

# INTERNAL MEDICINE NEWS

Spring 2021

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## FACULTY MEMBER HIGHLIGHT: DR. PAUL CARSON



Dr. Paul Carson has served as an infectious disease consultant for Sanford Health in Fargo, and has been a faculty member with the UND SMHS Department of Internal Medicine since 1996. He holds many other positions within the state of North Dakota as well, including: medical director of Villa Maria Nursing Home in Fargo, medical director for

the Center for Immunization Research and Education in the Department of Public Health at NDSU, state content expert on antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial stewardship for the ND Department of Health, and professor of practice for the Department of Public Health at NDSU.

During the pandemic, Dr. Carson has worked in several forums to research and spread information on SARS-CoV-2. Currently, Dr. Carson is the co-principal investigator on a grant to study the epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 infection, and the durability of immunity to natural infection vs. vaccine-induced immunity in the state. This will be a collaboration between both NDSU and UND in the departments of public health and at the medical school with Dr. Amber Lyon-Colbert, Dr. Pamela Jo Johnson, Dr. Donald Warne, Dr. Joshua Wynne, and Dr. David Bradley. The project will entail a survey of representative households across the state for infection history, risk factors for infection, access to testing, access to vaccine, testing for B and T cell

immunity to the virus, and B and T cell immunity to any received vaccines. Dr. Carson is also working on another collaborative study with investigators from NDSU and UND to assess the true range of the SARS-CoV-2 incubation period by doing serial PCR testing of college students while in quarantine after exposure to the virus.

Dr. Carson has been frequently called upon in an advisory capacity as a local expert on SARS-CoV-2. He has served as a formal advisor to the ND Department of Health, the Governor's COVID-19 Incident Command, the Red River Task Force, and the North Dakota University System on issues related to SARS-CoV-2 management, testing, and vaccination. He has also done innumerable lectures and press interviews on topics related to SARS-CoV-2.

Despite working most of his career primarily as a clinician, Dr. Carson has had significant scholarly output throughout his career and up to the present time. He has had over 40 peer-reviewed journal publications, including five in 2020, and three abstracts accepted at national meetings last year. Two recent publications were related to improving vaccine uptake and overcoming vaccine hesitancy, and two were related to SARS-CoV-2. One of these included a study overseeing a pharmacy/MPH student research project which identified a strikingly high seroprevalence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in ND community pharmacists early in the pandemic.



## NEW CLERKSHIP COORDINATOR

The Department of Internal Medicine has welcomed a new Clerkship Coordinator: Kathryn (Kat) Camburn. She is replacing Carla Mosser, who is moving into the Administrative Officer position. Kat was the clerkship coordinator for the UND Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Health before joining our department. She is a Grand Forks native and has been with the University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences since 2017. If you have any questions regarding third-year medical education or students, feel free to contact her at [kathryn.camburn@UND.edu](mailto:kathryn.camburn@UND.edu).

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## CLINICIAN Q&A:

# DR. SUNITA SHARMA

Dr. Sunita Sharma is a cardiologist at the Heart and Vascular Center at Sanford Health. She received her medical degree in basic and clinical pharmacology from the Indira Gandhi Government Medical College and Hospital in Nagpur, India. Dr. Sharma went on to receive her Ph.D. in Pharmacology, Physiology & Therapeutics from UND, where she went on to complete her residency in Internal Medicine as well. In 2018, Dr. Sharma completed her fellowship in cardiovascular medicine at Beth Israel Lahey Health in Burlington, Massachusetts.

### **Please describe your current clinical practice.**

I am full time cardiologist at Sanford Health. The practice involves inpatient service (generally one week per month), and the other three weeks divided into outpatient cardiology clinic and imaging days (reading echocardiogram, stress tests, and doing procedures (transesophageal echocardiograms, cardioversions).

### **How long have you been with the UND SMHS?**

I was with UND initially from 2005 to 2013 (for my Ph.D. and then internal medicine residency). I then moved for further training in cardiology in Boston, Mass., and my ties to UND brought me back to join as a faculty member. I still remember when one of my patients in Boston made a comment that I have an accent and I said: “You betcha, I am from North Dakota.”

