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UMCCTS Newsletter, August 2021

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CENTER FOR CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

UMASS CCTS NEWSLETTER



IN THE NEWS

COVID VACCINE TRIAL FOR KIDS ON TRACK, SAYS KIDCOVE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR AT UMMS

KATHERINE LUZURIAGA SUPPORTS MASK RECOMMENDATIONS TO RETURN TO SCHOOL SAFELY

BY SUSAN E.W. SPENCER & SARAH WILLEY

UMASS MEDICAL SCHOOL'S PRINCIPAL SITE INVESTIGATOR FOR MODERNA'S TEENCOVE AND KIDCOVE MRNA COVID-19 VACCINE CLINICAL TRIALS SAID THAT TRIAL SITES ARE ON TRACK TO EXPAND THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE MODERNA KIDCOVE TRIAL, AS REQUESTED THIS WEEK BY THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION.

INCLUSION OF MORE CHILDREN IN THE VACCINE CLINICAL TRIALS IS IMPORTANT TO BE ABLE TO EVALUATE POTENTIAL RARE SIDE EFFECTS. MEANWHILE, USE OF CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TOOLS WILL BE NECESSARY TO MEET THE CALL BY PEDIATRICIANS, PARENTS AND HEALTH LEADERS TO BRING CHILDREN BACK TO SCHOOL SAFELY IN FALL.

[FULL ARTICLE](#)

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UMCCTS NEWS

WELCOME TO OUR NEW UMCCTS INFORMATICS AND BIOMARKER CORE DIRECTORS!

The UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science would like to welcome two new core Directors, Drs. Adrian Zai and John Harris. As you may already know, Dr. Zai recently joined UMass Medical School as the Chief Research Informatics Officer. As part of this role, he will lead the Research Informatics Core (RIC) in the Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS). In his short time here, he quickly assessed the data needs required and is devising a plan to enhance our technical infrastructure. His goal is to advance our “Analytics Journey”. Dr. Zai has expressed that our data is currently more descriptive in nature, meaning that the data is telling us what happened at a point in time. Next, we will move to a predictive model that shows us what could happen if we utilized interventions. Finally, we will use a prescriptive approach that will reveal the best course of action for patients or projects. In addition, he will begin to develop the IT infrastructure necessary to allow for the use of real time data collection from apps and devices on a broader scale by utilizing the information we have gathered on smaller projects and expanding the process and programming to allow for a more robust system of data collection to be utilized by the Center as a whole.

Dr. John Harris is the Chair of the Department of Dermatology, Director of the Vitiligo Clinic and Research Center, and Director of the Autoimmune Therapeutics Institute here at UMass. Dr. Harris will take over the Integrated Biomarkers Core in the UMCCTS. He plans to support UMass investigators in the acquisition and incorporation of Multiomics and Spatial Transcriptomics data to reveal new insight into inflammatory diseases of multiple organ systems. One approach is to leverage existing data from human skin diseases to better understand diseases of other tissues that are more difficult to study, such as the tissues of the brain and pancreas. This knowledge will hopefully lead to a better understanding of the underlying cause of diseases like MS, Celiac Disease, Crohn’s Disease, and Type 1 Diabetes.

We look forward to the unique contributions that both Dr. Zai and Dr. Harris will have on the future of UMCCTS and the resulting advancement of our program.



Dr. Adrian Zai



Dr. John Harris



EVENTS

ARPA-H LISTENING SESSION

AUGUST 4, 2021

NIH and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy are organizing a series of publicly broadcast listening sessions to get feedback from patient advocacy groups, industry leaders, scientific professional organizations and other stakeholders to contribute to the planning for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H).

The session on Wednesday, Aug. 4, from 2 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. EDT focuses on biomedical and translational research and will include remarks by NCATS Acting Director Dr. Joni Rutter. As a valued member of the NCATS and translational science community, please register to attend and share this email with colleagues who also may be interested in joining. You can learn more about the proposed [ARPA-H on NIH's website](#).



FUNDING

MICROBIAL PATHOGENESIS IN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE GRANT

Last month, the IDSA Foundation opened applications for the 2021 Microbial Pathogenesis in Alzheimer's Disease Grant. This grant supports research that aims to uncover the potential missing link between an infection and chronic disease that could help unravel the complex origins of Alzheimer's disease. If you have an interest in the intersection of infectious agents and Alzheimer's disease, we encourage you to [apply](#)!



