

# Obstetrics & Gynecology NEWSLETTER

## SCIENCE FEATURE:

### **Recent Research led by Chaluvally-Raghavan has Highlighted the Pivotal Role of the Oncostatin M Receptor (OSMR) in Ovarian Cancer**

Their findings reveal that OSMR is highly expressed in ovarian cancer cells and plays a critical role in driving tumor growth, proliferation, and metastasis. To abrogate OSMR actions, the team developed a novel suite of monoclonal antibodies designed to inhibit OSMR signaling, offering a promising new approach to cancer therapy. This innovative work was published in *Cancer Research*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research, in 2021 (PMC8530981).

Using comprehensive transcriptome profiling combined with cellular and molecular assays, the researchers uncovered that OSMR is a key regulator of chemotherapy resistance. The mechanism involves the activation of integrin signaling through the STAT3 transcription factor, enabling cancer cells to resist treatment. These findings were published in *npj Precision Oncology*, a journal from the Nature Portfolio (PMCID: PMC11153533). The study indicates that anti-OSMR antibodies could significantly improve chemotherapy sensitivity in ovarian cancer patients, particularly those with recurrent disease after prior treatments.

To leverage this discovery for patient care, Dr. Chaluvally-Raghavan's team has secured a patent for their anti-OSMR monoclonal antibodies. This technology has been licensed under an option lease agreement to Sera Medicine, Inc., which is conducting further preclinical testing and toxicity evaluations. The ultimate aim is to develop these antibodies into an investigational new drug (IND) for gynecological cancers and other malignancies where OSMR is overexpressed, providing a novel therapeutic pathway for cancer.

## **Welcome to the Fall-Winter 2024 OBGYN NEWSLETTER**

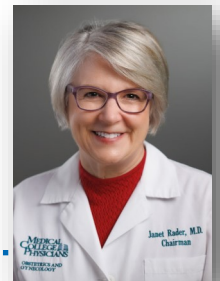
It has been a busy start to the school year with 22 academic clinical and research faculty, staff physicians, and APPs joining us. Our growth has enabled us to significantly increase our services for general and specialty Obstetrics and Gynecology in the community. Also, as Milwaukee area Birth Centers close, we will continue to see increases in deliveries to well over 4000. Our collaborative work has allowed us to invest in new research projects and offer more opportunities for trainees. Increased NIH funding has placed us in the top 15-20% of US medical school OBGYN departments.

Inside this newsletter we highlight the November 6 Faculty Retreat where ongoing clinical and translational research was presented followed by a coffee break with a few MCW Board members and community guests. There were then six breakout sessions.

Thank you to Drs Ben Beran, Kristina Kaljo, Kate Schoyer, Paul Lemen, and Abbey Kruper for organizing such a wonderful retreat.

The newsletter also highlights new clinical trials, faculty accomplishments and upcoming events.

Janet S. Rader, MD  
she/her  
Jack A. and Elaine D. Klieger  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Obstetrics and  
Gynecology  
Associate Director, CRTEC  
Medical College of Wisconsin  
Cancer Center



## NEW GRANTS:

- **Pradeep Chaluvally-Raghavan, PhD:** *Advancing Healthier Wisconsin (AHW)* - R- Translational Mechanisms in Breast Cancer
- **Pradeep Chaluvally-Raghavan, PhD:** *MCW Cancer Center* - R- RBMS1-Mediated Lineage Transition in Breast Cancer
- **Abbey Kruper, PsyD:** *Advancing Healthier Wisconsin (AHW)* - Nourishing Futures: Enhancing Maternal Child Health through Nutrition and Education
- **Anna Palatnik, MD:** *National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)* - 1R01HD112930—Reducing the Risk of Chronic Hypertension and Improving Vascular Function Following Preeclampsia

