Director's Message

As we finish the 2022-23 academic year, it is timely to take stock of Duke Endocrinology. We have grown to a group of 32 clinical endocrinologists and 20 nurse practitioner/physician assistant APPs working across four clinics and the Durham VA. We have added five new faculty and nine APPs in the last year and increased our volume proportionately... but there continues to be a backlog of patients in our queue. The reality is, ours is an underserved specialty with a growing patient base. The advent of new medications that cause meaningful weight loss, rising incidence of endocrinopathies related to cancer treatment, and involvement of endocrinologists in new multi-disciplinary care programs will increase the demand for our services even further. We are working to streamline our diabetes programs by using more online visits and blood glucose data collection; establishing same-day clinics to treat people who have developed severe hyperglycemia; and developing more direct lines of communication and care navigation to transition patients from the hospital to the ambulatory setting. As next steps, we are planning new clinic operations in the Cary-Apex area and an expanded presence in North Raleigh given the rapid population growth in Wake County. Busy but exciting times.

Our research programs have continued to grow and thrive. We now have nine scientists based at the Duke Molecular Physiology Institute conducting basic and translational research related to diabetes. Members of the faculty are also involved in trials of new approaches to diabetes care, in wide-ranging implementation trials. Others have active programs in site-based, multi-site clinical trials, and coordination of multi-national trials through the DCRI. Of great significance for the future of the division we have had several young investigators make significant progress initiating independent research programs focused on health disparities in diabetes, diagnosis and treatment of NAFLD in diabetes, and hypoglycemic counter-regulation.

Finally, we are delighted to announce the establishment of the Lindquist Distinguished Professorship and Chair created by a gift from a patient cared for by the great Dr. Diana McNeil. This is yet another well-deserved honor for Dr. McNeil in recognition of her substantial contributions to the Division of Endocrinology and Duke University School of Medicine. Diana continues to teach, mentor and inspire the many of us in her orbit, and makes us proud to be Dukies.

Drop by and see us when you are in town.

David D’Alessio, MD
Professor, Dept of Medicine
Director, Division of Endocrinology
Ph: 919-684-5778
david.d’alessio@duke.edu
Fellows Corner:
Words from the Program Director

It has been another great year for our fellowship crew. Our first-year fellows – Felicia Williams, Athavi Jeevananthan, and Tamara de Souza – have served as the faces of our division on the inpatient wards at Duke and the Durham VA. All of our first-years have provided excellent clinical care and are developing plans for their scholarly work. Great job, you three!

Our upper-level fellows have likewise continued their outstanding work. Luci Cotten will complete her clinical track fellowship in June, after which she will enter practice close to home near Athens, Georgia. Michelle Ponder has cultivated a strong interest in obesity medicine and, excitingly, joined our Duke faculty in July 2023. Lucy Esteve will continue as a research fellow next year, and is engaged in exciting work examining use of wearable technologies as a means to enhance detection of prediabetes. Jashalynn German joined Duke faculty in July, where she will continue her research examining racial disparities in utilization of diabetes technology and pancreas transplantation. Finally, Scott Carlson joined our faculty and will continue his work examining the metabolic effects of gender-affirming hormone therapy and characterizing gaps in the care of transgender patients.

I am also thrilled to report that we had another stellar recruiting season. Three outstanding new fellows joined us in July 2023:

Randol Kennedy, MBBS (Clinical Track)
Randol graduated from the University of the West Indies Faculty of Medical Sciences and completed his residency and chief residency at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center in Cleveland. He is a hospitalist and core teaching faculty at Cleveland Clinic-Akron. Randol has strong interests in clinical education and mentorship, and recently coached his team of residents to victory in the ACP Ohio Chapter Doctors Dilemma Competition.

Neesha Namasingh, MD (Research Track)
Neesha graduated from Brown University Medical School and completed her residency at Duke. She is a hospitalist at Duke Regional Hospital. She has strong interests in health equity, health services research, and medical education, and will explore these areas in her clinical work and research during fellowship.

