



Newsletter of the Population Sciences Research Program at MSK

A Message from the Program Directors

PSRP Leaders Drs. Bernstein, Offit and Ostroff and Associate Directors Drs. Begg and Gany weigh in on the state of the Program

The Population Sciences Research Program (PSRP) is a trans-disciplinary program integral to the MSK mission of discovering more effective strategies to reduce the burden of cancer and its long-term effects across diverse populations. The PSRP's research efforts are focused within three themes: "cancer etiology and risk", "health behaviors and symptom control", and "health care delivery, access, and disparities" (see table below). The program is co-Led by Jonine Bernstein, Kenneth Offit, and Jamie Ostroff, Colin Begg (Population Sciences), and Francesca Gany (Community Outreach and Engagement) serve as our Associate Directors. Our program has grown to over 77 members representing multiple disciplines (epidemiology, behavioral science, psychiatry, clinical medicine and surgery, pediatrics, biostatistics, immigrant health and cancer disparities, and physiological and laboratory science) at all academic ranks e.g., ~42% Assistant Member, 26% Associate Member, and 33% Member. All our members have a demonstrated, and sustained, population sciences research portfolio, grant funding, and are actively engaged in PSRP activities.

In addition to individual successes of the research programs within PSRP, we have important sustained and successful joint PSRP activities which leverage our scientific goals and serve as additional programmatic opportunities to enhance member communication and research, namely: a) the pilot award program (the Interdisciplinary Population Sciences Research Awards); b) the monthly seminar series; c) the PSRP News newsletter which reaches across MSK and the city-at-large; d) our member-only bi-monthly meetings and retreats; and e) the PRO-CEL (for patient reported outcomes, community engagement and language) CORE which serves our members in the key areas. With extensive intra- and inter-programmatic collaborations, expansion and cohesion of our research program areas, the PSR continues as a local, and international, leader in population health sciences.



PSRP membership spans a wide range of departments and services at MSK

THEME I Cancer Etiology and Risk	THEME II Health Behaviors and Symptom Control	THEME III Health Care Delivery, Access, and Disparities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetic and environmental factors Germline susceptibility Precancer biomarkers Etiology of second primary malignancies and other late effects Risk prediction and screening metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk perception & communication Tobacco cessation Behavioral interventions Health beliefs Symptoms and late effects Patient reported outcomes Health-related decision making Patient-provider communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economics & costs of cancer screening and care Socioeconomic determinants of health Financial toxicity of cancer treatment Linguistic and cultural responsiveness Community engagement and health care access and outcomes in the underserved Immigrant health interventions
Innovations in Statistical Methods		
Survivorship Research		

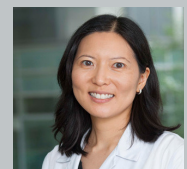
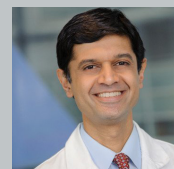
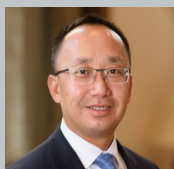
We could not be more honored to serve as PSRP co-Leaders or more proud of the extraordinary work conducted by our members.

Jonine, Ken and Jamie with Francesca and Colin

PSRP Grants Awardees

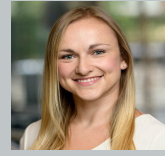
Congratulations to the following investigators on being awarded PSRP Grants

This year, four projects were awarded PSRP pilot grants. PSRP's Transdisciplinary grants are awarded to investigators involved with population science along with a specialist in a complimentary discipline. Please join us in congratulating our esteemed colleagues on their new funding!



▲ **Robert Daly, Jun Mao and Katherine Panageas** were awarded for their project *Connected Care: Remote monitoring after hospital discharge*.

▲ **Jonine Bernstein, Krishna Juluru and Janice Sung** were awarded for their project *Background Parenchymal Enhancement in Contrast-Enhanced Digital Mammography: A Pilot Study of a Promising Imaging Biomarker of Breast Cancer Risk*.