UMCCTS PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM (PPP)

LOI DUE SEPTEMBER 10, 2021

The UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science (UMCCTS) and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) are pleased to announce the next funding round for the Pilot Project Program (PPP). Individual project awards (up to \$50,000 for 1 year) will be made on a competitive basis to enable investigators to accelerate the translation of innovative discoveries into:

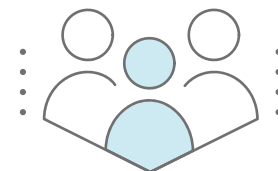
- New understanding and/or diagnosis of a disease process
- New devices, therapeutics, and vaccines for the treatment and/or prevention of disease
- New standards of care in the practice of community medicine
- New approaches to community-based research demonstrating true bi-directionality between community and academia
- New methodologies to leverage institutional strengths and new initiatives
- The pursuit of high-risk, high reward studies

Full information, including eligibility requirements and deadlines can be found [here](#).

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COLLABORATION



UMASS LOWELL INTERDISCIPLINARY SENIOR DESIGN PROJECTS

CALL FOR PROBLEM STATEMENTS DUE AUGUST 6TH

Undergraduate engineering majors at UMass Lowell complete a senior design project (two semester course) as a capstone to their degree. The purpose of this course is to give students skills in carrying out a project in a multidisciplinary team for a designated client, just as practicing engineers. This project requires the integration of skills developed throughout their undergraduate studies to solve the problems defined in the project. The developed solution(s) in this major design experience must adhere to engineering standards as well as the problem's constraints. The solution must consider all relevant economic, sustainable, ethical, social, environmental, health and safety, political, and legal issues, as they pertain to the problem. These factors should be addressed and documented as appropriate. Thus, students also acquire additional experience in delivering presentations and technical writing. [More Information](#)



RESEARCH TOOLS & RESOURCES

INTRODUCING THE LIFE COURSE VISUAL TOOLKIT

The innovative NCATS Life Course Research Visual Toolkit was created to advance the recommendations outlined in, Charting the Life Course: Emerging Opportunities to Advance Scientific Approaches Using Life Course Research. The Life Course Research Visual Toolkit serves to increase knowledge about innovative life course research methods by providing content that is widely available and accessible to trainees and researchers across multiple disciplines. The archive includes 6 full webinars with more than 15 national and international experts and 32 shorter education skills building videos can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/NCATSLifeCourseToolkit>.

NDRI BIOSPECIMENS

NDRI specializes in meeting researchers' needs for specific human organs and tissues for your rare disease research. NDRI provides an array of tissue types from any body system. Biospecimens from diseased and non-diseased surgical, autopsy, and low post-mortem interval (PMI) donors are available.

- NDRI maintains an inventory of various frozen and fixed tissue samples.
- Common diseases, including cancer, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease
- Rare diseases, including amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and lymphangiomyomatosis (LAM)

[More information](#)



EDUCATION

I-CORPS MINI-COURSE - REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

REGISTRATION THROUGH SEPT 15, 2021

This Fall the UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science is once again offering a short course to help investigators understand the commercial value of their inventions. Known as I-Corps, it's designed to support the translation of biomedical research by providing early-stage education and strategic guidance to faculty, staff and students during the initial phase of technology development.

Sign up Now! Registration closes September 15th

The course starts on October 15, 2021.

[More information and to register](#)

Questions? Contact Nate Hafer at 508-856-2511 or Nathaniel.hafer@umassmed.edu

A similar course was recently held at UAB. Learn more here: <https://youtu.be/xXZoWy0-x2g>

- Does your latest discovery have commercial value?
- Would a potential "customer" of your research welcome your technology, protocol, or intervention?
- I-Corps can help!

NCATS ONLINE COURSE IN TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

AUGUST 30- OCTOBER 15, 2021

Enhance your translational science skills this fall with a seven-week online course, MEDI 501: Principles of Preclinical Translational Science.

This class is open to the public and is being offered by NCATS' Education Branch in partnership with the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences(link is external).

Registration for the fall course is open. Please note that if you do not already have an FAES account, you will be required to make one before you can complete registration. There is a short wait time after submitting the form while FAES reviews the information submitted. After this review, the account will be activated and the prospective student will receive an email with the subject heading "Welcome to FAES" and will be able to register for MEDI 501. [MORE INFORMATION](#)



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SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORY!

Have you had your research published that cites the UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science? Has your patent been filed on technology developed using Center funding or resources? Did your pilot project receive external grant funding? Share it with us at ccts@umassmed.edu. Sharing your success demonstrates the importance and effect of the Center for Clinical and Translational Science at UMass.

CITE & SUBMIT

Please cite the NIH CTSA award any time you use The UMMS Center for Clinical and Translational Science resources, services and facilities or received funding through the Center. "The project described is supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, National Institutes of Health, through Grant UL1 TR001453, (or TL1 TR001454, or KL2 TR001455, as appropriate). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH."

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

To be included in the CCTS Monthly Newsletter, please send announcements, including a link, to ccts@umassmed.edu. The newsletter is published the first week of each month.



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