Arya Sharifzadeh, MD (Clinical Track)
Arya graduated from St. George’s University School of Medicine and completed his residency at Florida Atlantic University (where he is a chief resident). Arya has strong interests in clinical education, curricular development, and patient advocacy. These will be central to his clinical and scholarly work during fellowship.
Finally, a few other notable recent events to share:

We wished the great **Bob Horn** a happy retirement with a party at the University Club in March. This was a wonderful event, during which our fellows and faculty were able to thank Bob for all he has meant to our program over the years.

Thanks to Bryan Batch, Stef Alexopoulos, and others for organizing a great event!

Also in March, our team attended the latest North Carolina Endocrinology Fellows Series gathering over at UNC. This is a fun recurring event where fellows and faculty from Duke, UNC, Wake Forest, and ECU programs get together to network and present interesting cases.

Our fellows performed extremely well (as always) – special thanks to Athavi for presenting the Duke program’s case! The next event is planned for October at Wake Forest.

Finally – and most importantly – the Duke Endo family continues to grow! Lucy (Stella), Luci (Ender), and Scott (Nicholas) have all welcomed new kiddos over the past months.

Thanks so much to all of our fellows and faculty for making our fellowship thrive! Looking forward to more good times ahead.

Thanks,

Matt Crowley, Program Director
Traci Womble, Program Coordinator
**Fellows Corner: Fellow Spotlight**

**Dr. Scott Carlson** is a third-year research fellow and has worked with **Dr. Carly Kelley** at the Gender Medicine clinic since his second year of fellowship. Dr. Carlson had his own gender medicine clinic panel which allowed him to gain more experience with gender medicine under the mentorship and supervision of Dr. Kelley. “It has been such a privilege to be able to hone my clinical and interpersonal skills while being able to meet and advocate for our patients,” he said.

Gender medicine is a relatively new academic field, and through the Duke Adult Gender Medicine DREAM project and other research projects Drs. Carlson and Kelley are working to improve and expand evidence-based care. “Each patient brings a new perspective and often a new clinical learning and teaching opportunity, and these experiences are invaluable for developing my knowledge and practice, as well as empathy,” he said.

Along with Drs. Kelley and Carlson the South Durham Gender Medicine team is comprised of an amazing team including Quincy Jones, MSW, LCSW, MHS, PA-C, Sarah Kokosa, PharmD, CPP, Shivon Lamb-Dixon, MSN-ED, APRN, FNP-C, CMGT-BC and the South Durham clinical staff. Dr. Carlson said, “We strive to provide a gender-affirming experience from check-in to check-out, and we are able to connect patients with services such as speech/voice therapy, fertility, urology, plastic surgery, PrEP, and others.”

North Carolina now has the largest percentage of gender diverse individuals in the country, and Duke Adult Gender Medicine clinic aims to serve this growing population and become a regional and national leader in gender-affirming care. We are excited that Dr. Carlson joined our Division’s faculty in July 2023.

**Dr. Jashalynn German** is a third-year research fellow and has continued to be engaged in health services research with a focus in health disparities. She has presented her work nationally, regionally, and also was an honored participant in the Duke University School of Medicine, Dean’s Distinguished Research Session. She has been working with Dr. Susan Spratt and several faculty in the Division of General Internal Medicine, the Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics and Duke Health Technology solutions, on Duke Health’s Collaborative to Advance Clinical Health Equity (CACHE) supported work.

Dr. German said she hopes to “improve understanding of diabetes care and outcome in order to identify areas of potential improvement in diabetes management for Duke patients.” Findings from her work will lead to targeted interventions to improve diabetes outcomes with a focus on populations with poorly controlled diabetes. Dr. German has also received numerous awards including the 2023 Emerging-Generation (E-Gen) Award from The American Society for Clinical Investigation and is the 2022-2024 Inaugural Veteran Affairs ADAPT COIN Equity Scholar. We are excited that Dr. Jashalynn German joined our Division’s faculty in July 2023.

**Dr. Lucy Esteve** is a second-year research fellow. She works in collaboration with the Duke Bioengineering Big Ideas Lab on the use of wearable devices as predictors of metabolic health. “I am interested in better understanding the physiological processes underlying wearable data variables such as heart rate variability and electrodermal activity,” she said.