▲ **Tali Amir** and **Lisa Carter-Harris** were awarded for their project *Leveraging Mammography to Identify and Engage Women at Risk for Lung Cancer in Lung Cancer Screening*.

▲ **Monika Laszkowska** and **Ann Zauber** were awarded for their project *The Cost-Effectiveness of Screening and Surveillance of Precursor Gastric Lesions in Individuals with a Family History of Gastric Cancer*.

IHCD Update

IHCD's Food to Overcome Outcomes Disparities (FOOD) Program opened a new pantry at MSK Commack on November 23rd. It will be open every Monday to provide much needed food items directly to patients and families as they undergo cancer treatment.

This Fall, the IHCD Health Equity Seminar Series relaunched on Zoom and featured prominent experts in their field to educate the MSK community to current social determinants of health, health equity, racial justice, disparities in healthcare, and COVID-19 disparities. The Winter season kicked off on January 13, 2021.

On October 28th, IHCD partnered with MSK's Office of Faculty Development and Office of the Physician-in-Chief to hold MSK's first event simulcast in English and Spanish via Zoom: "Cancer care for Latinos during the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the USA: How has the pandemic affected cancer care for Latinos in the US and Latin America?" This panel was moderated by Dr. Rosario Costas-Muniz and featured a panel of notable figures in oncology and healthcare to explore the pandemic's real-world impacts on cancer care.

IHCD launched a Learning Collaborative in November 2020 which is based on the New York Times' 1619 Project and Netflix's documentary miniseries Immigration Nation to enhance learning through group participation and discussion.

Team members from IHCD and multiple other MSK departments received a joint Division of Quality and Safety Award at MSK's 2020 Quality Improvement Fair for "Exploring Essential Unmet Needs of MSK Patients". This was a cross-disciplinary effort between IHCD and MSK's Strategy and Innovation, Patient Financial Services, Social Work, MSK Direct, Ambulatory Care, and Nursing departments, and the next phase of the project will also involve collaboration with the Ralph Lauren Center. Their group efforts helped 14 patients navigate care at MSK by streamlining access to resources and assessing patient needs through surveys to better understand patient affordability, diversity and health equity.

IHCD's Service Chief, **Dr. Francesca Gany**, was named as a representative for MSK on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Leadership Alliance Workgroup for Equity and Health Care.

Grants

Congratulations to the following PSRP members who received funding as Principal Investigators or Co-Principal Investigators

PI/Co-PI/ MPI	Institute (Mechanism)	Project Title
Allison Applebaum	NCI (R01)	A Randomized Controlled Trial of Emotion Regulation Therapy for Cancer Caregivers: A Mechanism-Targeted Approach to Addressing Caregiver Distress
Abraham Aragon	P30 supplement	HPV & Cancer Center Support Grant
Ting Bao	NCI (R01)	Acupuncture for Chemotherapy-induced Peripheral Neuropathy Treatment (ACT) Trial
Victoria Blinder	Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology Foundation	Workplace/Employer Accommodations during Cancer Treatment (WE-ACT): A mobile health app to promote job retention in people undergoing treatment for cancer
Michael Berger & Zsofia Stadler	Mark Foundation	Non-Invasive Detection of Tumor Derived Cell-free DNA (cfDNA) as a Cancer Screening
William Breitbart	NCI (R25)	Meaning-Centered Psychotherapy Training Program for Cancer Care Clinicians
Sigrid Carlsson	Prevent Cancer Foundation	Improving prostate cancer screening using innovative technology
Rosario Costas-Muniz	NCI (U54)	Collective trauma of the coronavirus pandemic: Implications for health risk behaviors and mental health among youth and families in the Bronx, NY
Lisa Diamond	NBME	Medical Spanish proficiency assessment: Evaluating physician communication with Spanish-speaking patients in medical education settings
Helena Furburg-Barnes	Administrative Supplement (R21)	Association between body composition and treatment-related outcomes among metastatic kidney cancer patients treated with immunotherapy
Francesca Gany	NINR (R21)	Communicating with Oncology Nurses about Values from the Outset (CONVO): An Innovative Primary Palliative Care Intervention in English and Espanol
	MSK Department of Medicine	Patient - reported outcomes in prostate, gynecological and breast cancer patients and their caregivers; A Comparison of Teleoncology to Face to Face Visits
Jada Hamilton	NCI (U01)	Prospective Trial of a Linguistically and Culturally Appropriate Mainstreaming Model for Hereditary Cancer Multigene Panel Testing Among Diverse Cancer Patients
Neil Iyengar	The Breast Cancer Research Foundation	Memorial Sloan Kettering's Evelyn H. Lauder Breast Center
Lee Jones	NCI (R01)	Exercise as Interception Therapy in Primary High Risk Cancer
Aaron Mitchell	NIHCM	Can Conflict of Interest with the Drug Industry Harm Patients?
Talya Salz	P30 Administrative Supplement	Cannabis use among patients at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
Sohrab Shah	DoD	Dissecting the impact of mutational processes on therapeutic response in ovarian cancer
Ann Zauber	NCI (U01)	Comparative Modeling of Effective Policies for Colorectal Cancer Control

