

In Ignotis “Into the Unknown”

Message from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

I hope 2025 has started well for each of you. As we step into this new year together, I want to take a moment to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year and share some updates for the months ahead.

But first, it is with a heavy heart that we bid farewell to Dr. Julie Sill, who has transitioned to a new role within the school. Dr. Sill has been a tremendous asset to our department, and while her departure leaves a significant gap, I am deeply grateful that she will remain engaged with us in a limited capacity until her successor is appointed. Her contributions have been invaluable, and she will be greatly missed in her full-time capacity.

Looking back, I am incredibly proud of our collective achievements in 2024. Scholarly productivity within the department reached impressive new heights, surpassing last year's benchmarks. Thank you for your hard work, and I encourage you to maintain this momentum as we continue to raise the bar. As we aim to build on these successes, I want to highlight several exciting opportunities and initiatives for faculty. The recently announced TRACT (Translational Research Advancement through Collaborative Teams) grant offers up to \$15,000 to support innovative research projects.

This month, our research workshop will provide practical insights into grant writing. During the session, we will review key principles of successful grant applications and feature a discussion of a recently funded grant during the research journal club.

I am also thrilled to share some well-deserved recognitions. Several of our faculty members were named among the Virginia Top Doctors by Virginia Business magazine—congratulations to all! In addition, I would like to extend special congratulations to Dr. Siraj and Dr. Okhravi for their prestigious appointments to the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology and the Alzheimer's Disease Association Board of Directors, respectively. As we move forward into this year, let us continue to support one another, celebrate our achievements, and strive for excellence in all that we do.

Peer Reviewed Publications

- **Yehya A**, Lopez J, Sauer AJ, Davis JD, Ibrahim NE, Tung R, Bozkurt B, Fonarow GC, Al-Khatib SM. Revisiting ICD Therapy for Primary Prevention in Patients With Heart Failure and Reduced Ejection Fraction. *JACC Heart Fail.* 2025 Jan;13(1):1-13. Epub 2024 Dec 4. PMID: 39641686.
- **Vargas A**, Saadeh M, Boland CR, **Goudar RK**, **Johnson DA**. Genetic Testing in Colorectal Cancer: Towards a Better Understanding and Utilization by Clinicians. *J Clin Gastroenterol.* 2024 Nov-Dec 01;58(10):945-949. Epub 2024 Jul 24. PMID: 39042460.
- **Hanrahan J**, **Sill JD**, Ver Schneider P, Copeland JF, **Amoako-Kissi EF**, **Ilobi OO**, **Toepp AJ**. Cultures for acid-fast bacilli: are we being good stewards?. *Antimicrobial Stewardship & Healthcare Epidemiology.* 2025 Jan;4(1):e226.
- **Sharma KD**, Godambe SA, Chavan PP, Parks-Savage A, **Galicja-Castillo M**. Increasing Serious Illness Conversations in Patients at High Risk of One-Year Mortality Using Improvement Science: A Quality Improvement Study. *Healthcare (Basel).* 2025 Jan 20;13(2):199. PMID: 39857226
- Shin M, **Bahrani O**. Metronidazole-Associated Peripheral Neuropathy in a Patient With End-Stage Renal Failure. *Cureus.* 2024 Dec 9;16(12):e75373. PMID: 39781177.
- Wightkin WT, Graham EB, **Hooper B**, Ikonne U. Embracing Technology to Develop a Clinical Pharmacology and Medication Safety Elective in Undergraduate Medical Education. *Med Sci Educ.* 2024 Sep 26;34(6):1269-1273. PMID: 39758487
- Weinstein AM, **Fang F**, Chang CH, Cohen A, Lopresti BJ, et al. Multimodal neuroimaging biomarkers and subtle cognitive decline in a population-based cohort without dementia. *J Alzheimers Dis.* 2024 Dec 19:13872877241303926. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 39702989.

Annual Research Summary 2024

- 49 Peer Reviewed publications in 42 journals
- 135 Posters, Presentations, & Abstracts at International, National, Regional or Local Conferences
- 28 Faculty Mentors of unfunded research projects
- 37 Faculty Mentors of Poster Presentations & Abstracts
- 32 Media Events (Podcasts, TV Interviews, etc.)
- 26 Faculty Awards
- 24 Trainee Awards



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Annual Research Summary 2024—continues

Congratulations on another year of research excellence & scholarship! We are honored to highlight your accomplishments & commendable collaborations within the institution & beyond. Your continued pursuit of excellence is admirable & adds to trainee learning. Congratulations also to the research teams who also have a research project in the planning stages, the IRB approval process, or that are actively collecting data. This is the beginning of great work in addition to future discovery & potential publications.

