Advancing Maternal and Child Health Through Obstetric Clinical Trials
VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM
NOVEMBER 13, 2023

SPEAKERS

Alison G. Cahill, MD, MSCI | Associate Dean of Translational Research, Dell Medical School
Professor, Department of Women’s Health, Director, Health Transformation Research Institute, University of Texas at Austin

Dr. Alison Cahill is a board-certified Obstetrician Gynecologist and Maternal-Fetal Medicine subspecialist. She has formal training in conducting clinical research as a perinatal epidemiologist with a Master of Science in Clinical Investigation. She is currently a Professor in the Department of Women’s Health, with tenure, and serves as the Director of the Dell Medical School Health Transformation Research Institute.

Dr. Cahill’s neonatal and maternal outcomes research has three main areas of focus: reducing term labor and delivery-related morbidities by optimizing labor management and understanding physiologic and pathophysiologic labor, intrapartum fetal monitoring, and the impact of maternal obesity on pregnancy outcomes. She has experience in multi-disciplinary collaboration, as well as design, conduct, and publication of clinical studies, with over 250 peer-reviewed publications. Dr. Cahill has significant experience conducting complex multi-site trials and observational studies, including serving as a co-PI on a longitudinal MR imaging study examining inflammation in the placenta, PI of an NICHD-funded multicenter intervention trial for the optimal management of the second stage of labor, as well as co-PI of an NIDDK-funded obesity intervention trial among socioeconomically disadvantaged women to control gestational weight-gain.

Dr. Cahill has mentored dozens of junior investigators, including students, residents, fellows, and particularly junior faculty. Over two-thirds of the fellows and junior faculty she has primarily mentored have pursued careers in academic medicine and several are independently funded investigators.

She is chair of the Committee on Obstetric Clinical Consensus (formerly Obstetric Practice) for the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She also serves as editor-in-chief of the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology: Global
Reports and is the senior editor for the Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine editions of the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Janet Hurtado | Clinical Research Coordinator Associate, Obstetrics and Gynecology - Maternal Fetal Medicine, Stanford University
Janet is a clinical research coordinator in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Maternal Fetal Medicine Division. She is a first-generation college graduate and earned her bachelor’s degree in Sociology from San Jose State University with a focus on community health and reproductive justice. Before joining the MFM research team, Janet assisted local government in researching community health, public opinion, and behaviors surrounding health matters, as well as conducting bi-annual point-in-time homelessness surveys and censuses for five California counties. In all research projects, Janet noticed that women’s experiences were severely underrepresented, which shifted her career interests towards women's health. Since joining the MFM research team, Janet has coordinated studies related to gestational diabetes, congenital heart defects in pregnancy, fetal therapy, placenta accreta, the inheritance of allergies and the microbiome from mother to infant, maternal mental health, and many more.

In addition to her passion for clinical research and women's health, Janet is also dedicated to mentorship and increasing the representation of underrepresented minorities in all fields of medicine. Outside of her role as a clinical research coordinator, Janet serves as the Internal President of the Northern California Region of MiMentor, a national non-profit organization that creates and supports mentorship opportunities for underrepresented minorities interested in healthcare professions. In her free time, Janet is an avid reader and audiobook listener. She enjoys baking, practicing yoga, cycling, and exploring new hiking trails with her dog, Olive.

