department of Surgery from 1962 to 1983, passed away on April 7, 2022, at the age of 92. His contributions to the field of medicine and his unwavering commitment to patient care will forever be remembered.

Born in Atlanta, Dr. Stone pursued his MD at Emory University and his surgical residency at Grady Memorial Hospital before completing his pediatric surgery fellowship at the Hospital for Sick Children at the University of London.

Dr. Stone played an instrumental role in cultivating a symbiotic relationship between the Department of Surgery and Grady Memorial Hospital. He assumed various pivotal roles, including directorships of the Grady Burn Center, Grady Pediatric Surgery, Grady Trauma Service, and the Surgical Bacteriology Lab. His tenure at Emory was marked by numerous high-profile burn studies and investigations of surgical infections. Together with Dr. Robert Smith, III, and the late Dr. Garland Perdue, he pioneered efforts to establish an organ transplantation program at Emory, resulting in Georgia’s first successful kidney transplant in 1966. His groundbreaking work forever changed the landscape of medicine in our region.

“Dr. Stone was Emory through-and-through,” says Dr. John Sweeney, chair of the Department of Surgery. “It was always a pleasure learning about the development ▶

This intervention stage is crucial. By meeting victims at the hospital, it becomes easier to identify root causes of violence and work to prevent its spread. Research shows that there is up to 40 percent likelihood that victims of violence are at risk for reinjury and can also be prone to retaliation. Programs like IVYY are working to reduce these reoccurrences on a large scale.

Following their hospital treatment, patients are released with a “warm handoff” and connected with community-based partners to ensure that they have continued access to the resources they need. This is another essential step in interrupting the cycle of violence, keeping victims engaged and focusing on their life experiences to prevent reoccurrences.

“We like to say that we’re not just doing hard work, we’re doing the heart’s work,” says Dr. Smith. “Every time we see a victim that doesn’t come back, it reaffirms the work we’re doing to heal the community.” ■

► of the department through his eyes and hearing his unique perspectives and stories about the history of surgery in the country.”

Following his tenure at Emory, Dr. Stone assumed the role of chairing the Division of General Surgery and served as the surgical residency program director at the University of Maryland. He also went on to hold surgical training positions at the Phoenix Integrated Surgical Residency at the University of Arizona and the University of South Carolina Medical School in Greenville. Throughout his career, he authored nine medical books, over 100 textbook chapters, and more than 1,000 journal publications.

Dr. Stone is survived by his three sons, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Jean Martin Stone. Dr. Stone’s legacy lives on through his family and the countless lives he touched throughout his remarkable career. ■

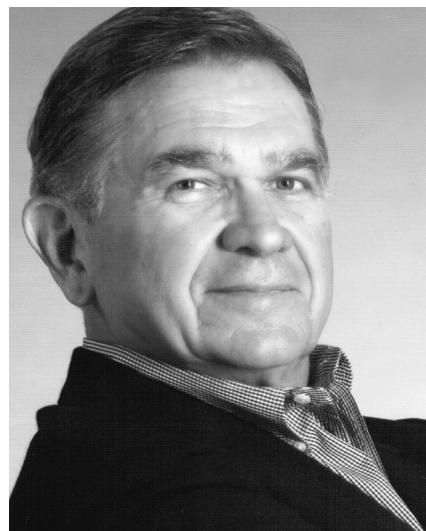
JOSEPH CRAVER, MD

Department of Surgery legend Joseph Craver, MD, passed away on June 2, 2022, at the age of 81. His departure leaves behind a profound void but also a legacy of exceptional service that will forever inspire generations to come.

From an early age, it was evident that Dr. Craver was destined for greatness. Not only was he an outstanding academic, but he also displayed remarkable prowess as a football player during his college years at the University of North Carolina (UNC). Despite receiving interest from renowned teams such as the Green Bay Packers and Dallas Cowboys, he chose to pursue a career in medicine. Driven by his passion to help others, he enrolled in medical school at UNC.

Dr. Craver completed his general surgery residency and cardiovascular fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital. In 1974, he concluded his chief residency in thoracic and cardiovascular surgery at the University of Virginia Medical Center. Seeking to share his knowledge, he then joined the Department of Surgery at Emory University, enticed by its position as a burgeoning academic surgery powerhouse.

Throughout his tenure as a faculty member at Emory, Dr. Craver found



immense joy in mentoring young surgeons. By the time he retired, he had imparted his expertise to over 85 cardiac surgical fellows, equipping them with the skills and artistry required to excel in the demanding field of heart surgery.

Over three decades, Dr. Craver played a pivotal role in expanding and fortifying cardiac surgical patient care, clinical research, and the university’s cardiothoracic surgery training program. He mended the hearts of over 11,000 patients, contributing significantly to the advancement of heart surgery. Alongside his partners at Emory, he played an instrumental role in refining and employing emerging techniques such as aortic valve surgery, mitral valve repair, and bypass surgery. Notably, in 1996, he performed Georgia’s first minimally invasive, direct coronary artery bypass.

Dr. Craver’s audacious love for his calling endeared him to all who knew him. His virtuoso whistling, which echoed through the halls of Emory University Hospital between patient visits and operations, became a cherished symbol of his unwavering spirit. ■



WALTER L. INGRAM, MD

Walter L. Ingram, MD, a cherished member of the Department of Surgery, passed away on July 26, 2022, leaving behind an extraordinary legacy of patient-centered care. With over 30 years of service, Dr. Ingram was an invaluable member of the trauma/surgical critical care team at Grady Memorial Hospital and served as the medical director of Grady Burn Center.

In 1982, Dr. Ingram enrolled in medical school at the University of Texas Health Science Center, marking a shift from his prior career as an aerospace engineer. He then went on to complete his general surgery residency and trauma/burn fellowship at Emory University. In 1992, upon completion of his fellowship, he was appointed

IN MEMORIAM

as the medical director of the Grady Burn Center, a position he held with unwavering dedication. Under his exceptional leadership, the center nearly doubled in size, maintained its status as Atlanta’s sole comprehensive burn center, and became one of the most highly regarded burn programs across the United States.

During his tenure, Dr. Ingram shouldered immense responsibilities with a tireless work ethic. In a remarkable display of dedication, he served as the sole attending physician for both pediatric and adult burn care from September 2013 to September 2014, overseeing 448 acute inpatient admissions. This extraordinary feat was a testament to his commitment to his patients.