Her research studies the utility of these wearable variables in developing artificial intelligence models for prediction of hyperglycemia. Dr. Esteve is also participating in the DOM Fellow Research Academy, Duke GME Medical Education Leadership Track (MELT) program and completing her first year of the Duke Clinical Research Training Program (CRTP).
Dr. Michelle Ponder is a second-year fellow in the clinical track. She has an interest in general endocrinology with a focus in obesity medicine. “I am thrilled to have obtained board certification in obesity medicine this year,” she said. She is working on research examining diabetes outcomes after bariatric surgery, and a QI project in optimizing the VA insulin order set with her co-fellows. In addition to her clinical pursuits, this year she served as a clinical skills evaluator for the second-year medical students’ diabetes OSCE exam and spoke about her pathway to becoming a doctor at the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) Convention in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Dr. Lucy Cotten is a second-year fellow in the clinical track. She said, “Although I am very sad to be leaving Duke after graduation, I am excited to be joining Endocrine Specialists of Athens, a private community practice in Athens, Georgia in the fall.” Dr. Cotten has an interest in general endocrinology and medical education. Along with co-fellow Dr. Michelle Ponder, she is working on a case report and poster presentation called A Case if Insulin-Like Growth Factor 2 Mediated Hypoglycemia in a Young Man with Metastatic Cholangiocarcinoma. On a personal note, she and her husband welcomed their second son, Ender Peyton Riblett, on Thanksgiving Day 2022.

Dr. Felicia Williams and her mentor Dr. Susan Spratt have also been working on a project evaluating the effectiveness of a Duke virtual personal health planning program on hemoglobin A1c, blood pressure, and lipids outcomes for patients with uncontrolled type 2 diabetes. Currently her study is in the data analysis phase and they plan for publication soon.

Dr. Williams along with her other first-year co-fellows, Drs. Athavi Jeevananthan and Tamara de Souza, are working on expanding a QI project regarding SGLT2-euglycemic DKA Best Practice Advisory (BPA) trigger in our electronic medical record system (EPIC). Dr. Williams said, “We are trying to optimize the current BPA trigger which will help with patient safety and identifying patients on SGLT2 inhibitors at risk of euglycemia DKA.” She also hopes the improved BPA trigger will aid in the diagnosis of euglycemic DKA in this hospitalized patient population.

SPECIAL NOTE: Drs. Lucy Esteve, Michelle Ponder, and Felicia Williams are working on a QI project at the Durham Department of Veteran Affairs. Together with several colleagues from the Internal Medicine department, they are working to rewrite the insulin order set. The pre-existing order set at the VA only included one sliding scale option, set at 2 units per 50mg/dL over 150, which they felt to be too aggressive for many patients in the hospital. They hope the new order set will reduce hypoglycemia for many patients, while also simplifying the order process for all providers.

Dr. Tamara de Souza has a clinical interest in bone, and research interest in identifying the addressing disparities in care in that arena. She kicked off her research fellowship by participating in the year long REACH Equity Health Disparities Research Curriculum which helped her develop systematic review compilation skills by assisting the Durham VA ESP group with this year’s topic. Dr. de Souza said she is “excited to collaborate with my first-year co-fellows with our QI project focused on extending the evaluation of our eDKA BPA that was started by recent former fellow Dr. Soliman.” She also has published an article about ectopic cushing’s syndrome.

Dr. Athavi Jeevananthan is a first-year research fellow who said, “I have an interest in thyroid, menopause, and gender medicine.” Recently she presented a rare case of plurihormonal plurimorphous pituitary tumor with Dr. Lauren Gratian at Endocrine Society 2023. She is also working alongside her class of fellows Drs. Felicia Williams and Tamara De Souza on a QI project assessing the effectiveness of Best Practice Advisory in early diagnosis of euglycemic DKA in the inpatient setting. She will be participating in CRTP courses in the upcoming year.
Diabetes Clinical Highlight

Dr. Jennifer Green is a professor of medicine and a faculty member of the Duke Clinical Research Institute. She said her “research has focused upon strategies to treat diabetes and reduce the risk of cardiovascular, kidney and other diabetes-related complications.” Her work with the Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI) has included protocol development, oversight of adjudication committees, and clinical and operational leadership for several large, international trials designed to determine the cardiovascular effects of glucose-lowering medications (TECOS, EXSCEL, and Harmony Outcomes).

