HEALTH DISPARITIES
RESEARCH WORKGROUP

Workgroup dedicated to promoting health disparities research at Michigan Medicine by:

• Conducting research that addresses the health needs of all sectors of the population
• Disseminating current research
• Acting as a mentors for potential health disparities researchers, residency and fellowship applicants and students
• Identifying additional resources for health disparities research

Sponsored by:
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John Ayanian, M.D., M.P.P.
Alice Hamilton Collegiate Professor of Medicine; Professor of Internal Medicine; Professor of Health Management and Policy; Director for Healthcare Policy and Innovation; Professor of Public Policy

Research Interest and Projects: Effects of race, ethnicity, gender and insurance coverage on access to care and clinical outcomes, and the impact of physician specialty and organizational characteristics on the quality of care for cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and other major health conditions. He has led numerous studies assessing access to care, quality of care, and health care disparities.

R. Alex Blackwood, M.D., Ph.D.
Faculty Lead for Leaders and Learners Pathways; Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Division of Infectious Diseases; Vice-Chair, Institutional Review Board

Research Interest and Projects: Neutrophil cell biology. Most noted for his involvement with U-M students serving as the faculty advisor for Multicultural Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS) and Wolverine Tutors; Vice-Chair of the Institutional Review Board of the U-M Medical School (IRB Med); member of the Admissions Committee; serves on the student Biomedical Research Committee and Advisory Board; M.D./Ph.D. Program Advisory Committee; Director of Resident Scholarly Activity for the Department of Pediatrics and a former Assistant Director of Pediatric Education and Director of the Pediatric Mentoring Program. He has also been developing partnerships with area schools to foster education and provide mentoring and tutoring for disadvantaged and under-represented student populations.
David J. Brown, M.D.
Associate Vice President and Associate Dean for Health Equity and Inclusion; Associate Professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
Research Interest and Projects: To increase diversity, inclusion and equity throughout the medical pipeline. As a U-M Global REACH faculty associate he collaborates with colleagues at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) in Kumasi, Ghana, to bridge otolaryngology educational, technical and research efforts between KATH and the U-M. He also is a member of the Global Tracheostomy Collaborative, which promotes quality and safety for patients with tracheostomies.

Devin Brown, M.D., M.S.
Professor of neurology and Director of the Vascular Neurology Fellowship Program
Research Interest and Projects: Stroke-related health disparities, sleep disorders in stroke patients, and clinical trials in stroke. She is the principal investigator of an NIH-funded project to assess the frequency of sleep-disordered breathing after stroke, and the relationship of these sleep disorders to stroke outcomes. She further conducts studies on the pathophysiology of sleep apnea in stroke patients.

James Burke, M.D., M.S.
Assistant Professor, Neurology
Research Interest and Projects: Understanding how information acquired from diagnostic tests improves clinical outcomes and developing more efficient mechanisms of determining which patients need diagnostic tests. He has completed subspecialty training in Vascular Neurology/Stroke and is board certified in Neurology and Vascular Neurology. He is a member of the Acute Stroke Team, sees inpatients on the University of Michigan Neurology Service and outpatients at the Ann Arbor VA.

Jorge Delva, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Kristine A. Siefert Collegiate Professor of Social Work
Research Interest and Projects: Drug epidemiology, program evaluation, survey research, cross-cultural and cross-national research, the use of multilevel statistics to study individual- and contextual-level variables. Focuses on addressing and reducing health disparities and helping improve the lives of low-income and racial and ethnic minority populations.
Kim Eagle, M.D.
Albion Walter Hewlett Professor of Internal Medicine, Professor of Health Management and Policy at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, and Director of the Frankel Cardiovascular Center at the University of Michigan Health System

Research Interest and Projects: Outcomes research in cardiovascular medicine, clinical decision guidelines in heart care, quality assessment, study of thoracic aortic disease, the fight against childhood obesity, and pacemaker re-use in underserved countries. Developed an outcomes research program focusing on quality, cost-effectiveness, practice guidelines, acute coronary syndromes, treatment of aortic diseases, the fight against childhood obesity heart disease in special populations and reuse of pacemakers in third world nations.