Other notable faculty research related accomplishments:

- 20 New IRB Applications/Clinical Research Projects
- 32 IRB Amendments
- 16 IRB Continuing Review Reports
- 53 Active (or recently approved) Unfunded research studies
- 20 Unfunded studies in the planning process

Researcher Spotlight — Iuliia Kovalenko, MD

What excites you about research?

Research excites me because it allows me to explore new frontiers of medicine, solve complex problems, and ultimately contribute to improving patient outcomes. I am particularly inspired by the potential to translate research findings into actionable clinical practices, especially in areas like VTE prophylaxis and cancer treatments. Being able to identify gaps in care, analyze data, and propose innovative solutions gives me a sense of purpose and drives my curiosity. Additionally, research provides a collaborative environment where I can work alongside diverse teams and continuously learn from others' expertise.

What areas do you hope to improve upon?

I aim to deepen my understanding of statistics and data analysis to better interpret study results and ultimately, to design robust research studies. Expanding my network and collaborating with researchers from other institutions is another area that I want to focus on, as it will allow me to broaden the scope of my research and help me to integrate interdisciplinary approaches. Additionally, I hope to improve my efficiency in managing large datasets and other tools such as TriNetX for larger patient population data analysis.

Describe a study that you are currently working on:

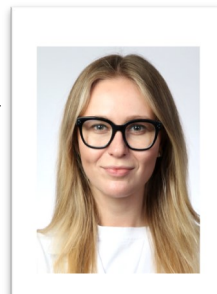
VTE prophylaxis interruption study: Using TriNetX, this study investigates how interruptions in VTE prophylaxis affect the development of VTE in hospitalized patients, aiming to develop metrics to optimize timing and adherence to prophylaxis regimens.

What lessons have you learned by being involved in research?

Research has taught me the value of perseverance and hard work. It not only expands knowledge but also opens doors to new opportunities, such as collaborations, networking, and career growth. I've learned that attention to detail and critical thinking are essential in producing meaningful results. Additionally, the iterative nature of research has shown me the importance of learning from setbacks and continuously improving.

What advice do you have for trainees who are just beginning to become involved in clinical research?

Choose an area you are genuinely passionate about, as it will sustain your motivation through challenges. Seek out mentors who align with your interests and can guide you effectively—having more than one mentor can provide diverse insights. Stay curious and committed to lifelong learning, as the field of medicine is constantly evolving. Lastly, persistence is key; research often involves setbacks, but staying dedicated will lead to valuable discoveries and personal growth.



Presentations, Awards, and Media Highlights

- **Johnson DA** presented at the Florida Digestive Disease Update Conference on 07 Dec 2024. Oral and Esophageal Microbiome: Moving from a (acid) to b (bacteria).
- **Johnson DA** presented at the Florida Digestive Disease Update Conference on 07 Dec 2024. Intestinal Microbiome – the Answer for all GI Ailments.
- **Hanrahan J** was the guest editor for a special edition of Medical Clinics of North America journal, on the topic of Severe Infections.
- **Bulaeva A, Derber C, DeBiase J, Weaver C, & Blumrick C** each wrote chapters for an upcoming publication in the journal, Medical Clinics of North America, on the topics of Severe Infections.
- **King J** was featured in the Macon & Joan Brock Virginia Health Sciences, Eastern Virginia Medical School at Old Dominion University's Weekly Pulse Health Updates. Hypertension the Silent Killer. Watch the clip [here](#).



February 2025 Reminders:

Medicine Grand Rounds:

Wednesdays, 12-1 p.m.

2/5/25—Dr. Thomas McCune, Macon & Joan Brock VHS, EVMS @ ODU

2/12/25—Dr. Amit Pahwa, John's Hopkins University School of Medicine

2/19/25 - Dr. Seth Reddy, Central Michigan University College of Medicine

2/26/25 - Dr. Hamid Okhravi, Macon & Joan Brock VHS, EVMS @ ODU

Research Events:

Second and Fourth Tuesdays
5:00-6:00 p.m.

Hybrid: 5th Floor Large Conference Room & Zoom

2/11/25 - Research Workshop, Applying for Grant Awards

2/25/25 - Research Journal Club, looking closely at a successful grant application

Please send scholarly updates & photos to:

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