Driven by a belief that quality improvement was a never-ending venture, Dr. Ingram dedicated himself to advancing the capabilities of the Burn Center. He played an instrumental role in maintaining the center’s American Burn Association verification and implemented standardized wound care protocols. He also spearheaded expansions to the hydrotherapy facilities, made significant improvements to pain control processes, pioneered services for patients with complex wound problems secondary to burns, and developed his own patient registry and outcomes database.

Dr. Ingram will be fondly remembered for his genial devotion to sharing his knowledge with the hundreds of trainees he mentored throughout his career. His dedication and extraordinary work ethic served as an inspiration to all who had the privilege of working alongside him. ■

EDUCATION

Renewed Impact: Expanding Global Outreach

In the summer of 2021, just as COVID-19 travel restrictions began to wane, the Emory Global Perioperative Alliance (EGPA) began to plan the resumption of its global health outreach efforts, following a nearly two-year hiatus.



Beginning in 2008, Emory medical students embarked on annual month-long surgery outreach trips to Haiti, operating under the appropriate name, the Emory Haiti Alliance. Unfortunately, following the 11th trip to Haiti's Central Plateau in 2018, political unrest and natural disasters in the country brought those efforts to a halt, leading to the cancellation of their 2019 trip. In an effort to make good use of medical funding, supplies, and willing medical students, the program took a week-long outreach trip to Puerto Rico that year instead.

Since then, the medical student-led, faculty-supervised organization has focused on establishing contacts and planning efforts with academics, NGOs, and communities across the globe. In 2020, the group rebranded and began to operate as the EGPA to encompass their growing scope and interests. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck



The EGPA ophthalmology team, Javier Pagan, Soroosh Behshad, and Jared Raabe, operates on a Guatemalan patient with pterygiums. Photo provided by HELPS International

and shut down global health operations, they remained active by holding a virtual global surgery symposium and publishing a virtual COVID-19 Community & Healthcare Facility Checklist Manual for clinical programs and individuals in various global communities.

Then, the EGPA was approached about scheduling a 2022 summer outreach by Emory Helps Guatemala, an undergraduate group that was seeking a partner to plan a surgical component of a pre-existing trip, planned in collaboration with Guatemala NGO, Helps International. Spearheaded by Dani Farchi, an M1 in the MD/PhD program, the groups came together to begin planning the trip over the next eight months, securing a team, funding, supplies, and travel logistics.

The EGPA's medical student leaders, Charles Crepy D'Orleans, Charlie Marvil, and Sophia Stylianos, all M4s, were joined



The Emory Global Perioperative Alliance and Emory HELPS 2022 team.

by several additional Emory M4s and M3s. The students were accompanied by Department of Surgery faculty members David Elwood, MD, Stephanie Busby, MD, Barbara Pettitt, MD, and Steven Roser, DMD, MD; faculty from the departments of gynecology and obstetrics, and ophthalmology; OR staff, nurses, and PAs from Emory and Grady Memorial hospitals; several Guatemalan providers; and twenty M1, M2, and M3 students from Universidad Rafael Landívar, who served as translators and assisted in all aspects of patient care.

On June 5th, in a Guatemalan school that had been transformed into a clinical site complete with operation rooms, the work began. The team was met with a line of patients as far as the eye could see. Over the course of the trip, the EGPA and Emory Helps teams saw hundreds of patients for a range of cases, from lipomas and cyst excisions to hernias and hysterectomies.

"They were all so grateful and, in a way, mystified by us and our organization and efficiency," says Dr. David Elwood, assistant professor of surgery in the Division of General/GI Surgery at Emory University School of Medicine. "Many of these people had been waiting years for treatment, even minor procedures. To see their smiles afterward...they were all tickled pink."

There were many valuable lessons learned throughout this trip as they worked collaboratively to overcome challenges, find creative solutions, and re-think methods. Following their Guatemala trip, the EGPA conducted focus groups, interviews, and surveys from their patients and partners to gather feedback that will help to grow and improve for future outreach efforts.

"It's an incredible opportunity for the students to learn what it takes to run a health care facility," says Dr. Elwood. "They used what they learned in their rotations, transported that down there, and adapted as needed. It was really gratifying to see." ■