Gary L. Freed M.D.
Percy J Murphy MD & Mary Murphy RN Professor of Pediatrics in Child Health Delivery, Professor of Pediatrics & Communicable Diseases, Medical School and Professor of Health Management and Policy in the School of Public Health

Research Interest and Projects: Child health policy and health economics, immunizations, physician behavior, the medical workforce and inter specialty variation in the provision of preventive services to children. He is a frequent consultant to state and federal agencies as well as the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences and the World Health Organization. He is a member of the American Board of Pediatrics and a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Vicki Ellingrod, Pharm.D.
John Gideon Searle Professor, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education, Professor of Pharmacy, College of Pharmacy, Professor of Psychiatry, Medical School and Adjunct Professor of Psychology, College of LSA

Research Interest and Projects: Pharmacometabolomics of bipolar disorder treatments, Folate pharmacogenomics and risk of atypical antipsychotic metabolic side effects, Effects of SSRIs on bone health in adolescents. Focuses on the role of pharmacogenetically regulated folate metabolism and its relationship to metabolic syndrome and endothelial dysfunction seen with antipsychotic use in patients with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Amir Ghaferi, M.D., M.S.
Assistant Professor of Surgery
Chief, Division of Veteran’s Administration, Director of Bariatric Surgery (AAVA), Director of the Michigan Bariatric Surgery Collaborative

Research Interest and Projects: Understanding the relationship of organizational culture to quality and efficiency, with the ultimate goal of designing interventions to improve care locally, regionally, and nationally. He is currently a co-investigator on an NIH funded grant that seeks to assess the micro-system resources, the safety attitudes and culture, and the safety-related practices and behaviors that are potentially related to the ability to recognize and manage major postoperative complications.
Jennifer Griggs, M.D., M.P.H.
Professor Department of Health Management & Policy, Professor Department of Internal Medicine, Hematology & Oncology Division

Research Interest and Projects: Quality of breast cancer care and effect on outcomes. Racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in quality of breast cancer systemic therapy. Dr. Grigg’s research program addresses the quality of cancer care, optimal cancer care in obese patients, and patient-physician communication and decision-making.

Susan Goold, M.D., M.H.S.A., M.A.
Professor of Internal Medicine, Medical School, Professor of Health Management and Policy, School of Public Health

Research Interest and Projects: Studies the allocation of scarce healthcare resources, especially the perspectives of patients and citizens. Her health services research interests include public perspectives on health and healthcare spending priorities, physicians and stewardship, conflicts of interest in medicine and biomedical research, public health ethics and equity, physician reimbursement and the doctor-patient relationship, deliberative procedures in bioethics and health policy, and the philosophical and empirical study of trust relationships in healthcare settings.

Marc Hershenson, M.D.
Frederick G.L. Huetwell Professor of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases at the University of Michigan Medical School, Professor of Molecular and Integrative Physiology and Division Director of Pediatric Pulmonology

Research Interest and Projects: Biochemical mechanisms underlying virus-induced exacerbations of asthma and chronic obstructive lung disease; Biochemical mechanisms underlying airway smooth muscle cell hypertrophy in asthma.

Mary Heisler, M.D., M.P.A.
Professor Department of Internal Medicine, Professor Health Behavior & Health Education

Research Interest and Projects: Patient self-management of chronic illnesses; patient-doctor relations; disparities in processes and outcomes in chronic illnesses; Her main focus is using CBPR approaches to work with partners to develop, evaluate, and implement innovative programs to improve chronic disease self-management and outcomes among adults in vulnerable populations and underserved communities. She currently is leading several multisite federally funded trials to test different approaches involving peer mentors and interactive web-based tailored tools to inform chronic disease self-management support from community health workers, health coaches, and peers.
Sarah Hawley, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Associate Professor in the Division of General Medicine at the University of Michigan, and a Research Investigator at the Ann Arbor VA Health Services Research and Development Center of Excellence

Research Interest and Projects: Decision making related to cancer prevention and control, particularly among racial/ethnic minority and underserved populations. She has a specific focus on understanding the role of patient preferences and patient-physician communication in use of screening and treatment services and in reducing health disparities.