## NEW CLINICAL TRIALS:

- **PI: William Bradley, MD — GOG-3082-ACRIVON-ACR-368-201:** An open label Phase 1b/2 study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of ACR-368 as monotherapy or in combination with ultralow dose gemcitabine in participants with platinum-resistant ovarian carcinoma, endometrial adenocarcinoma, and urothelial carcinoma based on Acrivon's OncoSignature® test status. amount of estrogen and also blocks the use of estrogen made by the body. This may help stop the growth of tumor cells that need estrogen to grow. The combination of ipatasertib and megestrol acetate may be more effective in treating endometrial cancer than megestrol acetate alone.
- **PI: Elizabeth Hopp, MD — NRG-GY028:** Phase Ib/II trial tests the safety, side effects, best dose, and effectiveness of the combination of ipatasertib with megestrol acetate to megestrol acetate alone in patients with endometrial cancer that has come back (recurrent) or has spread to other places in the body (metastatic). Ipatasertib may stop the growth of tumor cells and may kill them by blocking some of the enzymes needed for cell growth. Megestrol acetate lowers the amount of estrogen and also blocks the use of estrogen made by the body. This may help stop the growth of tumor cells that need estrogen to grow. The combination of ipatasertib and megestrol acetate may be more effective in treating endometrial cancer than megestrol acetate alone.
- **PI: Anna Palatnik, MD — BUNDLE: Building TrUst and UNiting Teams Through DouLa partnErship:** The BUNDLE study is a prospective mixed-methods study focused on the early integration of community doula into prenatal care. The investigators will pursue the following aims using a multidisciplinary team of experts in health disparities, community engagement, qualitative research, maternal-fetal medicine, and doula support.

## CLINICAL TRIAL HIGHLIGHT:

**Leveraging Methylated DNA Markers (MDMs) in the Detection of Endometrial Cancer, Ovarian Cancer, and Cervical Cancer (ECHO)**

**—PI: Emily Davidson, MD**

MCW is one site for this multi-center trial aiming to develop screening tests for endometrial cancer, ovarian cancer, and cervical cancer. Mayo Clinic is the sponsor and coordinating center. MCW is actively recruiting patients from the GYN/ONC and Complex Gynecology division clinics with abnormal uterine bleeding, postmenopausal bleeding, benign gynecologic conditions undergoing hysterectomy, and patients with ovarian or endometrial cancer. In this study, after consent blood and tampon will be collected and tested to identify potential biomarkers for early detection.

**Stay in touch and  
follow us!**

**Have something to share?**

**Send it our way!**

**[mcwobgyn@mcw.edu](mailto:mcwobgyn@mcw.edu)**



**CLINICAL TRIAL HIGHLIGHT:****REPAIR—Reducing the Risk of Chronic Hypertension and Improving Vascular Function****Following Preeclampsia: —**

**PI: Anna Palatnik, MD** — REPAIR is a multicenter RCT of 618 postpartum patients with hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (HDP). The REPAIR study enrolls postpartum patients with HDP. Individuals who enroll in the study are randomized to either the intervention group (tight control below 140/90 mmHg) or the active control group (less tight below 150/100 mmHg) with the goal of keeping blood pressure values below the threshold of their assigned group. The primary objective is to determine the effect of intensive postpartum blood pressure control on incident diagnosis of stage I hypertension at one year postpartum. The secondary objective is to determine the effect of intensive postpartum blood pressure control on cardiovascular function and disease risk following HDP."

**NEW CLINICAL TRIALS CONT'D:**

- **PI: Denise Uyar, MD — Debio 0123-102** — This study has two parts: Part 1 and Part 2. The purpose of this study in Part 1, Dose Escalation Part is to determine the maximum tolerated dose (MTD) and/or the recommended Phase 2 dose (RP2D) of Debio 0123 as monotherapy with repeated dosing in adults with advanced solid tumors that recurred or progressed after prior therapy and/or for whom no standard therapy of proven benefit is available.

The purpose in Part 2, Expansion Part of this study, is to characterize the safety and tolerability of Debio 0123 in each study arm and overall when administered as monotherapy at the MTD/RP2D determined during the Dose Escalation Part 1 and to evaluate the preliminary anti-tumor activity of Debio 0123 when administered as monotherapy to participants in each study arm.

- **PI: Denise Uyar, MD — GOG-3068-HOTT-HIPEC:** a Phase III Randomized Trial of Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy (HIPEC) with Cisplatin Versus No HIPEC At the Time of Optimal Interval Cytoreductive Surgery Followed by Niraparib Maintenance in Patients with Newly Diagnosed Stage III and IV Ovarian, Primary Peritoneal, and Fallopian Tube Cancer (Heated Ovarian Treatment Trial).

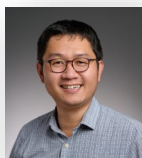
- **PI: William Bradley, MD — NRG-GY032:** a phase II trial tests how well tailoring therapy in post-surgery works in patients with low-risk endometrial cancer. The usual approach for patients with low-risk endometrial cancer is treatment with surgery. In this study, tissue that is removed as part of the surgical procedure is analyzed in the pathology laboratory to help guide the doctor to decide whether or not additional treatment such as radiation and or chemotherapy should be recommended.