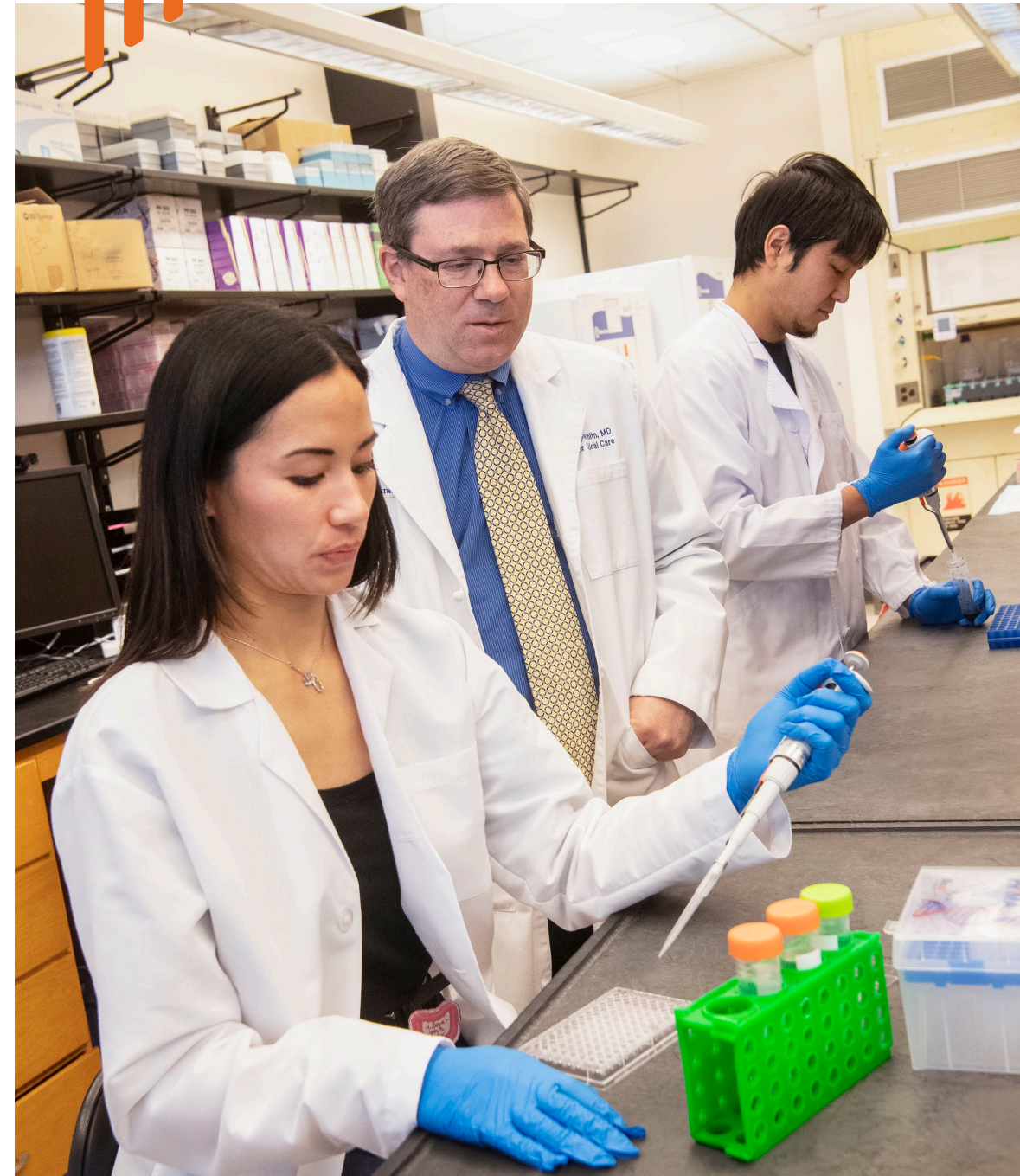
EDUCATION

Trainee Kudos

TRAINEE	AWARD	FACULTY MENTOR
Jerome C. Anyalebeci, MD General Surgery	Travel Award to the Shock Society	Mandy Ford, PhD; Craig Coopersmith, MD
Jesse A. Codner, MD General Surgery	Georgia Quality Improvement Project Distinguished Service Award; Georgia Chapter American College of Surgeons Leadership and Advocacy Summit Travel Award	Joe Sharma, MD
Emma Crichton, MD General Surgery	Department of Surgery DEI Travel Award	I. Raul Badell, MD
Goeto Dantes, MD General Surgery	1st Place, Resident Paper Competition, 2022 Annual Meeting of the Georgia Society of the American College of Surgeons (GSACS); Department of Surgery DEI Travel Award	Allison Linden, MD, MPH
David A. Faber, MD General Surgery	J.D. Martin Resident Award	Keith A. Delman, MD
Katherine T. Fay, MD General Surgery	Resident Excellence in Teaching Award; Douglas Murray Award	Jahnvi Srinivasan, MD
Benjamin J. Hazen, MD General Surgery	Selection to Airforce Special Forces Operation Team; Winner of Clinical Science Category, Air Force Committee of Trauma Resident Paper Competition, USU Trauma Day; ACS Committee on Trauma Region Competition Winner	Christopher Dente, MD; Jonathan Nguyen, DO
Hilary R. Jessup, MD General Surgery	2022 Elkin Fellowship Award	Allison Linden, MD, MPH
Aileen Johnson, MD General Surgery	TTS Young Investigator Award	Christian P. Larsen, MD, DPhil
Jessica M. Keilson, MD, MS General Surgery	ASCO Conquer Cancer Merit Award, 2022 Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium; Best Oral Presentation Awards, 2022 William C. Wood Symposium	Shishir K. Maithel, MD; Gregory Lesinski, PhD, MPH
Chase King, MD General Surgery	2nd Place, General Surgery Resident Paper Competition, 2022 Annual Meeting of the Georgia Society of the American College of Surgeons (GSACS)	Muralidhar Padala, PhD; Robert Guyton, MD
Brendan P. Lovasik, MD General Surgery Chief Resident	Resident Award for Exemplary Teaching, American College of Surgeons; Back to Bedside Initiative Grant, Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, 2022–24; Best Oral Presentation Awards, 2022 William C. Wood Symposium	Jahnvi Srinivasan, MD; Sharon Muret-Wagstaff, PhD
David V. Mathews, MD General Surgery	Barbara J. Pettitt Medical Student Teaching Award	I. Raul Badell, MD
Dylan K. McLaughlin, MD Vascular Surgery	Robert B. Smith Resident Award, Georgia Vascular Foundation	Katherine E. Hekman, MD, PhD
Jessica Liu McMullin, MD General Surgery	International Association of Endocrine Surgeons Travel Award to Vienna; Best Clinical Poster Awards, 2022 William C. Wood Symposium	Snehal Patel, MD; Neil Saunders, MD; Joe Sharma, MD; Collin Weber, MD
Caroline Medin, MD MS General Surgery	ASCO Conquer Cancer Merit Award, 2022 Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium	Shishir K. Maithel, MD; Gregory Lesinski, PhD, MPH
Eli Mlaver, MD General Surgery	2022 HOPE Award; NIH-funded Georgia CTSA TL1 Grant Awardee, 2022	Joe Sharma, MD; Julie Hollberg, MD; Rachel Patzer, PhD, MPH
Cameron W. Paterson, MD General Surgery	Barbara J. Pettitt Medical Student Teaching Award	Cletus Arciero, MD
David A. Swift, MD General Surgery	Travel Award to the Shock Society	Mandy Ford, PhD; Craig Coopersmith, MD
Emilie Warren, MD General Surgery	2022 Chester Rochfort Scholarship, Winship Cancer Institute; Winship Cancer Institute Development Grant, 2022–2023	Shishir K. Maithel, MD; Chrystal M. Paulos, PhD; Gregory B. Lesinski, PhD, MPH
Jeroson C. Williams, MD General Surgery	Department of Surgery DEI Travel Award	Mandy Ford, PhD; Craig Coopersmith, MD

RESEARCH

An Unconventional Journey to Success



On January 21, 2023, **Craig Coopersmith, MD, FACS, MCCM**, accepted the **American College of Critical Care Medicine (ACCM) Distinguished Investigator Award** – the highest award given by the College. It is awarded to “an individual whose scientific and educational contributions to the art and science of critical care demonstrates career commitment and excellence.” This tremendous and well-deserved honor proves that the path to excellence is not always conventional.

Unlike many of his peers, Dr. Coopersmith, who now serves as the vice chair of research in the Department of Surgery and director of the Emory Critical Care Center, did not grow up expecting to become an academic surgeon and investigator. As a young adult, when many others were charting their path in the

Craig Coopersmith (middle) mentors post-doctoral fellows Carolyn Davis (left) and Takashi Shimazui (right) in conducting research to understand the mechanisms underlying mortality in sepsis.

