

The
4th Annual
OSCAR Symposium

Thursday, November 16, 2023

8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Hybrid

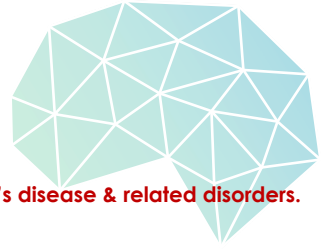


University of
Pittsburgh

Alzheimer's Disease Research Center
Research Education Component

Sponsored by NIH grant P30AG066468
PI: Oscar L. Lopez, MD

The 4th Annual OSCAR Symposium



Thursday, November 16, 2023

Featuring leaders and trainees in research on Alzheimer's disease & related disorders.

Hybrid on campus & Zoom

AGENDA

8:30 am Continental Breakfast & Networking

9:00 am **Welcome & Poster Session**

10:00 **Keynote: Cultivating a Culture of Excellence: Academic Leadership Practices that Enhance Performance and Well-being**

Kyaien O. Conner, PhD, LSW, MPH

University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

Q&A with Dr. Conner

11:00 am 10-minute break

11:10 am **OSCAR Scholar Rapid Talks**

Marissa Gogniat, PhD, MS

Assistant Professor in Department of Neurology, School of Medicine

Christi Kolarcik, PhD

Research Assistant Professor of Pathology, School of Medicine

Jr-Jiun (Jean) Liou, PhD, Meng

Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Bioengineering, Swanson School of Engineering

Sarah Royse, PhD, MPH

Research Instructor, Department of Radiology, School of Medicine

Licelia (CeCe) Williams, PhD, MBA, BSRT(T)

Postdoctoral Scholar in Department of Occupational Therapy, Instructor, Department of Physician Assistant Studies, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Q&A with the OSCAR Scholars

12:20 pm **Presentation of Poster Awards & Closing Statements**



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The OSCAR Symposium is coordinated by the **Research Education Component (REC)** at the University of Pittsburgh Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC).

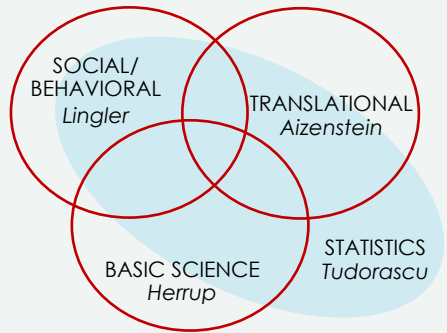
REC Leadership

- ▶ Howard Aizenstein, MD, PhD
- ▶ Jennifer Lingler, PhD, CRNP

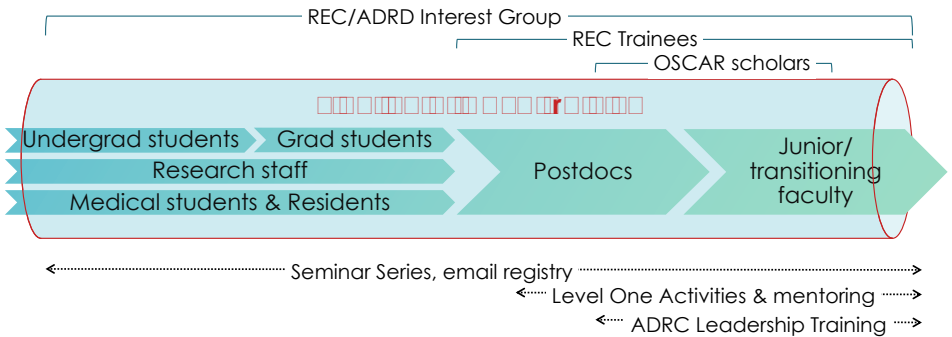
Co-Investigators

- ▶ Karl Herrup, PhD
- ▶ Dana Tudorascu, PhD

REC Coordinator Melissa Knox



- ▶ Pitt's ADRC seeks to identify and attract new trainees to the research field on Alzheimer's disease and related disorders (ADRD) and to grow and support their career development.
- ▶ The REC assumes primary responsibility for executing this vision for advancing the ADRC research workforce and places emphasis on cultivating the growth of this field's future leaders across the pipeline of ADRC training.