Deborah Levine, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine and Assistant Professor of Neurology, Medical School

Research Interest and Projects: Epidemiology, prevention, and care of stroke and cognitive impairment, with a focus on vascular risk factors, adherence, and health disparities. Her research includes improving the quality of stroke care; stroke-related dementia and cognitive impairment; and reducing healthcare disparities in cardiovascular disease and stroke. She also focuses on quality improvement program design, implementation and evaluation research, and research on provider behavior.

Elizabeth Lawlor, M.D., Ph.D.
Russell G. Adderley Professor of Pediatric Oncology, and Molecular Sarcomas, Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics & Communicable Diseases

Research Interest and Projects: Investigating how hijacking of normal stem cell and developmental processes contributes to the initiation and progression of Ewing sarcoma. The central hypothesis underlying her research program is that pediatric cancers depend on dysregulation of genes and pathways that are integral to normal stem cell biology. The overall goal is to discover and define similarities and differences between normal stem cells and cancer cells. To achieve this, her lab uses human stem cell models as well as mouse models and tumor cell lines.

Julie Lumeng, M.D.
Professor of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, Research Professor, CHGD, Associate Professor of Environmental Health Sciences, School of Public Health

Research Interest and Projects: How social eating behavior and children’s cognitions around food may alter dietary composition and overweight risk, particularly in preschool-aged children and younger. Dr. Lumeng also examines the influences on young children’s overweight risk through the analysis of large data sets, particular focus on child care quality, and neighborhood characteristics.
Toby Lewis, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Professor, Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, Assistant Professor, Environmental Health Sciences, Assistant Research Scientist, Health Behavior and Health Education

Research Interest and Projects: Epidemiology and public health of childhood respiratory disease, particularly the interplay of biologic, environmental, and social factors in the development and exacerbation of asthma.

Carlos Mendes de Leon, Ph.D.
Professor, Epidemiology
Director of the Center for Social Epidemiology and Population Health
Director of the Center for Integrative Approaches to Health Disparities

Research Interest and Projects: Major health problems and health disparities in late life. His work focuses on a broad array of social and psychological determinants that affect the development and progression of disability, cognitive decline and other common, age-associated health conditions. Specific areas of interest include the role of neighborhood-level social processes and environments in late-life health, and the complex interplay between life-course social conditions and biological processes and their functional consequences in older age.

Elham Mahmoudi, Ph.D., M.B.A., M.S.
Research Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery, Medical School

Research Interest and Projects: Evaluating healthcare policies, reducing disparities in access to quality healthcare, and optimizing care management for patients with multiple chronic conditions. Other health services research interests encompass disability and healthcare disparities, the economics of aging, cost-effective analysis, economic outcomes of traumatic digit amputation, and patient-centered medical homes.

George Mashour, M.D., Ph.D.
Associate Dean for Clinical and Translational Research, Executive Director of Translational Research, Office of Research, Director, Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research (MICHR)
Director, Center for Consciousness Science, Bert N. La Du Professor of Anesthesiology Research, Faculty, Neuroscience Graduate Program

Research Interest and Projects: Consciousness, anesthetic mechanisms, and sleep. Approaches, from computational modeling to animal studies to clinical trials. How the brain synthesizes or binds information to generate normal conscious experience and how these integrative processes are disrupted during sleep, general anesthesia, and other altered states.
Michael McKee, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Professor of Family Medicine, Medical School, President of the Medical Professionals with Hearing Losses (AMPHL)

Research Interest and Projects: Health Care for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Populations, Health disparities for individuals with various disabilities, health information accessibility, health literacy, and telemedicine applications. He is also interested in the application of eye trackers and mixed methodologies to study how individuals acquire health information through visual and incidental learning opportunities.

Michelle Meade, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Medical School

Research Interest and Projects: To enhance health and participation, and reduce health care disparities and costs, among individuals with disabilities through (1) identification of modifiable factors, including those associated with health and health care disparities; (2) development and validation of culturally relevant interventions; and (3) implementation of (tailored) dissemination and knowledge translation strategies. Other interest includes: Spinal Cord Injury, Health Disparities, Community Re-integration.