Irogue Igbinosa, MD | Instructor, Obstetrics and Gynecology - Maternal Fetal Medicine, Stanford University
Dr. Irogue Igbinosa is a Women’s Reproductive Health Scholar and Maternal Fetal Medicine physician at Stanford University. Dr. Igbinosa graduated from University of Houston, earned her medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine, and completed her residency at Louisiana State University School of Medicine Baton Rouge. After residency, Igbinosa was an AAMC-CDC Public Health Policy Fellow able to serve in the CDC Emergency Operations Center and was a member of U.S. Zika Pregnancy and Birth Defects Taskforce dedicated to research and resources for health care providers regarding the treatment of pregnant women and infants. Subsequently, she completed her maternal fetal medicine fellowship at Stanford University.
Her research interests included severe maternal morbidity, health disparities, anemia, nutrition, and infectious diseases in pregnancy. Igbinosa has published a variety of peer-reviewed articles and her work, “Racial and Ethnic Disparities in antepartum anemia and severe maternal morbidity” was recently featured in the Green’s Journal special issue on racism in reproductive health. As a WRHR Scholar, Igbinosa will pursue a multi-faceted approach to narrowing the gaps in anemia-related health disparities. In addition to her clinical trials, she works with community-based organizations utilizing mixed methods approaches to understand patient perspectives and experiences regarding the role of nutrition and anemia in pregnancy. Moreover, Igbinosa is involved with several quality improvement initiatives at hospital and statewide levels (California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative) to improve the adverse health outcomes and address health disparities.

Ijeoma Iwekaogwu | Clinical Research Coordinator II, Obstetrics and Gynecology - Maternal Fetal Medicine, Stanford University

Ijeoma is a clinical research coordinator in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Maternal Fetal Medicine Division. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry, Cell Biology, and Business Economics from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). During her academic years at UCSD, Ijeoma dedicated her efforts to clinical research studies with a focus on two areas: placental-based pregnancy disorders and depressive disorders associated with the reproductive cycle from adolescents to menopausal women. To further her involvement in this field, Ijeoma joined the Stanford MFM/OB team to work on research related to preeclampsia and heart health in pregnancy, placenta accreta, iron deficiency anemia, and contraceptive birth control clinical trials.

Outside of her role as a research coordinator, Ijeoma also serves as a program assistant for the Women's Reproductive Health Research (WRHR) Career Development Program. She is actively engaged in the U54 project: "Patient-Centered Community and Clinical Approaches to Reduce Racial Disparities at Birth by Preventing Anemia" to address disparities in women's healthcare and improve maternal outcomes. Ijeoma's goal is to become an OB/GYN, where she aspires to continue her journey of making substantial progress in the field of women's health. In her downtime, she enjoys cooking, traveling, indulging in television and literature, and playing immersive video games.

Scarlett Karakash, MD | Clinical Associate Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology - Maternal Fetal Medicine, Stanford University

Dr. Scarlett Karakash is a maternal fetal medicine specialist and clinical associate professor in the Stanford School of Medicine. She also serves as the Director of Stanford Perinatal services at Natividad Hospital.
Yvonne Maldonado, MD | Professor, Pediatrics - Infectious Diseases, Stanford University
Dr. Maldonado is the Taube Endowed Professor of Global Health and Infectious Diseases; Professor of Pediatrics, Epidemiology and Population Health; Interim Chair, Department of Medicine, Former Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases; and Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Diversity at Stanford University School of Medicine, USA. Dr. Maldonado's research interests are the epidemiology and prevention of viral vaccine preventable infections, such as measles, polio, rotavirus, and COVID-19, conducted in the US and internationally. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Infectious Disease Society of America, a member of the Society for Pediatric Research, the Pediatric Infectious Disease Society, and the American Public Health Association.

Hayley Elizabeth Miller, MD | Medicine Fellow, Obstetrics and Gynecology – Maternal Fetal Medicine, Stanford University
Dr. Hayley Miller is our current third year Maternal Fetal Medicine Fellow after completing her residency at Stanford as well.

Her journey for intellectual curiosity and quality reproductive health care started during undergraduate years at UC, Berkeley where she graduated with a degree in Molecular and Cell Biology in 2010. She completed several research projects prior to and during medical school focusing on reproductive health access and equity, including attitudes towards the HPV vaccine, and Plan B access in the Chicago area. Throughout her residency her passion for obstetrics and medical complexities became clear. She published several manuscripts on placenta accreta spectrum and sepsis markers in labor and served as a representative on the Postpartum Hemorrhage Committee and Labor and Delivery Triage Committee.