► medical field, he was playing in a band and serving as the editorial editor for the Daily Pennsylvanian. Now, he'll tell you that some of the keys to success are being open to new opportunities and applying skills you've honed from other experiences in life to your current endeavors.

"As editor of my college newspaper, I had to ask myself, 'How can I distill the truth quickly, with accuracy, and in a way that everyone can understand it,'" says Dr. Coopersmith. "Well, that's what being a scientist is, isn't it?"

Despite his self-described underwhelming grades and board scores, Dr. Coopersmith earned himself a residency spot at Washington University after driving overnight to meet with the chair — a 12-hour journey having taken several wrong turns. This, he says, was a lesson in making the most of every chance you are given. It was here, at WashU, that Dr. Coopersmith would begin to distinguish himself as a top-notch investigator.

First, though, came failure. Two years into his research fellowship, Dr. Coopersmith had accomplished next to nothing. With a failed project and a looming warning from the chair, he was on thin ice as he chose his next project. That's when everything clicked into place. Over the next few years, Dr. Coopersmith worked on multiple first-author papers, earning himself the Samuel A. Wells, Jr. Resident Research Award. Then, as a senior resident, he made the switch to the field of critical care. In 2009, he joined Emory's faculty, in large part for the Critical Care Center and the work that would be possible there.

"I'm a baseball fan," says Dr. Coopersmith. "In that game, if you fail seven out of ten times — you're in the Hall of Fame. Research, like baseball, is a game of failing. If you get published, nobody cares that you got rejected several times before."

In 2016, Dr. Coopersmith was a member of an international task force that redefined the terms "sepsis" and "septic shock." Their groundbreaking research, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, was named one of the journal's

RESEARCH

Early Strides in Promising Careers

The first few years as a faculty member can shape the trajectory of one's career, providing an opportunity to choose the community, colleagues, and resources that best align with an anticipated career path. Success as a junior faculty member can depend on various factors.

When **Steven Kim, MD**, joined the Division of Transplantation in 2022, it was the collaborative environment that made Emory the ideal next step, specifically the relationship with the Emory National Primate Research Center. Trained in liver, pancreas, and kidney transplantation, much of Dr. Kim's work focuses on xenotransplantation — the use of non-human cells, tissues, or organs to treat medical conditions in humans.

Dr. Kim now leads the non-human primate research component of a collaborative NIH U19 grant awarded to Emory University and the University of Minnesota.

He was also recently awarded the Department of Surgery Pilot Research Award for his study, "Role of NK Cells in Pig-to-Nonhuman Primate Kidney Xenotransplantation." The proposal aims to contribute to a broader understanding of outcomes in pig-to-nonhuman primate kidney transplantation.

"The environment here is pretty unique," says Dr. Kim. "There's only a handful of places where the translational lab effort with non-human primates exists. This type of research lab would not be possible in most other places."

Of course, a clear sense of purpose can make the best use of resources and support, as demonstrated by **Olamide Alabi, MD**. Upon completion of her vascular surgery fellowship at Oregon Health and Science University, Dr. Alabi knew that she wanted an academic

surgery position in the southeast (where aortic aneurysm disease and peripheral artery disease (PAD) are highly prevalent) and that she felt compelled to serve the region's population of patients. What she didn't know is that research would be her best path forward.

"I didn't start my career thinking I would be on the path of a funded investigator," admits Dr. Alabi. "I went in thinking I would just treat as many patients as possible, but if it's a population-level health issue, you just can't really make a dent in the problem as an individual."

Dr. Alabi's clinical efforts are conducted both at Emory University Hospital and the Atlanta VA, where she serves as the assistant section chief of vascular surgery. She has received grants for her work at both institutions — recently, the VA Southeast Network (VISN7) Research Development Award from the Department of Veterans Affairs, which will support her work at the Atlanta VA. The proposal is based on her study, "Defining Determinants of Lower Extremity Amputation (LEA) Among Veterans," framed using a blended health and racism framework and allostatic load conceptual model to better understand racial disparities in LEA among veterans with PAD.

Dr. Alabi sees her research focus as constantly evolving, as she "learns from failure" and takes a closer look at LEA patients to improve future efforts.

John Lyons, MD, is another example of a junior faculty member who did not expect research to be his main focus. He joined our



Steven Kim



Olamide Alabi



John Lyons

faculty in 2021, after completing all of his post-graduate work at Emory, including a fellowship in Dr. Craig Coopersmith's lab focusing on sepsis and shock.

Recently, Dr. Lyons was awarded the R35 Maximizing Investigators' Research Award (MIRA), which provides support for research that falls within the mission of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS). This five-year grant will support his work in investigating basic cell pathways, and how they contribute to sepsis or overwhelming inflammatory response to infection.

According to him, "sepsis kills a lot of people, and we don't have any specific targeted therapies for it." As a result of this research, there could be the potential to design new drugs to interrupt their pathway signaling and have improved sepsis outcomes.

In addition to work ethic and a clear vision and passion for your work, Dr. Lyons credits effective mentorship as a crucial ingredient in the recipe for success. Even now, as a faculty member with his own research lab, Dr. Lyons still considers Dr. Coopersmith a mentor who has provided him invaluable guidance and advocacy.

"Good jobs have good mentorship," says Dr. Lyons. "It's one of the foundational things that's a bare minimum for success. You need people who have been through the system and knows how it works to help you avoid pitfalls." ■

Top Articles of the Decade. Currently, his research includes an NIH T32 training grant and multiple R series grants as a principal investigator. This includes close, collaborative multi-PI studies investigating the immunological host response in sepsis with Mandy Ford, PhD, scientific director of the Emory Transplant Center.

In late 2022, Dr. Coopersmith received the news that he had won the ACCM Distinguished Investigator Award, and it came as quite the surprise. While he once served as the president of the Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM), only a small fraction of past presidents has won the award. This was truly an acknowledgement

of his impact on the critical care field. Reflecting on his journey, he credits his success to his extraordinary mentors, his own work ethic, and a little serendipity.

According to Dr. Coopersmith, "The people I worked with determined my success every bit as much as my own intellectual input."

He has had the good fortune of working with many ambitious and talented people throughout his career, but gives special credit to Dr. Mandy Ford, his "partner in science," and former mentors Tim Buchman, PhD, MD, 2009–2018 founding director of the Emory Critical Care Center, and Richard Hotchkiss, MD, of Washington University.