Marcia Perry, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine, Medical School, Assistant Director, Emergency Medicine Residency Program

Research Interest and Projects: Coaching and mentoring medical students and residents, patient satisfaction, formative assessment and remediation. In her role as OHEI Lead for House Officers she plans to work collaboratively with OHEI to develop a community equipped with tools and resources to mentor and coach house officers in developing the skills needed to be successful in academic medicine.

Michael Quasney, M.D.
Fredrick Huetwell Professor, Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases Division Director, Pediatric Critical Care Medicine

Research Interest and Projects: Research interests include genetics of acute lung injury and sepsis, molecular mechanisms of critical illness, long term outcomes of critical illness in children. While this work has focused on using candidate genes and pathway analysis, he has also used transcription arrays to identify novel gene products and pathways not previously thought to be involved in lung pathobiology.
Ken Resnicow, Ph.D.
Professor, Health Behavior & Health Education

Research Interest and Projects: The design and evaluation of health promotion programs for special populations, particularly cardiovascular and cancer prevention interventions for African Americans; understanding the relationship between ethnicity and health behaviors; school-based health promotion programs; substance use prevention and harm reduction and motivational interviewing for chronic disease prevention.

Matthew Sampson, M.D., M.S.C.E.
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, Medical School

Research Interest and Projects: Utilizing next-generation sequencing data and deep clinical phenotyping to elucidate the role of genomic variation in both transcriptomic changes in kidney biopsy tissue and clinical outcomes in NEPTUNE subjects. Also works on using exome chip, whole genome and targeted exome sequencing data from subjects with nephrotic syndrome to define functional genomic elements across the genome in order to develop a generalizable genomic variant mapping test that can be used across diseases.

Santiago Schnell, DPhil (Oxon), FRSC
Professor of Molecular & Integrative Physiology and Computational Medicine & Bioinformatics, William K. Brehm Investigator at the Michigan Comprehensive Diabetes Center

Research Interest and Projects: Investigates physiological systems comprising many interacting components, where modeling and theory may aid the identification of the key mechanisms underlying the behavior of the systems as a whole. Dr. Schnell’s lab is particularly interested in investigating the molecular mechanisms of pancreatic beta-cells turnover and dysfunction in diabetes, the dynamics of metabolic pathways in cancer cells and the mechanisms of protein misfolding and aggregation in conformational diseases.

Amy Schulz, Ph.D.
Professor, Health Behavior & Health Education, Associate Director, CRECH, Principal Investigator for the Healthy Environments Partnership

Research Interest and Projects: Understanding social determinants of health in urban communities, the contributions of social and environmental factors to racial and socioeconomic cardiovascular disease, social aspects of community and their relationship to health, and interventions designed to promote environmental health and health equity in urban areas.
Kayte Spector-Bagdady, J.D., M.Bioethics
Research Investigator, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Medical School

Research Interest and Projects: Informed consent around emerging technologies with a focus on reproduction and genetics. She is a former drug and device attorney and has served as associate director of the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues.

Lesli Skolarus, M.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Neurology, Medical School

Research Interest and Projects: Understanding and reducing stroke related health disparities through health services research and community based participatory research. Dr. Skolarus and her community partners are utilizing implementation science and community based participatory research approaches to increase acute stroke treatment rates in Flint, MI. She has also partnered with Hurley Medical Center and community health centers in a clinical trial to reduce blood pressure. Finally, she is exploring the drivers of racial differences on post-stroke disability using national data.

Susan Woolford, M.D., M.P.H
Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, Medical Director, University of Michigan Pediatric Comprehensive Weight Management Center

Research Interest and Projects: Interventions in the clinical setting for the treatment of obesity, particularly for severely obese adolescents. Her research explores the delivery of weight management interventions and outcomes from multidisciplinary obesity care. In particular, Dr. Woolford’s work focuses on the use of communications technology to enhance patient engagement and adherence to treatment recommendations.