Research Highlight with Dr. Jamie Ostroff

Dr. Ostroff is the Joseph Gaumont Chair of Cancer Prevention at MSK

Successful quitting: A clinic benefits of prolonged expert counseling for smoking cessation.

Over the past 30 years of her career Dr. Jamie Ostroff has been dedicated to helping cancer patients with tobacco addiction to quit smoking. “Everybody knows that smoking is bad but far fewer patients and clinicians appreciate the cancer-specific risks of persistent smoking and the benefits of cessation for individuals diagnosed with cancer, not just lung cancer and other tobacco-related cancers, but all cancers.” says Dr. Ostroff, a psychologist and director of Memorial Sloan Kettering’s Tobacco Treatment Program. In her most recent work, a collaboration with Dr. Elyse Park at Harvard Medical School, Dr. Ostroff addresses the important question of how to effectively help patients with tobacco addiction.



Dr. Jamie Ostroff

The study, recently published in JAMA (Park et al. 2020), builds on guidelines by major national cancer organizations that emphasize the importance of treating tobacco dependence as part of high-quality cancer care. These guidelines follow the 2014 report by the Surgeon General that lists the risks of smoking as developing a second primary cancer, disease recurrence, treatment complications, diminished quality of life and reduced survival.

Drs. Ostroff and Park compared the efficacy of Intensive Treatment consisting of 11 counseling sessions with tobacco treatment specialists over a 6 months period paired with provision of free cessation medication, to Standard Treatment, 4 counseling sessions over 4 weeks and medication advice. Their randomized clinical trial, enrolling 303 patients ~ 150 patients in each arm of the study, showed that patients in the Intensive Treatment condition were 13% more likely to quit and not relapse. Biochemical verification of smoking abstinence was 34.5% and 21.5% in the Intensive vs Standard condition, respectively.

Dr. Ostroff points to several unique aspects of the study: “This is the first trial to demonstrate the superiority of more intensive tobacco treatment, all the more generalizable because of enrollment of patients with tobacco and non-tobacco related cancers.”

The promising results from this trial were instrumental in the team’s current work that tests the effectiveness of implementing this intervention in community oncology settings. In follow up work Dr. Ostroff plans to design a trial that distinguishes patients who are most likely to benefit from enhanced counseling from those who need less support and can successfully quit with the standard number of counseling sessions.

MSK has longstanding leadership in integrating smoking cessation support services as a part of routine cancer care “We have an NCI-funded training program at MSK that brings together oncologists, oncology nurses and tobacco treatment specialists to learn how to do this intervention.” explains Dr. Ostroff. Tobacco treatment specialists are specifically trained to understand patients’ needs, help them navigate the minefield of frustration, self-blame, shame and guilt often associated with tobacco addictions and provide needed support.