"I love research," says Dr. Coopersmith. "The opportunity to ask and answer questions that no one in the entire world has ever done before and to hopefully play a small role in changing human health on a broad scale downrange is an incredible privilege. It's something that energizes me every single day." ■



Dr. Harding's work focuses on improving data collection and quality related to kidney disease and transplantation.

and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) of the NIH has provided funding for a new study, "Risk of new-onset diabetes following COVID-19: A multi-ethnic cohort study of 1 million+ individuals across the life course."

"While prior observations have suggested that COVID-19 may be associated with the risk of new-onset diabetes, rigorous epidemiological evidence is limited," says Dr. Harding. "This study will aim to establish a longitudinal cohort of individuals across the life course — children, pregnant women, adults — who developed diabetes following SARS-CoV-2 infection in order to better understand the pathophysiology and clinical course of post-COVID-19 diabetes."

This data analysis study is being undertaken in collaboration with the Georgia Center for Diabetes Translation Research (GCDTR) and Kaiser Permanente. The GCDTR is a collaboration of Emory University, Georgia Tech, and Morehouse School of Medicine dedicated to facilitating and growing diabetes translation research at Emory, its partner institutions, and regionally. Leading the study as principal investigator is K.M. Venkat Narayan, MD, MSC, MBA, executive director of the Emory Global Diabetes Research Center. Dr. Harding will serve as co-investigator along with epidemiologist Shivani Patel, MPH, PhD, from the Hubert Department of Global Health at the Rollins School of Public Health.

"This has been a multi-site collaboration, and establishing contractual agreements between sites has been laborious and can bury you in paperwork," admits Dr. Harding. "But working across institutes and sites is so important for team science, and we are on our way to start analyzing this data."

In addition to investigating the link between COVID-19 and new-onset diabetes, Dr. Harding says the initial study explored whether diabetes itself was a risk factor for long-COVID. However, the findings were inconclusive. Evidence from the NIH-funded study will hopefully, in time, be able to shed some light on this and the team hopes to present their findings at the 2023 International Diabetes Federation Virtual Congress. ■

Following the release of a study in February 2022, which suggested a potential connection between COVID-19 and the development of early-onset diabetes, Jessica Harding, PhD, of the Transplant Health Services and Outcomes Research Program of the Department of Surgery, conducted a study, titled, "The bidirectional association between diabetes and long-COVID-19 — A systematic review." The report showed that among 14 studies reporting on new-onset diabetes at that time, 86% reported that COVID-19 was significantly associated with new-onset diabetes, with increased risks ranging from 11% to 276%.

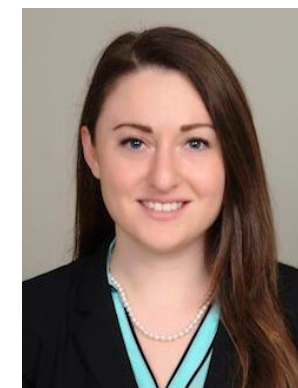
Recognizing the potential importance of this public health issue, Dr. Harding and her colleagues aimed to conduct a meticulous assessment of new-onset diabetes across a racially and ethnically diverse population across the life course, with a longer follow-up time. To support their research, the National Institute of Diabetes

RESEARCH

Unveiling the Link: COVID-19 and New-Onset Diabetes

RESEARCH

Shaping the Future of Cancer Research



Caroline Goel



Emilie Warren

General surgery residents Caroline Goel, MD, and Emilie Warren, MD, have been recognized for their exceptional cancer research. Their exemplary work has earned them both Conquer Cancer Merit Awards from the Conquer Cancer Foundation of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), enabling them to present their research at the 2023 Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium held in San Francisco from January 19–21.

The ASCO Foundation Conquer Cancer Merit Awards are designed to encourage and promote high-quality clinical research by young scientists. Each year, a select number of Merit Awards are bestowed upon individuals who have demonstrated outstanding research in abstracts submitted for presentation at the ASCO Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium.

Dr. Caroline Goel received an ASCO Merit Award for her research on neoadjuvant radiation for patients with rectal cancer. Her study, titled "Neoadjuvant Chemoradiation Does Not Improve Outcomes for Patients Undergoing Resection for Upper Rectal Cancer: A US Rectal Cancer Consortium Analysis," involved a retrospective cohort analysis. The findings indicated that neoadjuvant chemoradiation (NCRT) was not associated with improved survival or recurrence rates among patients with non-metastatic upper rectal cancer who underwent surgical resection. Notably, NCRT was associated with a nearly threefold higher diverting loop ileostomy rate. These results challenge the use of NCRT in upper rectal cancer, highlighting the need for alternative treatment approaches. This marks Dr. Goel's second consecutive ASCO Merit Award, following her recognition for her study on high-risk gene expression in colorectal liver metastasis, which she presented at the 2022 Symposium.

Dr. Emilie Warren has been investigating the role of galectin-9 expression in the cholangiocarcinoma immune microenvironment to develop novel therapeutic strategies. Her project, titled "A transanal minimally invasive surgical approach is associated with improved oncologic outcomes over conventional transanal excision for early-stage rectal cancer: An analysis of the US Rectal Cancer Consortium," secured her the 2023 Conquer Cancer Merit Award. Dr. Warren's research revealed that for early-stage rectal cancers undergoing local excision, a minimally invasive surgical (MIS) approach (transanal endoscopic microsurgery or transanal minimally invasive surgery) was associated with a decreased rate of recurrence and improved recurrence-free survival, with no significant difference in perioperative complication rates.

Both Dr. Goel and Dr. Warren have been mentored by esteemed physicians Dr. Shishir Maithel and Dr. Gregory Lesinski, along with Dr. Chrystal Paulos for Dr. Warren. Their guidance and expertise have undoubtedly played a pivotal role in shaping their research endeavors. This is the eighth year that residents working in Dr. Maithel's lab have been recognized with ASCO Merit Awards.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Goel and Dr. Warren for their well-deserved Conquer Cancer Merit Awards. Their dedication, innovation, and pursuit of scientific excellence will continue to shape the future of cancer treatment. ■



Prior to joining Emory's faculty, Dr. Nader Massarweh was an investigator for the Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness and Safety at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center.

RESEARCH

Modernizing Surgical Quality Data

In January 2022, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) granted R01 funding to support a study titled "Using Modern Data Science Methods & Advanced Analytics to Improve the Efficiency, Reliability, & Timeliness of Cardiac Surgical Quality Data," led by co-primary investigator Nader Massarweh, MD, MPH, FACS, in collaboration with a co-investigator from Stanford University. Dr. Massarweh, chief of surgery at the Atlanta VA Healthcare System and vice chair of veteran affairs for the Emory University School of Medicine's Department of Surgery, focuses his research on assessing the impact and effectiveness of national health policy initiatives and evaluating the reliability and value of national quality measures.