**CLINICAL UPDATES:**

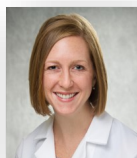
- REI Division now offers onsite (in hospital) oocyte retrievals for high-risk oncofertility patients at Froedtert Menomonee Falls Hospital.
- Genetic Counselors— All GCs are now licensed in the state of WI. Milestone- historically, licensure for CGCs did not exist (in WI).

WELCOME FACULTY:

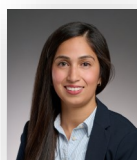
**Liang Liang, PhD** — Assistant Professor in OBGYN, division of Research & Advanced Education, joining us from Stanford University.



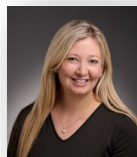
**Guangbo (Bill) Chen, PhD** — Assistant Professor in OBGYN, division of Research & Advanced Education, joining us from Stanford University.



**Abbey Merryman, MD** — Vice Chair Clinical Operations, Associate Professor, joining us from University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics.

WELCOME ADVANCED PRACTICE CLINICIANS:

**Xonanet Z Curtin, NP** — Nurse Practitioner in UroGyn, joining us from UW-Madison Urology.



**Jennifer Mahaffey, NP** — Nurse Practitioner in General OBGYN, joining us from MCW Surgery.



**Wandalee Lutzen** — Maternal-Fetal Medicine Research Coordinator.



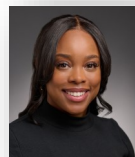
**Suzette Rosas-Rogers, PhD** — Postdoctoral Researcher with Dr. Anna Palatnik.



**Raven Hall** — Maternal-Fetal Medicine Research Coordinator.



**Shafiq Shaikh, PhD** — Postdoctoral Researcher in Dr. Akinyemi Ojesina's Lab.



**Carlisa Prospere, RN** — Research Nurse with Dr. Anna Palatnik.



**Rachel Pollard, NP** — Nurse Practitioner in General OBGYN, joining us from Froedtert Community Physicians Clinic.

The Generalist Division has welcomed 5 new Faculty members over the last two months. We are thrilled about the growth of our division! We are now positioned to increase our access and provide excellent care to all our patients here on Main Campus and at four satellite clinics. Our new partners bring with them a diversity of experience in training, practice, and life experience, and our division is better for it. We are equally excited about their collective interest in medical student and resident education, which comes at a critical time as our residency transitions to a fully academic program. There is opportunity to grow our clinical research and to explore further community engagement, both of which are a win for healthcare in Wisconsin. The future of our division is very bright.

- Jackie Peebles, MD



✓ MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

April 9, 2025: James E. Aiman, MD  
Endowed Lectureship

**Bani Ratan, MD, EdD —**  
“OBGYN Physicians as Educators and Leaders”  
Associate Professor, Associate Program Director,  
Obstetrics and Gynecology; Resident as Teachers  
and Educators (RaTE) Chair,  
Graduate Medical Education  
Baylor College of Medicine

April 11, 2025: Women's Health Conference  
Harley Davidson Museum

June 20, 2025: Resident and Fellow Graduation  
The Wisconsin Country Club

June 25, 2025: Resident and Fellow  
Research & Alumni Day  
MCW Alumni Center



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education, visit our website at  
[https://obgyn.mcw.edu/about-us/  
philanthropy/](https://obgyn.mcw.edu/about-us/philanthropy/)  
or call (414) 955-4711 to donate.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

- Jessica Chung, MD; Robert Rydze, MD; Kristina Kaljo, PhD; Mary Burke, MD; Samantha Conner, MD ('26); Julianne Newcomer, MD; Breanna Ries, PA; Amy Ticknor, MD ('27); Denise Uyar, MD; Cristina Young, MD ('25) were all recipients of the 2023-2024 Teacher Recognition Pins for outstanding medical school teachers.
- **Kate Schoyer, MD** hosted a roundtable at ASRM on "Natural cycle Frozen Embryo transfer".
- **Dr. Denise Uyar** is president of the Heartland Association of Gynecologic Oncology (HAGO) and co-chaired the 2024 Annual meeting in Milwaukee.
- **Erica McKinney, PhD** interviewed by CBS 58 news on Mom's Mental health Initiative during a hosted a discussion at Alverno College to help raise awareness about the perinatal mental health crisis.
- The Word on Medicine hosted **Dr. Kimberly Gecsi** discussing National Domestic Violence Awareness.
- **Kimberly Gecsi, MD** featured in Family Practice News MDedge speaking on ACOG's New Guidance which Advises Clinicians on Cannabis Use for Gynecologic Pain.
- Our Womanity podcast featured **Kimberly Gecsi, MD**, on HPV and "Pap Smears".
- **Dr. Kimberly Gecsi** speaks at ACOG's micround on Counseling Patients About Ovarian Cancer Prevention Strategies for BRCA Carriers and Other High-Risk Groups.