We Welcome Your Feedback!

The PSRP News Committee would love to hear your thoughts and suggestions on how to improve the newsletter. Please feel free to send any comments to Richard Koppenaal (koppenaar@mskcc.org). Thank you for your support!

PSRP News Editorial Staff

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Shireen Lewis, MPA / Epidemiology & Biostatistics
Maha Mamoor / Epidemiology & Biostatistics
Leeza Menon / Immigrant Health & Cancer Disparities
Nicole Rusk, PhD / Epidemiology & Biostatistics
Meghan Woods, MPH / Epidemiology & Biostatistics

Psych Update

Updates from the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

Dr. Allison Applebaum

Through funding from the Projects in Patient and Family-Centered Care Grant, Dr. Applebaum and team extended their existing study “The Impact of Caregiver Distress Screening, Targeted Referral and Consultation on MSK Caregiver, Patient and Health System Outcomes” for another year and expanded their distress screening protocol to include COVID-19 specific questions, information, and resources.

Drs. Yesne Alici and William Breitbart

Several members in the Psychiatry Service collaborated with colleagues in the Critical Care Service to review COVID-19 patients with delirium admitted to the ICU from March through the end of July, IRB 20-225. The goal is to describe the frequency, predictors, and outcomes of delirium among this patient population and they are about to start data analysis.

Dr. Jamie Ostroff

As an extension of the national Cancer Centers Cessation Initiative (C3I), the MSK Tobacco Lab, led by Dr. Jamie Ostroff, in partnership with the MSK Health Informatics team is participating in an NCI-funded collaboration examining the effect of smoking status on COVID-19 severity and other cancer/health outcomes. In total, 42 cancer centers nationwide are extracting and pooling harmonized EHR data from COVID positive patients. Data analysis and manuscript preparation are underway.

Dr. Jennifer Hay/GRHDM Lab

Jennifer Hay, PhD, is working with a team of investigators to examine the impact of public perceptions of COVID-19 risk for oneself and other people on protective behavior adoption across diverse geographical locations in the country. The team is currently examining findings within and across geographical areas of the country to be used for message development and tailoring strategies to increase the proportion of those adopting protective behaviors by understanding public perceptions of COVID-19 risk.

Drs. Jada Hamilton, Jennifer Hay, Lisa Diamond

Jada Hamilton, PhD, MPH was awarded an NCI Moonshot U01. The objective of this 5-year study is to develop, test, and evaluate a linguistically and culturally appropriate streamlined approach to hereditary cancer multigene panel testing among cancer patients diverse in race/ethnicity, language, and education.

COMSKIL

Utilizing best practices of communication skills training, the Comskil team, in collaboration with telemedicine, developed 2 brief tele-oncology resource guides to address the timely need to maximize high-quality care to patients with cancer during the COVID-19 crisis. The goal of these resource guides is to recognize, elicit, and effectively respond to patients’ medical needs and concerns while utilizing empathic responses to communicate understanding, alleviate distress, and provide support via phone or videoconferencing, as applicable.

Dr. Lisa Carter-Harris

Dr. Carter-Harris was named as a representative for MSK on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Leadership Alliance Workgroup for Equity and Health Care, along with PSRP Co-Director Dr. Francesca Gany.

Mark your calendar

PSRP Seminars

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|------|--|
| 3/16 | Ross Levine, MD
MSKCC |
| 4/20 | Rulla Tamimi, ScD
Professor of Population Health Sciences, Division
Chief of Epidemiology, Associate Director of Population Science, Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer
Center Weill Cornell Medicine |
| 5/18 | Eric Garland, PhD, LCSW
Distinguished Endowed Chair in Research
Professor and Associate Dean for Research U
niversity of Utah College of Social Work |
| 6/16 | Otis W. Brawley, MD, MACP, FASCO, FACE
Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Oncology and
Epidemiology, Johns Hopkins University |