The study builds upon the success of the Veterans Health Administration National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (VASQIP), initiated in 1994. Over the past three decades, VASQIP has been one of the nation's most enduring systems for ensuring

safety and quality in surgical care. In fact, it has served as a template for another surgical quality improvement program established by the American College of Surgeons (ACS).

While the VASQIP program has achieved notable success, there are some areas that could benefit from a more modern approach. One of the key challenges lies in the absence of a robust early-warning system that can promptly alert hospitals of high-risk issues. Additionally, the current quarterly reporting system introduces a lag in data availability, potentially exposing patients to problematic care processes and outcomes.

"If I'm a hospital leader, I want to know my surgical program is having a problem right now, rather than three months from now," asserts Dr. Massarweh. "So, we need to figure out how to look at data in real time, as it's happening, to give stakeholders and facilities more information earlier to address a problem when it is early in development."

Moreover, the manual abstraction of nearly 200 variables from patients' charts for each cardiac surgery proves to be a labor-intensive process that demands substantial effort and training. To improve efficiency and alleviate the burden on health care professionals, the research team is assessing the potential of natural language processing and machine learning to automate data collection. This technological advancement could significantly streamline the process and reduce the reliance on human labor.

Throughout the study, Emory's team is focused on studying how best to utilize and implement a statistical process control technique, the cumulative sum (CUSUM), to VASQIP's existing analytic framework. Meanwhile, the Stanford team is dedicated to developing a machine-learning system. Both teams are actively involved in the data-collection work, engaging in extensive discussions with nurses, VA leadership, and researchers who interpret the reports and utilize the data. By actively involving stakeholders, the team aims to modernize the program and explore innovative ways to enhance the quality and timeliness of cardiac surgical data analysis.

The NIH-funded study led by Dr. Massarweh holds immense promise for transforming the landscape of cardiac surgical care. By harnessing modern data science methods, including advanced analytics and machine learning, this research endeavor aims to revolutionize data collection, analysis, and reporting. Ultimately, it strives to empower healthcare facilities with real-time insights, ensuring the highest standards of quality and safety in cardiac surgical care. ■

RESEARCH

Frailty as a Predictor

Frailty, defined as an age-related decline in physiologic reserves, has been demonstrated to have a stronger correlation with clinical outcomes compared to age or ASA classification in various patient populations.

In a 2022 study, Felipe Maegawa, MD, a general and hepatopancreatobiliary surgeon in the Department of Surgery, revealed that patient frailty can serve as a powerful predictor of 30-day hepatectomy complications. The study sheds new light on the importance of incorporating frailty into established predictive models, potentially leading to improved surgical outcomes.

Published online in HPB, a scientific journal owned by the International Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association (IHPBA), the study brings together the expertise of co-authors from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and highlights the significance of considering frailty as a key factor in assessing the severity of liver dysfunction.

This study is the first to showcase how the modified frailty index (mFI) can significantly increase the discriminative ability of Albumin-Bilirubin grade (ALBI) in predicting post-hepatectomy severe complications and 30-day mortality. ALBI is a commonly used model assessing liver dysfunction severity.

Frailty, defined as an age-related decline in physiologic reserves, has been demonstrated to have a stronger correlation with clinical outcomes compared to age or American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) physical status classification in various patient populations, including those undergoing surgery. This study marks the first of its kind to demonstrate the substantial contribution of frailty in improving outcome predictions for hepatectomy patients.

To gather data for the study, the researchers thoroughly reviewed the liver-targeted National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP) database, covering a period from 2014 to 2019. A comprehensive analysis of 24,150 hepatectomies was conducted, providing a robust foundation for the study's findings.

The investigators observed a direct association between worsening frailty and an increased incidence of complications. Furthermore, the incorporation of the mFI into the ALBI score yielded notable improvements in predicting complications and 30-day mortality rates. This breakthrough research

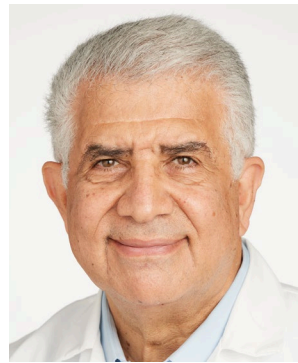
demonstrates the significance of considering frailty as a critical element in assessing the potential risks and outcomes of hepatectomy procedures.

Dr. Maegawa and his co-authors concluded that worsening patient frailty corresponds to an increased incidence of major complications, 30-day mortality, and postoperative liver failure. They also noted that minimally invasive approaches were associated with reduced risk of major complications for both frail and non-frail patients. The researchers emphasized the need for further evaluation of incorporating frailty into established predictive models of post-hepatectomy outcomes through prospective studies.

The results of this study hold considerable promise for advancing the field of hepatectomy and improving surgical outcomes for patients suffering from liver disease. By recognizing and accounting for frailty as a critical factor, medical professionals can refine their decision-making processes and tailor treatments to enhance patient safety and recovery. ■



Felipe Maegawa specializes in general and hepatopancreatobiliary surgery, with a focus on robotic approaches to these procedures.



Omar Lattouf

New Leaders

Omar Lattouf, MD, PhD, has returned to Emory University School of Medicine to serve as the medical director of the cardiothoracic surgery program and chief of cardiothoracic surgery at Tanner Health System.

Dr. Lattouf received his master's degree and PhD in anatomy from Emory University and his MD from Emory's School of Medicine. Prior to returning to Emory to serve in his new leadership role, he held a position at Mount Sinai Morningside Hospital.

Laura Johnson, MD, has been appointed medical director of the Burn Center at Grady Memorial Hospital and associate program director of the Department of Surgery's general surgery residency program.

Dr. Johnson did her fellowship in trauma and surgical critical care at Emory University School of Medicine, and prior to joining our faculty, she held positions at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Georgetown University School of Medicine, Medstar Washington Hospital Center, and the Children's National Medical Center.

Randi Smith, MD, became the vice chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Department of Surgery in January 2022. Serving as a trauma surgeon and surgical ICU physician at Grady Memorial Hospital, Dr. Smith has gained national recognition for her work with hospital-based violence intervention and youth violence reduction programs.

Dr. Smith is involved in efforts to bridge the gap between youth from backgrounds that are under-represented in medicine (URiM) and the medical field, and guide URiM medical students to mentored research experiences.