## DEPARTMENT NEWS

### CONT'D:

- **Morgan Armstrong and Samantha Stachowiak**, certified genetic counselors, featured in The Word on Medicine's October Breast Cancer and Genetics radio program.
- **Dr. Libby Hopp** featured in Tosa Living Magazine for participating in Running Towards a Cure – A Ray of Hope Event.
- **Anna Palatnik, MD**, receives The Julia A. Uihlein, MD, Dean of the School of Medicine's CTSI Award – Breakthrough in translational science.
- **Dr. Prerna Pandya** was accepted to the national AUGS CME Committee and **Dr. Emily Davidson** was accepted to the national AUGS Coding Committee.
- **Carissa Aboubakare, NP**, was chosen to be this year's Chair of the AUGS APP Course.

## ALUMNI CORNER:

We'd like to hear from you!  
Please send us your  
updates to:

[obgynresidency@mcw.edu](mailto:obgynresidency@mcw.edu)

## RESIDENT NEWS:

Our OBGYN residency program is pleased to be making a successful transition to a single site program within Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin. We are in the process of recruiting our second class of five residents and are excited about the opportunities this transition will offer our current and future learners.

Our program continues to exceed expectations for obstetric, gynecologic and outpatient experience. Residents participate in a research curriculum that facilitates a deep understanding and appreciation of medical literature, while setting our residents up for success in fellowship or practice. Our educators remain focused on exposing our learners to medical and surgical advances through evidence-based practice in both obstetric and gynecologic settings. Our learners have the benefit of exposure and education from every subspecialty group within OBGYN right here at Froedtert and MCW.

We look forward to building a strong academic residency with a firm foundation at Froedtert and MCW, with the goal of serving the people of Southeast Wisconsin and beyond.

## STUDENT NEWS:

The OB/GYN clerkship simulation sessions started in July 2023 and are currently facilitated by Drs. Lemen and Farez. These sessions were designed to ensure all students were exposed to key clinical diagnoses, ranging from hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, postpartum hemorrhage to pelvic inflammatory disease and early pregnancy loss. In groups, students are able to interview and examine our simulation model and then present their findings. They are then tasked to "break the news" to the patient as well as discuss their management recommendations. Hands on skills including suturing and knot tying, birthing model, cesarean section model as well as a laparoscopic session are also incorporated into the sessions. Students have been overwhelmingly positive about this experience



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## **FACULTY RETREAT—November 6:**

### ***Morning Speakers:***

- Stephanie Gunderson, MD – Fertility Preservation: ongoing efforts at F&MCW
- Erika Peterson, MD – Improving Access and the Maternal Mobile Clinic
- Brock Polnaszek, MD – Labor and Delivery Research
- Jackie Peebles, MD – Navigating the 4th Trimester
- Liang Liang, PhD – Harnessing Big Data for Precision Medicine in Pregnancy
- Anna Palatnik, MD – Maternal Health Research Center
- Sunila Pradeep, PhD – Communication Matters!
- Libby Hopp, MD – Research Innovation in Adult-type granulosa cell tumors of the ovary
- Akin Ojesina, PhD – Not-so-Strange Bedfellows: Host-Microbe Synergy in Women's Cancers
- Pradeep Chaluvally-Raghavan, PhD – Delivering the Promise of Targeted Therapy
- Bill Chen, PhD – Testing immunotherapy in human spleen on a petri dish

### ***Guest Lecture:***

- Trauma – Informed Care with Ricky Ferrari Trainer, CTICP MPA CSW, Founder Director & Principal Trainer, Kulfau Professional Trainings, LLC

### ***Afternoon Breakout Sessions:***

- MCW Leadership Academy with Nate Filzen
- Surgical Coaching Program with Jed Calata
- Faculty Development/Promotion Criteria with Abbey Kruper
- Rooted Leadership Course with Kimara Ellefson
- Faculty Development/Writing & Productivity with Kathlyn Fletcher
- Community Engagement - Best Practices and Application with Staci Young and Liang Liang



## **DEPARTMENT SOCIAL—September 8:**

We hosted a department social this past September at Third Space Brewing Company and had a group from the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF) for some singing entertainment and fundraising to kick off our academic year.