### **Do you serve on any UND committees?**

I have had the opportunity to serve on the Graduate Curriculum Committee, Scholarly Research Committee, and Professional Practice and Improvement Committee during my association with UND.

### **How do you balance clinical practice and an academic career?**

When I had my twins, I was told “it takes a village” and I strongly believe it is just the same when it comes to balance clinical practice and an academic career. My husband’s constant support and sacrifices is the reason I have achieved success in my professional life. And the other important part of my village is my colleagues both in cardiovascular medicine and hospital medicine. I am lucky to have mentors like Drs. Theige, Bande, Potluri, Vilenski and Alberto who provide me constant encouragement and bring out the best in me

since I was an internal medicine resident. Dr. Manjunath have played a pivotal role in helping me gain confidence as a clinical cardiologist and I cannot thank my friends who are always there to help when needed.



### **What do you like most about teaching?**

I strongly believe that “Teaching is Learning.” If you can teach a particular topic to someone only then will you know you understand it well. I feel that by teaching I am constantly learning and keeping my knowledge up to date, and it gives me sense of immense satisfaction if I am able to explain a concept to a medical student or resident and I see the ‘light bulb’ moment in their eyes. I must add it’s not just about teaching the learners, it is also educating patients.

### **What resources from the University do you find valuable in clinical or teaching responsibilities?**

I have found that the faculty development sessions hosted by the Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship unit of Education Resources and the Office of Education and Faculty affairs have been quite useful. In addition, to participate in research with medical students and residents, I find the support of Dr. Guerrero and Dr. Sahmoun invaluable. Also, Erika Johnson has been very helpful in providing full articles and managing the reference library.

### **What can you advise to other physicians who are considering becoming more involved in teaching?**

The word ‘doctor’ is derived from the Latin ‘docēre,’ which means ‘to teach’ and clinicians have dual role to teach and provide patient care. There is no doubt that finding time for teaching with the clinical demands and expectations can be challenging. However, I would suggest the ‘one-minute preceptor’ that focuses on one teaching point pertaining to the patient’s case that can have a longer lasting impact. Sometimes even asking the learner a question, and stimulating and motivating them to think or look up answers can be enough to help enhance their knowledge.

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD REMINDER



If you are the primary investigator of the research team, UND IRB approval is mandatory, in addition to the hospital IRB approval. For questions, please contact Michelle Bowles at [michelle.bowles@UND.edu](mailto:michelle.bowles@UND.edu) or by calling 701.777.4079.

# HEALTH EQUITY COMMITTEE UPDATE

A new and exciting project is underway in the University of North Dakota Internal Medicine and Transitional Year programs to develop a Health Equity lecture series. The mission of the University of North Dakota's Health Equity committee is to educate our physicians to work within diverse communities by providing curriculum that explores the intersectionalities that exist within our community and work to identify ways in which we can foster healthcare equity. Work to promote healthcare equity is and will be an ongoing endeavor. Lecture topics in development include, but are not limited to, exploring bias, structural competency, and culturally competent care to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The broader aim is to equip our physicians with a better understanding of how to best serve diverse communities.

Submitted by

Ciciley Littlewolf, MD

Stephanie Melquist, MD, MPH

Jessie Bjella, MD

## MAJOR MEDIA MENTIONS\*

Congratulations to the following IM faculty who were recently in the local and national news:

- Dr. Michael Blankinship – “IMA Doctors Show” – KFGO – 3rd Monday of Each Month from 12:30-1:30 p.m.
- Dr. Paul Carson – “North Dakota and South Dakota set global Covid records. How did they turn the tide?” – NBC News – Feb. 2021
- Dr. Tze Shien Lo – “Ohayo Asahi” – Asahi TV (Osaka, Japan) – Jan. 2021
- Dr. Joshua Ranum – “Covid-19 antibody treatments are plentiful, but still sitting on the shelf” – CNN – Jan. 2021
- Dr. Rishi Seth – “‘A Shot of Hope’: What the Vaccine Is Like for Frontline Doctors and Nurses” – The New York Times – Dec. 2020
- Dr. Rishi Seth – “Covid tensions in US hotspot of North Dakota: ‘Grow up, mask up’” – BBC News – Dec. 2020
- Dr. Avish Nagpal – “Prairie Pulse Interview” – PBS – Dec. 2020

\*This list is only partial. If you have recently been in the media and would like to be included in the next newsletter, please contact Mikki Eken at mikki.eken@UND.edu.

# FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

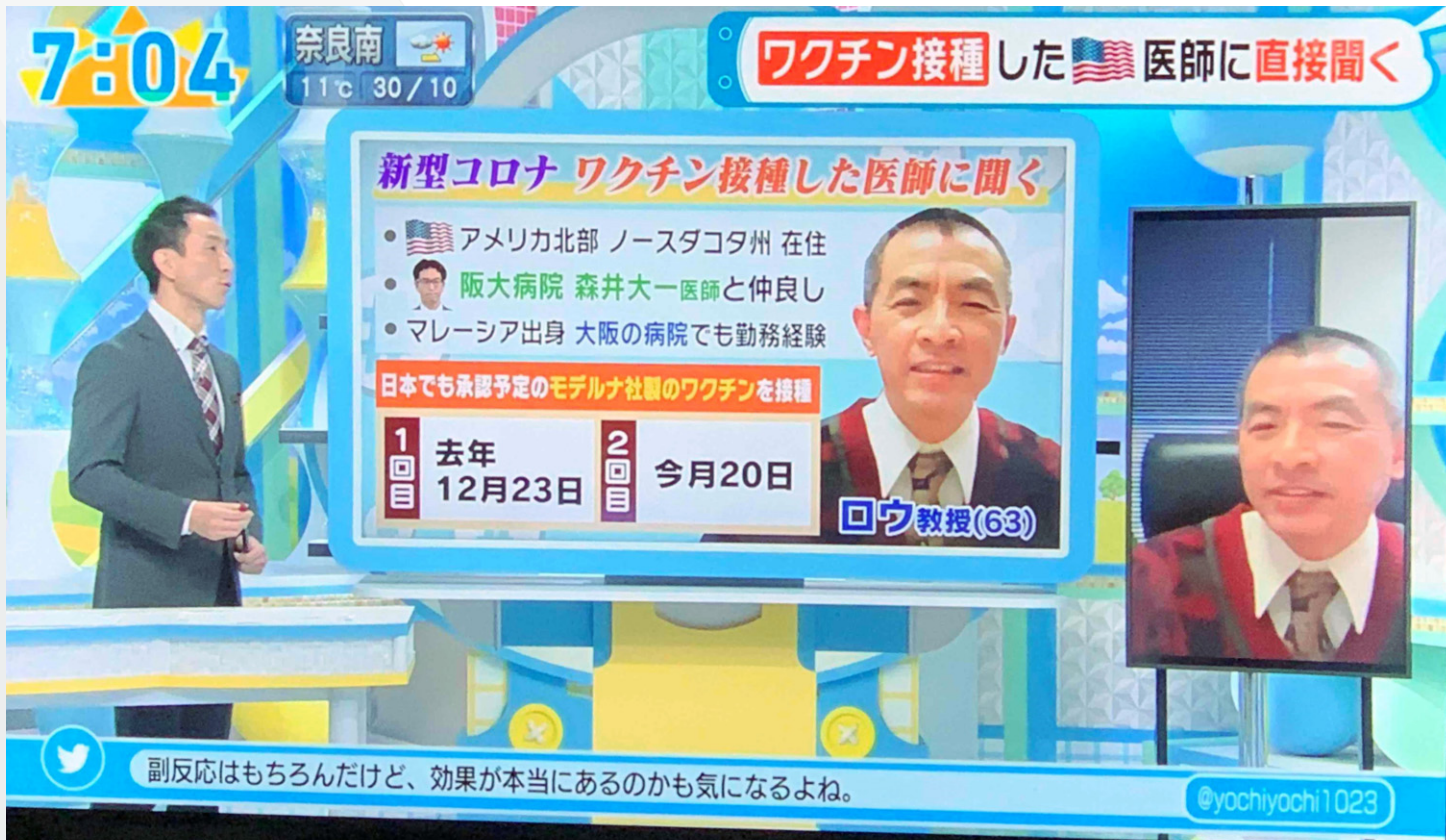
Congratulations to the following IM faculty and students who recently published articles:

- Eidenschink B, Stenzel A, Michael Y, Alwahab U, Kurniali P, Guerrero D. Opioid use prior to admission for chemotherapy induced febrile neutropenia is associated with increased documented infection, sepsis, and death. *J Infect Chemother.* 2021; 27(4):568-572.
- Gao A, Matta A. Strongyloides stercoralis infection: A rare cause of acute abdomen. *Cureus.* 2020; 12(11): e11470.
- Johnson A, Vincent B, Carson P, Skoy E. Prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies among North Dakota community pharmacy personnel: A seroprevalence survey. *J Am Pharm Assoc.* 2021 Jan 21: S1544-3191(21)00025-X.
- Matta A. A rare case of erythema gyratum repens associated with esophageal carcinoma. *Cureus.* 2020; 12(8): e9971.
- Rodrigues J, Kuruvilla M, Vanijcharoenkarn K, Patel N, Hom M, Wallace D. The spectrum of allergic ocular diseases. *Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol.* 2021; 126(3):240-254.
- Schroeder A, Lewis A, Sahmoun A, Beal J. Antibiotic utilization for adult acute respiratory tract infections in United States Emergency Departments. *Am J Emerg Med.* 2021; In Press.
- Sharma A, Bande D, Matta A. A Case of Diagnostic Difficulty: Transient Loss of Consciousness in Artery of Percheron Infarct. *Cureus.* 2021; 13(1):e12918.
- Storandt M, Seth R. A Case of Stevens-Johnson Syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis in a patient receiving chemo-immunotherapy with pemetrexed and pembrolizumab. *Curr Probl Cancer.* 2021; 3(10):100048.

\*This list may only be partial. If you have a recent scholarly activity that you would like to have included in the next newsletter, please contact Mikki Eken at mikki.eken@UND.edu.



# DR. LO DOES INTERVIEW WITH JAPANESE TV STATION



On January 26, 2021, Dr. Tze Shien Lo was invited to interview with the Japanese television show “Ohayo Asahi desu” (Good Morning Asahi) on Asahi TV. Ohayo Asahi is a television show that is similar to “Good Morning America,” and is a variety show that is shown at 6 a.m. across the Kansai region of Japan from the city of Osaka. Asahi Television approached Dr. Lo to go on Ohayo Asahi to discuss the COVID-19 vaccine in the United States after a recommendation from a friend at Osaka University. At the end of January, no one in Japan had received the COVID-19 vaccination and there was a lot of skepticism. Dr. Lo was able to use his expertise, fluency in Japanese,

and the fact that he had received the vaccination to discuss the safety and possible side-effects of the vaccine. Dr. Lo currently serves as the Chief of Infectious Disease Service at the VA Medical Center in Fargo and regularly conducts research on the identification, treatment, and prevention of infectious diseases. He is a Professor of Internal Medicine and an Internal Medicine residency core faculty member at UND. Dr. Lo works closely with residents and other faculty members on infectious disease prevention and treatment research through both UND and the VA Medical Center. If you would like to view his interview with Ohayo Asahi, please contact Dr. Lo at [tze.lo@va.gov](mailto:tze.lo@va.gov).



# 2020 ACADEMIC FACULTY PROMOTIONS

In 2020, three of our academic faculty members were awarded promotions from the UND SMHS Committee on Promotion and Tenure. Dr. Abe Sahmoun was promoted from Associate Professor to Professor-Educator Scholar Track, Dr. Jon Allen was promoted from Associate Professor to Professor-Educator Scholar Track, and Dr. Kimberly Hammer was promoted from Adjunct Assistant Professor to Adjunct Associate Professor-Educator Scholar Track.



Dr. Abe Sahmoun has been a faculty member in the Internal Medicine Department since 2003 and currently serves as the Director of Research Affairs. He is actively involved in teaching both medical students and residents in pre-clinical courses, clerkship courses, and research electives. Dr. Sahmoun has been awarded the Outstanding Block Instructor Award from the UND SMHS three times since 2010. Dr. Sahmoun has been a mentor for student and resident clinical research projects that resulted in numerous publications in high-visibility journals, awards at regional and national conferences, and small funded grants. Dr. Sahmoun presently serves on the Internal Medicine Evaluation & Promotions committee, the UND Bylaws committee, the Consortium of Universities for Global Health Scientific Planning Advisory committee, and the North Dakota Cancer Coalition.