S. Scott Davis, Jr, MD, became the vice chair of Clinical Affairs for the Department of Surgery in June 2022. Dr. Davis is a professor of surgery in the Division of General and GI Surgery in the Department of Surgery. He specializes in advanced laparoscopy and GI surgery and is the director for the Minimally Invasive Surgery Fellowship in the Emory Endosurgery Unit, one of the longest standing fellowships in the country. He also serves as the co-medical director of Perioperative Services for Emory University Hospital which includes the operating rooms, endoscopy suites, and all perioperative areas.



S. Scott Davis, Jr

New Faculty

Abdl-Rawf Al-Nowaylati, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Dr. Al-Nowaylati completed his plastic and reconstructive microsurgery fellowship at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. His practice is in Emory University Hospital Midtown, where he focuses largely on breast reconstruction.

Elliot Sumner Bishop, MD, Assistant Professor, Trauma and Surgical Critical Care at Grady Memorial Hospital

Dr. Bishop's postgraduate medical training includes a research fellowship and general surgery residency, both at The University of Chicago Medical Center. His primary clinical focus is trauma surgery, surgical critical care, and emergency general surgery.

Ellen Caparosa, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Colorectal Surgery

As a board-certified surgeon, Dr. Caparosa specializes in the surgical management of colon and rectal malignancies as well as inflammatory bowel disease, hereditary colorectal cancer, and anorectal disorders.

Joshua L. Chan, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Dr. Chan received advanced fellowship training in thoracic transplantation and mechanical circulatory support at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. During his postdoctoral research fellowship at the National Institute of Health, he published in areas of xenotransplantation, stem cell therapy, and myocardial revascularization.

Daniel A. Cuzzzone, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

During his residency at NYU Medical Center, Dr. Cuzzzone completed a research fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. His craniofacial fellowship was done at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

Clara R. Farley, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Surgical Oncology

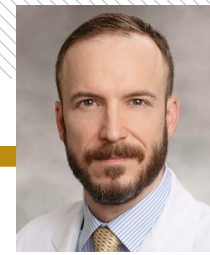
Dr. Farley completed her residency at Emory University, where she received numerous awards and honors, including the Resident Excellence in Teaching Award, J.D. Martin Resident Award, and Elkin Fellowship Award. She joins us after completing her clinical fellowship in breast surgical oncology at the UT MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

Gabriela Garcia Nores, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Dr. Garcia Nores completed her plastic surgery residency at Emory University, followed by a microvascular reconstruction fellowship at the University



Abdl-Rawf Al-Nowaylati



Elliot Sumner Bishop



Ellen Caparosa



Joshua L. Chan



Daniel A. Cuzzzone



Clara R. Farley



Gabriela Garcia Nores



Laura Johnson



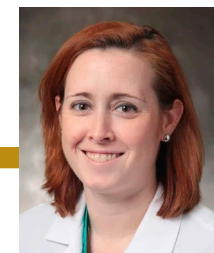
Kanika Kalra



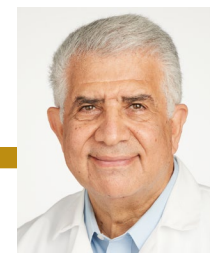
Nidhi Khanna



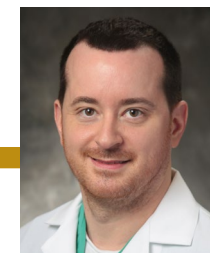
Steven C. Kim



Katherine Kohler



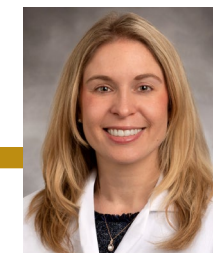
Omar Lattouf



Philip Turner Ramsay



Sheethal Dyapa Reddy



Chelsea Yost

of Pennsylvania. Her general surgery residency was completed at NYU Medical Center, during which she did a two-year research fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Laura Johnson, MD, Acting Associate Professor of Surgery, Trauma and Surgical Critical Care at Grady Memorial Hospital, Medical Director, Grady Memorial Hospital Burn Unit

Dr. Johnson completed her general surgery residency at Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C and did her fellowship in trauma and surgical critical care at Emory University. Prior to joining Emory, she held positions at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Georgetown University School of Medicine, and more.

Kanika Kalra, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Dr. Kalra completed a cardiothoracic research fellowship, general surgery residency, and a cardiothoracic fellowship all at Emory University. Prior to joining our faculty, she held a medical officer position at Delhi High Court Medical and Health Center.

Nidhi Khanna, DO, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Gastrointestinal and General Surgery

Dr. Khanna received her DO from New York College of Osteopathic Medicine, and her postgraduate training includes a general surgery residency at Rowan

University School of Osteopathic Medicine. Prior to joining Emory, she held a position at Southern Regional Medical Center Her primary clinical focus is minimally invasive and robotic surgery.

Steven C. Kim, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Transplantation

Dr. Kim received his MD degree from Emory in 2013 and remained to complete his general surgery residency and a two-year postdoctoral research fellowship. Prior to joining Emory's faculty, he attended the University of Wisconsin for his abdominal transplant surgery fellowship.

Katherine Kohler, MD, FACS, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Trauma and Surgical Critical Care at Grady Memorial Hospital

Dr. Kohler completed a general surgery residency at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and a trauma and surgical critical care fellowship at Emory University. She has been published in The American Surgeon.

Omar Lattouf, MD, PhD, Professor of Surgery, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Dr. Lattouf received his master's degree and PhD in anatomy from Emory, as well as his MD degree. Prior to returning to Emory, he held a position at Mount Sinai Morningside Hospital. His primary clinical focus is on coronary arterial revascularization and repair of valvular heart disease.

Philip Turner Ramsay, MD, FACS, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Trauma and Surgical Critical Care at Grady Memorial Hospital

Dr. Ramsay completed both his general surgery residency and a critical care fellowship at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine. His articles have been published in a number of leading journals including The American Surgeon.

Sheethal Dyapa Reddy, PhD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of General and GI Surgery

Dr. Reddy received her PhD in clinical psychology from Kent State University and her postgraduate training includes a post-doctoral fellowship in Child and Adolescent Behavioral Medicine at Emory. Prior to joining Emory's faculty, she held a position at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Her primary clinical focus is targeted behavioral health interventions for individuals seeking bariatric surgery.

Chelsea Yost, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of General and GI Surgery

Dr. Yost received her MD from the University of Florida and completed her Internal Medicine Residency at Emory University. Her articles have been published in the Encyclopedia of Gastroenterology.