Optimizing Scientific Careers in Alzheimer's Disease Research

Scholars Program

A subset of trainees who demonstrate extraordinary potential are recruited to spend one year as an OSCAR scholar and participate in:

- ▶ ADRC-specific leadership development activities and
- ▶ a leadership apprenticeship with an ADRC Core Leader or Associate Leader.

This symposium was developed for the 2023 OSCAR scholars. Learn more about the current cohort of scholars on pages 6 & 7.

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|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Race, Meaning & Purpose in Life, and Markers of Brain Health for Alzheimer's Disease | Aishwarya Mukundan, MPH, BS |
| 2 | Enhancement in sleep induced by repetitive TMS | Coco Dong, RN |
| 3 | Unfair treatment, social cohesion, and cognition in Black adults living in urban neighborhoods. | Erica Fan, MPH |
| 4 | Neighborhood disadvantage and the association between imaging biomarkers of Alzheimer's disease and cognition in a cohort of diverse older adults | Erica Fan, MPH |
| 5 | DNA Damage and Neuronal Senescence: Differential Vulnerabilities of Neurons in Different Cortical Layers | Gnanesh Gutta, BS |
| 6 | Understanding the Female Advantage in Verbal Memory Among Individuals with Unimpaired Cognition and Mild Cognitive Impairment | Hannah Dewhurst, BS |
| 7 | Creating Inclusive Research Through Culturally Aware Data Collection Sites | Hector Salazar, BSN |
| 8 | Assessing the Correlations Between LATE Pathology and Amygdala Volume in Neurodegenerative Diseases Using 7T Postmortem MRI | Jaehoon Noh, BS |
| 9 | Predictors of Decisional Capacity in AD Biomarker Test Candidates | Jeong Eun Kim, BSN |
| 10 | Age- and Sex-Related Morphological Changes in Cerebral Blood Vessels: A 7T TOF MRA Study | Jiatai Li, BS |
| 11 | Assessing the Correlations Between Pathology and Hippocampal Volume in Neurodegenerative Diseases Using 7T Postmortem MRI | Jr-Jiun Liou, PhD |



Visit the Online
Poster Gallery
to browse
abstracts and
full details.

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|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 12 | Psychosocial Factors are Associated with Physical Activity in Older Adults with Musculoskeletal Pain: Cross-Sectional Findings from the Cardiovascular Health Study | Kailyn Witonsky, BA |
| 13 | The Functional Role of ENPP6 in the Pathogenesis of Psychosis in Alzheimer's Disease | Khushi Rai, BS |
| 14 | Transcriptomic Profiling of Astrocytes in Alzheimer's Disease: Revealing Cellular States and Molecular Alterations | Kimia Ghafari , BS |
| 15 | Social Characteristics of Racial Minority Stroke Survivors and Perceived Discrimination: A Secondary Analysis | Lilcelia Williams, PhD |
| 16 | Subjective Memory and Perceived Risk of Alzheimer's Disease among African American Adults | Lilcelia Williams, PhD |
| 17 | The Alzheimer's Disease-Associated TREM2 R47H Exacerbates Ferroptosis through GPX4 | Lili Lu, PhD |
| 18 | University of Pittsburgh National Sports Brain Bank for Contact Sports Participants: An overview of data collected during the first 6 months | Mary Gantz Marker, PhD |
| 19 | Neuron-Preserving Tau Coincides with Distribution of HSV-1 Proteins in Alzheimer's Disease | Vanesa Hyde, BA |
| 20 | Change in Alzheimer's Disease Gray Matter Cortical Signature is Associated with Treatment Response in Late-Life Depression | Saurab Faruque, MPH |