Dr. Jon Allen has been with the Department since 1987 and serves as the Director of Clinical Skills, Director of the SMHS Simulation Center, Medical Director of the SIM-ND Mobile Simulation program, and is an



internal medicine physician at Altru Health System. Dr. Allen works closely with UND medical students, residents, and fellow physicians in both a classroom and clinical practice setting. He combines the fundamentals with new technology to help prepare future and practicing physicians for clinical practice in a technological world. Dr. Allen received Medical Director of the Year in 2017 from the North Dakota EMS Association, and the Dean's Special Recognition Award in 2018 for outstanding contributions to UND and the larger community.



Dr. Kimberly Hammer has been with the department since 2013 and serves as the Associate Chief of Staff for Research & Development for the Fargo VA Medical Center. Dr. Hammer is a great facilitator, motivator, and educator in the area of research at the Fargo VA Medical Center and the UND School of Medicine & Health Sciences. She oversees all research conducted at the VA Medical Center, and facilitates collaborative projects between the VA Medical Center and UND. Dr. Hammer has completed 10 VA/UND collaborative research projects since joining UND, and is currently part of 10 others. She works to continue to facilitate collaborative projects between the Fargo VA Medical Center and UND.



## RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

If you are interested in becoming involved in research, or have research ideas but do not know where to start, feel free to contact Mikki Eken at [mikki.eken@UND.edu](mailto:mikki.eken@UND.edu). If you have published research or presented a poster or oral presentation please inform Mikki Eken.



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## QUARTERLY NEWS

There are four new Associate Program Directors within the department:

- The newly created Associate Program Director for Curriculum and Point of Care Ultrasound (POCUS) is Dr. Neville Alberto. Dr. Alberto is an expert in the area of POCUS and his expertise will be greatly valued as he works to design the best way to train our physicians, residents, and students in the use of this useful diagnostic tool.
- The Associate Program Director for Research is Dr. Dubert Guerrero. Dr. Guerrero serves as the Associate Director of Research & Scholarly Activity and has been with the department since 2011. Dr. Guerrero works closely with residents and faculty members to mentor, encourage, and facilitate research development and collaboration.
- Dr. Kirsten Juhl was named the Associate Program Director for Ambulatory Medicine. Dr. Juhl will work closely with ambulatory faculty to facilitate collaboration and help residents pursue an interest in the specialty.
- Dr. Devendranath Mannuru is now the Associate Program Director for Hospital Medicine. Dr. Mannuru currently works with the department as the Internal Medicine Clerkship Director where he works closely with hospital medicine physicians and medical students. He will expand his role to include faculty development and work with residents on inpatient medicine.

## IMPORTANT DATES\*

- April 6-16 – AAIM Academic Internal Medicine Week; Virtual meeting <https://www.im.org/meetings/upcoming-events/meetings-aimw-2021>
- April 20-23 – 2021 SGIM Annual Meeting; Virtual meeting <https://connect.sgim.org/annualmeeting/home>
- April 22 – Annual Frank Low Research Day; Grand Forks, ND
- April 28 – 2021 Internal Medicine Research Symposium; Fargo, ND and Virtual
- April 29-May 1 – ACP Internal Medicine Meeting 2021; Orlando, FL
- May 3-7 – SHM Annual Conference; Virtual meeting <https://www.hospitalmedicine.org/event/annual-conference/>
- May 14-19 – ATS International Conference; Virtual meeting <https://conference.thoracic.org/attendees/index.php>
- June 4-8 – ASCO 2021 Annual Meeting; Virtual meeting <https://meetings.asco.org/am/attend>
- Sept. 8-11 – 9th Annual SOHO Meeting; Houston, TX
- Sept. 29-Oct. 3 – ID Week 2021; San Diego, CA
- Oct. 22-27 – ACG Annual Scientific Meeting; Las Vegas, NV
- Nov. 2-7 – ASN Kidney Week; San Diego, CA
- Nov. 4-8 – ACAAI Annual Meeting; New Orleans, LA
- Nov. 5-9 – ACR Annual Convention; San Francisco, CA

\*These date are subject to change.