As a fellow, Dr. Miller has focused on the intersection of MFM and Complex Family Planning. She focuses on quality improvement by serving on the Labor and delivery local improvement team, perinatal loss committee, and reproductive health privacy committee. She has presented several posters and published manuscripts throughout fellowship. And for her fellowship thesis, she received grant funding to assess use of mifepristone for term induction of labor, which she will be presenting on today.
Iona Munjal, MD | Executive Director, Clinical Research & Development, Pfizer

Iona Munjal, MD FAAP, is an Executive Director in Pfizer Vaccine Clinical Research and Development. A board certified pediatric infectious diseases physician and assistant professor of pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, she is a graduate of Georgetown University and Rutgers Medical School. She did her residency and chief residency in pediatrics at Mount Sinai Hospital. She followed that with a fellowship in infectious diseases at The Children’s Hospital at Montefiore where she was awarded the best scientific research abstract by the New York Infectious Diseases Society. Dr. Munjal worked in hospital administration in epidemiology and emerging infectious diseases, including the health system’s response to Ebola and Zika viruses. She founded and oversaw the hospital’s pediatric antimicrobial stewardship program which seeks to promote sensible use to improve patient outcomes, decrease adverse events, and prevent the emergence of resistant pathogens. As an assistant professor for pediatrics, she is the recipient of numerous teaching awards, and she served as a principal investigator in multiple anti-infective and vaccine clinical trials during her tenure in academia. At Pfizer, Iona has contributed to vaccine clinical trials in all stages of vaccine development from phase 0 to licensure. She has provided trial design and overall strategy to several large global assets for Pfizer, including Staphylococcus aureus, group B streptococcus, and COVID-19 pediatric vaccine programs. She is currently the franchise lead of Pfizer’s RSV clinical vaccine programs and RSV combination programs, including the recently licensed Abryzvo vaccine.

Erica Sonnenburg, PhD | Senior Research Scientist, Microbiology and Immunology, Stanford University

Erica Sonnenburg is a senior research scientist at the Stanford University School of Medicine in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology where she studies the role of diet on the human intestinal microbiota. She has published her groundbreaking scientific findings in prestigious journals such as Cell, Science, and Nature and is the co-author of the book The Good Gut: Taking Control of Your Weight, Your Mood, and Your Long-Term Health.

The Sonnenburg lab is currently focused on understanding basic principles that govern interactions within the intestinal microbiota and between the microbiota and the host. To pursue these aims, the lab applies systems approaches (e.g., functional genomics and metabolomics) to gain mechanistic insight into emergent properties of the host-microbial super-organism.
Meryl Megumi Sperling, MD, MA | Clinical Assistant Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology - Maternal Fetal Medicine, Stanford University

Meryl Sperling, MD MA is a native of California. After graduating from UCLA, she became an English teacher in rural Japan and then went on to receive a Master of Arts in secondary education at Columbia University – Teachers College where she then went on to become a high school history teacher in New York City. During this time, she realized that her underlying passion was in the medical field. She completed her Ob/Gyn residency at the University of Hawaii followed by a maternal-fetal medicine fellowship at Stanford University. During her fellowship, she was given the opportunity to pursue her research interests in the field of gestational diabetes and subsequently stayed on as faculty where she primarily works out of the Stanford/El Camino Hospital Prenatal Diagnostic Center where she is able to help grow and run a busy diabetes in pregnancy program.

Virginia D. Winn, MD, PhD | Associate Professor OBGYN (Reproductive and Stem cell Biology), Stanford University

Virginia D. Winn, MD, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Stanford University, the Director of Reproductive, Stem Cell and Perinatal Biology Division and the Program Director for the Women’s Reproductive Health Research (K12) at Stanford Program. She is a physician-scientist board certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Maternal-Fetal Medicine (MFM) with a PhD in Biochemistry.

Dr. Winn is an expert in human placental development and preeclampsia pathogenesis. She leads a basic and translational research program with the mission of improving maternal and child health while training the next generation of perinatal researchers. Dr. Winn is the basic science lead for the Dunlevie Maternal-Fetal Medicine Center for Discovery, Innovation and Clinical Impact.