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| 21 | Transcriptomics Atlas of Aged Human Brain Immune Cells: Unraveling Pathology-Associated Changes in Alzheimer's Disease | Shihan Wang, MD candidate |
| 22 | Big Five Personality Characteristics, Neuropsychological Performance, and Subjective Cognitive Functioning in Older Adults | Taylor Lazzari, BS |
| 23 | G Protein-Coupled Receptor Kinase 2 Modulates Tau Pathogenesis In Human Neurons | Thais Rafael Guimarães, BS |
| 24 | Do Cardiovascular, Metabolic, or Inflammatory Risk Factors Relate to Brain Age in Late Life? | Thomas Kraynak, PhD |
| 25 | Investigating Non-Canonical SUMF1 in Alzheimer's Disease with Psychosis | Tiffany Ku, MS |
| 26 | APOE Stratified Genome-Wide Meta-Analysis of Cognitive Decline across Neurocognitive Domains in Older Adults | Vibha Acharya, PhD Candidate |
| 27 | GRK2 Activity Promotes Aβ Generation by Altering GPR3 Signaling and Intracellular Trafficking | William Lu, BS |
| 28 | Dignity in People with Dementia: A Concept Analysis | Yuchen Zhang, RN, BSN |

Vote for the best posters!

Scan the QR code to cast your vote for your top three posters by 11:10.

Poster awards will be presented at 12:20.

Cultivating a Culture of Excellence: Academic Leadership Practices that Enhance Performance and Well-being

Dr. Conner will discuss her road to leadership in teaching, scholarship, research as well as in the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) space. Dr. Conner will discuss the role of authenticity, collaboration and teamwork and being in environments where your voice is heard. She will discuss strategies and practices for enhancing well-being while moving towards ambitious goals.



Professor and Donald M. Henderson Endowed Chair

Director of the Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP)

Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Kyaien O. Conner, PhD, LSW, MPH

Dr. Conner's research investigates the factors that influence disparities in health and mental health service utilization and treatment outcomes for racial and ethnic minorities. She focuses on the development and evaluation of culturally meaningful approaches to improving behavioral health for communities of color. She is currently the PI of a research award (PCORI) to evaluate the impact of a transitions in care intervention to reduce health disparities among African American and Latino/Hispanic patients being discharged from the hospital with chronic illness and co-occurring mental illness.

She is a co-investigator on a multi-site R01 (NIMH) to evaluate the efficacy of training volunteers in low-income communities to deliver a brief intervention for depression to their acutely depressed peers in an effort to build community capacity. Dr. Conner is the DEI lead for the NIH funded Advanced Research Institute for Geriatric Psychiatry. Dr. Conner also is focused on the development of policy and legislation which supports health equity. Dr. Conner wrote a bill that signed into law on 6/17/2021 to restructure the Florida State Office of Minority Health and Health Equity (Senate Bill 404 sponsored by State Senator Darryl Rouson Senate Bill 404 (2021) - The Florida Senate (flsenate.gov))

Dr. Conner has received several awards for her work including the Distinguished Alumni Award (University of Pittsburgh, 2023), Chancellors Award for Excellence in Civic and Community Engagement, (University of South Florida, 2022), and Black Faculty Member of the year (University of South Florida, 2021).



Marissa Gogniat, PhD, MS

Dr. Gogniat is an incoming Assistant Professor at Pitt's School of Medicine. She specializes in the neurobiology of aging and aims to understand the neuroprotective mechanisms of health and wellness in older adults.

Her research combines neuroimaging, clinical neuropsychology, kinesiology, public health, and advanced statistical methodologies to uncover the neural basis of lifestyle factors, particularly physical activity, and their impact on neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease.

She served as a clinical Neuropsychology postdoctoral T32 fellow at the Vanderbilt Memory and Alzheimer's Center.

