

In Ignotis “Into the Unknown”

Message from the Chair

Dear Faculty and Colleagues,

I hope this message finds you well and thriving. As we conclude our first month within the **Old Dominion University** as part of the **Macon & Joan Brock Virginia Health Sciences**, we are presented with an exciting opportunity to harness the complementary research strengths across our integrated institutions. This is a time for collaboration and innovation, as we aim to advance the field of medicine and healthcare delivery.

While many things have remained constant, including the IRB submission process, others have changed. I want to thank you for your hard work to learn new systems and workflows. Having said that, the integration has immensely grown the potential for groundbreaking research and collaboration. Let us seize this moment to expand our horizons and work together to push the boundaries of medical research and education.

I am delighted to remind you about the **Eastern Virginia Medical Journal**, an open-access online journal dedicated to publishing peer-reviewed medical science manuscripts authored by members of our community. This journal serves as a platform to enhance the education of our EVMS Graduate Medical Education at Old Dominion University trainees, offering them invaluable experience in the preparation, publication, and peer review of scientific literature. We warmly invite submissions from our EVMS at ODU trainees and faculty, encompassing resident scholarly activity, quality improvement initiatives, curriculum development, and innovative content delivery modalities. I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Sean Hesselbacher, our esteemed colleague and program director for the Sleep Medicine Fellowship Program, who serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal. You can access the journal here: <https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/evmj/>

Additionally, I encourage you to reserve August 24th (Saturday) for **BootCamp 2024: Introduction to Clinical Research**. This one-day event promises to be an enriching experience, featuring lectures on a wide variety of topics in clinical research delivered by experts from EVMS and Sentara. It is an excellent opportunity for all of us to deepen our knowledge and foster connections within the research community.

As we move forward, let us continue to support one another and remain committed to our shared mission of advancing medical science and improving patient care. Thank you for your dedication and hard work. I am confident that together, we will achieve great things.

Peer Reviewed Publications

- Bohannon, DG, Long, D, **Okhravi, HR**, Lee, SC, De Jesus, CL, Neubert, TA, Rostagno, AA, Ghiso, JA, & Kim, WK (2024). Functionally distinct pericyte subsets differently regulate amyloid- β deposition in patients with Alzheimer's disease. *Brain Pathology*, e13282.
- 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 Jul 24. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 39042460.

Abstracts, Posters, & Presentations

- Okhravi HR** was an invited speaker for the University of North Dakota, Dementia Friendly Healthcare and Community Symposium on 05 June 2024. Review of Disease Modifying Agents in Alzheimer's Disease and the Potential Challenges of Implementation.
- Batchelor E**, Camac E, Bagley B, & Chu D presenting the MedEd Seminar on the topic of, Rescuing the Struggling Learner on 19 May 2024.

Awards and Media Highlights

- Faculty members, **King J & Seidensticker D** won the Golden Flea Award for Excellence in Academic Teaching & Dedication to Outstanding Patient Care.
- Residents, **Brown S & Fiaz S** won the Outstanding Intern of the Year Award for the 2023-2024 academic year.
- The Glennan Center Clinic & **Niknejad B** were both featured on a recent Wavy 10.com video, 15 July 2024, What healthy aging looks like: Local geriatricians helping older adults stay independent. Watch the clip [here](#).
- McQueen-Gibson E** was recently inducted as the President of the Southern Gerontological Society.
- Johnson DA** was author for a Medscape article on 17 July 2024. Which GI Side Effects Should GLP-1 Prescribers Worry About? Read media article [here](#).



MACON & JOAN BROCK VIRGINIA HEALTH SCIENCES
EVMS MEDICAL GROUP
AT OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY



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Researcher Spotlight—Fang Fang, PhD

Please tell us about yourself: I am a health service researcher at Research and Infrastructure Service and Enterprise (RISE) and Assistant Professor of Medicine at EVMS. I received my doctoral degree in Sociology and master's degree in Data Analysis and Applied Statistics from Virginia Tech. My research is multidiscipline and encompasses sociology, public health, and clinical research in studying cognitive health and preventive interventions for the health and well-being of older populations.