2022 Faculty Awards and Distinctions

Olamide Alabi, MD

Dean's Teaching Award, Emory School of Medicine

I. Raul Badell, MD

Jacobson Promising Investigator Award, 2022 ACS Awards

Castle Connelly Top Doctor

Gary F. Bouloux, MD, DDS, MDSc

Board of Directors, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Foundation

Section Editor, Anesthesia, Facial Pain, and Temporomandibular Joint Pain section, *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*

Kenneth Cardona, MD

Inaugural Holder of Patricia R. Reynold Professorship

M. Andrew Davis, MD

Excellence in Patient Care, Emory School of Medicine

Hakob G. Davtyan, MD

Heart of Columbus Honoree, Greater Columbus Heart and Stroke Ball

Chris Dente, MD

Excellence in Patient Care, Emory School of Medicine

Stephanie Drew, DMD

Regional, National, and International Award, Emory School of Medicine

Megan Durham, MD

Joe Snitzer Master Clinical Award for Clinical Expertise, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

Heather Faulkner, MD

Editorial Board, *Annals of Plastic Surgery*

Vice Chairman of Safety Committee, American Society of Plastic Surgeons

Mandy Ford, PhD

Board of Directors, American Society of Transplantation (AST)

Carla Haack, MD

Site-Based Award – Recognition of Outstanding Leadership, Emory School of Medicine

Jessica Harding, PhD

Harry Keen Award, International Diabetes Epidemiology Group (IDEG)

Juvonda Hodge, MD

Excellence in Patient Care, Emory School of Medicine

Laura Johnson, MD

Outstanding Mentor of the Year, 2022 ACS Awards

William Jordan, MD

Regional, National, and International Award, Emory School of Medicine

Brent Keeling, MD

Regional, National, and International Awards, Emory School of Medicine

Christian Larsen, MD, DPhil

Lifetime Service & Leadership Award, Emory School of Medicine

Albert Losken, MD

Regional, National, and International Awards, Emory School of Medicine

Editorial Board, *Annals of Plastic Surgery*

President, Southeastern Society of Plastic Surgeons

Muralidhar Padala, PhD

Innovation for Impact Award

Ravi Rajani, MD

Editor, *Annals of Vascular Surgery*

Editorial Board, *Journal of Vascular Surgery*

Christopher Ramos, MD

Excellence in Patient Care, Emory School of Medicine

Steven Roser, DMD, MD, FACS, FRCS

Mentoring Award, Emory School of Medicine

Humanitarian Award, American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (ACOMS)

Honorary Doctorate of Global Studies, Universidad de Aquinos, Santa Cruz Bolivia

Re-elected Chair, Advisory Council for Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, American College of Surgeons

Matthew Santore, MD

Excellence in Patient Care, Emory School of Medicine

Virginia Shaffer, MD

Councilor, Association for Academic Surgery

Society of University Surgeons Membership

Fawwaz Shaw, MD

Excellence in Patient Care, Emory School of Medicine

Randi Smith, MD, MPH

2022 Excellence in DEI Award, Emory School of Medicine

Charles Staley, MD

Complex General Surgical Oncology Board, American Board of Surgery

Peter Thompson, MD

Hidden Gems, Emory School of Medicine

David Vega, MD

Regional, National, and International Awards, Emory School of Medicine

Celebrate Life Honoree, Georgia Transplant Foundation

ACS Award Trifecta

Three Department of Surgery faculty members received well-deserved recognition at the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Conference in October 2022, a true showcase of excellence. The honors bestowed upon Idelberto Raul Badell, MD, Brendan Lovasik, MD, and Laura Johnson, MD, FACS, FCCP, serve as a testament to the department's commitment to patient care, education, and research.

Dr. I. Raul Badell, an associate professor of surgery in the Division of Transplantation, was the recipient of The Jacobson Promising Investigator Award. This accolade acknowledges exceptional surgeons who engage in research, advance the art and science of surgery, and exhibit early promise in making significant contributions to the practice of surgery and the safety of surgical patients.

Dr. Badell's research focuses on transplantation immunology and clinical kidney transplantation, and his clinical practice centers around kidney/pancreas transplantation. His remarkable work in the field has also been recognized through other prestigious awards, including the 2018 Vanguard Prize by The American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS) for authoring the best clinical and basic research manuscript from a young investigator. Furthermore, his recognition as the American Journal of Transplantation Editors Pick in 2020 and 2021 highlights his consistent dedication to excellence in research, solidifying his position as a future leader in his field.

Dr. Laura Johnson, the medical director of the Grady Burn Center and associate program director of the Department of Surgery General Surgery Residency, was honored with the 2022 Resident and Associate Society (RAS-ACS) Outstanding Mentor of the Year Award. The ACS established this award to acknowledge an exceptional ACS fellow who has made a profound impact on the engagement of a resident member or associate fellow, providing the necessary support and encouragement to lay the foundation for a successful surgical career.

Dr. Johnson was nominated by Dr. Yewande Alimi, who she mentored at the MedStar Georgetown University Hospital. In her nomination letter, Dr. Alimi praised Dr. Johnson's ability to create space for those in need, whether it was fostering the development of the women in surgery group or guiding others in discovering their true passions in surgery. Dr. Johnson's recognition as an outstanding mentor highlights her exceptional ability to connect, encourage, and empower her mentees.

Dr. Brendan Lovasik, the general surgery chief administrative resident at Emory's School of Medicine, was presented with the 20th Annual ACS Resident Award for Exemplary Teaching. Sponsored by the ACS Division of Education, this award celebrates excellence in teaching and emphasizes the crucial role of teaching in residents' daily lives. Dr. Lovasik's nomination for the award came from Dr. Jahnvi Srinivasan, the program director of the general surgery residency.

In the summer of 2022, Dr. Lovasik received Back to Bedside funding from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) for his project, "Meet Your Surgical Team (MYST): Building the Trainee-Patient Relationship through Improved Recognition of the Resident." This project aims to develop patient-oriented informational materials that describe resident responsibilities and highlight their unique contributions to surgical patient care. By fostering deeper engagement with patient care, the MYST project will have a positive impact on patients, trainees, and the Emory Healthcare system. Dr. Lovasik's dedication to exemplary teaching is exemplified through this project, which underscores his commitment to advancing the field of surgery.

These awards highlight the department's commitment to advancing health care through groundbreaking research, fostering strong mentorship, and promoting exemplary teaching. ■



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Department of Surgery

Department of Surgery

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