As an OSCAR scholar, Dr. Gogniat seeks to enhance her leadership skills, establish connections with field leaders, and foster peer collaborations.

ADRC Core:
Clinical Core

ADRC Mentor:
Dr. Beth Snitz



Christi Kolarcik, PhD

Dr. Kolarcik is a Research Assistant Professor of Pathology in the School of Medicine. She is dedicated to determining the biological mechanisms underlying dysfunction in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and frontal temporal dementia (FTD).

She is specifically interested in the neural circuit-level mechanisms responsible for the overlapping clinical phenotypes observed in ALS-FTD spectrum disorders. Her long-term goals are to link circuit- to cellular- to molecular-level events in ALS and FTD, thereby informing the design of therapeutic strategies.

As an OSCAR Scholar, Dr. Kolarcik looks forward to establishing collaborative partnerships and further developing her leadership and mentorship skills.

ADRC Core:
Clinical Core

Mentor:
Dr. Riddhi Patira



Jr-Jiun (Jean) Liou, PhD, MEng

Dr. Liou, a postdoctoral associate in bioengineering, specializes in utilizing neuroimaging and biomarkers for diagnostic and therapeutic applications in AD.

Working alongside Dr. Tamer Ibrahim's and Julia Kofler's teams, her research goals involve advancing diagnostic tools through a combination of imaging modalities and biomarkers for improved AD prediction and diagnosis. She also aims to contribute to targeted AD drug development using functional MRI and tau PET scans.

As an OSCAR Scholar in the Neuroimaging Core, she seeks to establish connections in AD research, gain fresh perspectives, and investigate the discrepancies between in vivo scans and histological observations of tissue degeneration.

ADRC Core:
Neuroimaging

ADRC Mentors:
Drs. Ann Cohen &
Victor Villemagne



Sarah K. Royse, PhD, MPH

Dr. Royse is a Research Instructor in Radiology. Her research specializes in the etiology and progression of ADRD pathology, with a specific focus on African American populations.

Using innovative neuroimaging techniques, she aims to assess ADRD biomarkers in relation to exposures more common in this population. Dr. Royse also seeks to enhance causal interpretations in observational ADRD neuroimaging studies through the application of epidemiological methods.

As an OSCAR Scholar in the Neuroimaging core, she aims to develop leadership skills for transdisciplinary ADRD research and acquire practical management techniques for complex research projects. Additionally, she hopes to accelerate her professional growth by observing effective leadership and management strategies in ADRD research.

ADRC Core:
Neuroimaging

Mentor:
Dr. Ann Cohen



Lilcelia (CeCe) A. Williams, PhD, MBA, BSRT(T)

Dr. Williams is a postdoctoral trainee in Pitt's Integrated Clinical Research and Geroscience T32 program and an Instructor in the department of Physician Assistant Studies.

Her research focuses on health disparities in Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) experienced by racial and ethnic minority communities. Driven by her background in healthcare administration and the identification of system barriers, she aims to establish sustainable practices for equitable access to quality patient-centered care for minoritized communities. Her goal is to create inclusive healthcare environments that empower minoritized patients to actively participate in their healthcare and advocate for meaningful outcomes.

Dr. Williams aspires to be a clinician scientist with expertise in health equity research for ADRD and related conditions, leading research on contributors to health disparities and developing effective practices.

Through the OSCAR Scholars Program, she seeks collaboration opportunities and intends to gain expertise in designing qualitative research studies with large datasets, grantsmanship, and dissemination.

ADRC Core:
Outreach,
Recruitment, &
Education Core

Mentor:
Dr. Jennifer Lingler

Thank you for attending the
4th Annual OSCAR Symposium

If you would like to learn more about the University of Pittsburgh Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, the Research Education Component, or the OSCAR scholars program, please visit www.adrc.pitt.edu or email the REC Coordinator, Melissa at mlk42@pitt.edu.