What excites you about research or what motivated you to work in a research-related field? What areas do you hope to improve upon? For me, research is all about discovery: exploring uncharted territories, solving complex problems, and contributing to our collective understanding about the world. The process of conducting research to uncover the unknown and using the new knowledge to benefit society is incredibly fulfilling for me. I am committed to consistently improving my research skills, such as learning new and innovative research and analytic methods, enhancing my ability to work collaboratively, as well as seeking ways to be a more effective in sharing my research knowledge with aspiring young researchers.

Describe the studies that you are currently working on: I am collaborating with researchers from University of Pittsburgh as part of a NIH-funded project, to study how social isolation and loneliness are related to older adults' cognitive outcomes in Southwestern Pennsylvania, and how longitudinal cognitive decline is associated with biomarkers of Alzheimer's disease. I am also collaborating with researchers from Departments of Psychology and Computer Science at ODU to understand the affective and cognitive processes of social participation and their associations with cognition among older adults by using both statistical methods and the innovative method of machine learning.

What lessons, if any, have you learned from being involved in research? What lessons, if any, have you learned from being involved in research? To complete a research project requires a myriad of skills. The ability of multitasking and managing your time wisely and effectively can be as important as the skills to address research questions. To communicating with your collaborators is also essential, especially for clinical research that often involves people with various types of expertise, to ensure that everyone is on the same page, help in efficiently managing shared responsibilities, and complete all tasks on time.

What advice do you have for trainees who are just beginning to become involved in clinical research? First of all, believe in yourself, and surround yourself with supportive senior researchers and your peers sharing your research interests. Learn from working closely with people with more research experiences, which can also help widen your own research horizon. Start with smaller and manageable research projects. For example, before collecting your own data to answer one specific question, find a secondary and publicly available dataset that focuses on the similar scope of your interests to answer the research question.



"To acquire knowledge, one must study; but to acquire wisdom one must observe."
- Marilyn Vos Savant

Scholarship Opportunities

- 1) Critical Care Congress (Orlando, FL): Due 8/1
- 2) American Association of Clinical Endocrinology-General Education Submissions (Orlando, FL): Due 8/5
- 3) ID Week 2024 - Late Breaking Abstracts (Los Angeles, CA): Due 8/14
- 4) American College of Gastroenterology – Late Breaking Abstracts: Due 8/27
- 5) Gerontological Society of America, GSA 2024 - Late-Breaking Abstracts (Seattle, WA): Due 8/29
- 6) Eastern Virginia Medical School Research Day (Norfolk, VA): Due 9/3
- 7) The Liver Meeting – AASLD (San Diego, CA): Due 9/30

Updates on Ongoing Research

You may have seen a variety of team members & research volunteers collecting data in the medicine clinic spaces this summer. That is because there are 3 different teams who are investigating & analyzing patient perceptions on different topics of medicine. Each has study a questionnaire that can be accessed electronically. Paper versions are also available for 2 of the studies to accommodate patient preferences of participation.

Maliakal A & team are studying the relationship between Physician Compassion and Social Determinants of Health-SDoH. They have currently collected 313 questionnaires from volunteer participants.

Derber C & team are studying patient perceptions of Vaccine Hesitancy post-COVID-19 with vaccine mandates.

Sill JD, Bernstein RC & team are investigating the topic of transportation equity as related to healthcare access. The team is currently collecting data from individuals who are residents of Hampton Roads to examine their experiences with transportation for medical appointments and its effect on consistent access to care.

Reminders:

Grand Rounds:

We will see you in September after a short break.

Research Events:

Research Office Hours

Fridays, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

The agenda will be sent out by Wednesday afternoons; don't forget to look & see if your project is listed.

(All faculty & trainees may attend for learning purposes.)

Save the Date:

Research Boot Camp

Saturday, August 24

8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please send scholarly updates, photos, & requests for weekly office hour appointments to : SillJD@evms.edu
SillJD@odu.edu