Dr. Green currently serves as US coordinating center PI and US national representative for the EMPA-Kidney trial of empagliflozin therapy in patients with chronic kidney disease. She said, “EMPA-Kidney found that empagliflozin reduced the risk of a composite cardiorenal outcomes in a broad spectrum of individuals with chronic kidney disease, with or without diabetes and currently the long term follow-up study of the participants is ongoing.”

She was also part of the multidisciplinary leadership team for COORDINATE-Diabetes, a trial which was successful in increasing delivery of guideline-based therapies (including SGLT2i and GLP-1RA) to patients with T2D and ASCVD who received care in cardiology clinics across the US. She is now leading an innovative, centralized study of an intervention to reduce the risk of future diabetic foot ulceration which will be conducted using an EHR-linked software platform developed by a Duke faculty member.

Dr. Green is a program committee member planning the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) 2023 Congress. She also has concluded three years of service as a member of the American Diabetes Association’s (ADA) Professional Practice Committee, which publishes the organization’s annual Standards of Care in Diabetes. She is now a member of the ADA-EASD writing group which recently revised a joint consensus statement on the management of hyperglycemia in type 2 diabetes.

Duke Endocrine Gives Back to the Community

Duke Endocrinology has been participating in health fairs for many years. How did all this begin you ask?

Durham Diabetes Coalition was established in 2010. At that time, Drs. Susan Spratt and Bryan Batch provided diabetes education and screening events. “We soon realized that we could reach more people if we joined other large health screening conferences.” said Dr. Spratt. They expanded their work and they started using the American Diabetes Association Risk Assessment to determine who needs A1c testing. “We provided medical advice at the time of testing and many participants sought health guidance and diabetes screening,” she said. Once abnormal findings were found the volunteer teams communicated with primary care providers to get patients follow up visits.

This tradition still continues today! This year several Duke Endocrinology providers and staff participated in the Duke Diabetes Screening booth Saturday April 15, 2023 at North Carolina Central University (NCCU).

This team screening effort involved the same process developed years ago by Drs. Spratt and Batch which included ADA DM risk assessment, HbA1c testing, counseling and education by providers and dieticians. Drs. Susan Spratt, Bryan Batch, Jyothi Rao, Genie McPeak Hinz, Brandi Hawkins & daughter Kayla, and to Speakers Sarah Kokosa, Jashalyn German, and Lynnette Spencer!
Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Rana Gupta

Did you know that your body is in constant dialogue with its own fat, and fat talks a lot? Rana Gupta, PhD, is a professor of medicine at Duke University School of Medicine and a member of the Duke Molecular Physiology Institute. He joined the endocrine faculty in 2022 and his research has received international recognition.

Dr. Gupta is an investigator in the field of adipose biology and his research is focused on adipose tissue development and function. “Your fat tissue is not just an energy bank, it's not just an energy furnace,” he said. “It's a very talkative, chatty tissue that communicates with the whole body. Moreover, it's also an immunological organ.”

His lab has contributed novel findings related to adipocyte homeostasis and metabolic health. The Gupta lab studies the major regulatory effects of adipose tissue on overall metabolic homeostasis via the production of adipokines as well as differences in adipose tissue metabolism (white fat versus brown fat). His lab is also focused on identifying cellular cross-talk in the regulation in adipose tissue and how that relates to metabolic health. His research group studies how adipose tissues develop and expand. “Each kind of fat tissue has its own precursor cells, and unlike other cells, fat cells don’t divide to copy themselves. They arise through differentiation of progenitor cells. What fat cells also do that's different is dramatically change their individual sizes — fat cells themselves get fatter. They accumulate more and more lipid in response to the continual oversupply of energy,” he said. As fat cells enlarge, they start to die and get “chewed up by these immune cells” which creates a lot of inflammation.

Dr. Gupta’s lab is also further studying transcription factors related to energy metabolism in adipocytes. Specifically, Dr. Gupta’s lab removed a key transcription factor from an obese mouse which resulted in more energy-burning brown adipose tissue, weight loss, and improved glucose metabolism. The goal is to learn how to make our adipose tissue healthier, resulting in better metabolic health, or converting energy-storing white adipose tissue into energy-burning brown adipose tissue to burn excess calories.
Recent National Endocrine Presentations

PEDIATRIC ENDOCRINE SOCIETY

ENDO 2023


AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION
Anastasia Alexopoulos, MD, “Gaps in the Use of Evidence-Based Diabetes Medications for NASH.” Poster Presentation, American Diabetes Association, 83rd Scientific Session, June 2023, San Diego, California.


Jennifer Green, MD, Chris Granger, MD, and Neha Pagidipati, MD. “Background and Rationale.” Speaker at COORDINATE-Diabetes Trial Results Symposium, American Diabetes Association, 83rd Scientific Session, June 2023, San Diego, California.


UPCOMING NATIONAL ENDOCRINE CONFERENCE
Clinical Endocrinology Update (CEU) September 21-23, 2023
Leonor Corsino, MD; Oral moderator for several lectures:

- “Diabetic Retinopathy: Prevention and Treatment (Diabetes)”
- “Inpatient Diabetes Management Updates (Diabetes)”
- “Management of Hyperglycemia in Type 2 Diabetes (Diabetes)”
- “Using Diabetes Technology in Patients with Type 2 Diabetes (Diabetes)”
- “Diabetic Retinopathy: Prevention and Treatment (Diabetes)”

RECENT PUBLICATIONS
See a listing of recent publications on our website: https://duke.is/9/sapu
Awards and Honors

Dave D’Alessio, MD, was selected co-recipient of the 2023 Neil L. Spector Art of Medicine Award
Read more https://duke.is/2/gnph

Jashalynn German, MD, received the 2023 Emerging-Generation (E-Gen) Award, the American Society for Clinical Investigation & was a 2022-2024 Inaugural Veteran Affairs ADAPT COIN Equity Scholar

Carly Kelley, MD, received the Duke Science and Technology (DST) Launch Seed Grant (September 1, 2022-August 31, 2023) for her study “DREAM – Duke Research toward Equitable Access to Medicine.” & received the Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award for Capacity Building (September 1, 2023-August 31, 2025) for her study “DREAM-Engage.”

Kathryn Kreider, DNP, received The Betsy Love McClung Development Award for demonstrating leadership, scholarship, vision, enthusiasm, courage and determination to extend the knowledge and role of endocrine nursing.

Wanda Lakey, MD, received the 2022-2023 Duke Endocrinology Faculty Teaching Award

Diana McNeill, MD, was honored by a grateful patient with the Presidential Distinguished Chair Professorship in Endocrinology Read more https://duke.is/g/9hyk

Afreen Shariff, MD, receives the 2023 ACCC Innovator Award from Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) Read more https://duke.is/2/8e65

Leonor Corsino, MD, MHS, received the 2023 Feagin Leadership Program Alumni Network Award. This annual award goes to a faculty member who has demonstrated superb leadership and impacted students and healthcare in a positive manner. She also received the 2023 Duke School of Medicine Medical Alumni Association – Transformational Leadership Award for her work as a member of the LATIN-19 (Latinx Advocacy Team and Interdisciplinary Network for COVID-19) Executive Team.

How to Give Back to Duke Endocrinology

The possibilities for advancing all aspects of our mission are virtually limitless. We invite you - our faculty, staff, former trainees, and friends - to join us in shaping the future of endocrinology. Generous supporters like you will make it possible for us to open doors of discovery that might otherwise remain closed, and train tomorrow's leaders in endocrinology. To find out how you can partner with us, please contact Duke Health Development and Alumni Affairs: 919-385-0059, gregory.bolwell@duke.edu

In Memory of Duke Endocrinology Nurse Gina Gammell
Gina Gammell, RN, was a beloved member of our Duke Endocrinology clinic 1A for almost a decade. She was a gentle and loving person who prided herself on patient care and education. She also was a great support figure for the providers and co-workers who knew her and worked closely with her. Her smile could warm up a room and bring peace to those around her.

Help keep Gina's memory and legacy alive by supporting the Gina Wagstaff Gammell Memorial Nursing Education Award! This is a Duke University Health System Ambulatory Services award to help provide funds for employees seeking a nursing degree.

To find out more, visit https://www.supportdukehealth.org/site/TR?fr_id=1830&pg=entry