

1-2024

Dean's Update, January 2024

Neil W. Schluger

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Dear Members of the NYMC Community:

I am pleased to share with you the first issue of the Dean's Update Newsletter of the new year, which features some of the highlights of recent months in the SOM. This spring is sure to be busy, as we prepare for the accreditation visit in April by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), the organization responsible for the formal accreditation of M.D. degree-granting medical schools in the United States and Canada. The last visit by the LCME was in 2016 when the SOM received the maximum accreditation of eight years.

Earlier this month, we submitted the required data collection instrument (DCI), which provides a comprehensive description and specific data to support how the SOM meets the 12 specific standards outlined by the LCME. In February, we will undergo a mock site visit, which will help us to better assess the College's readiness for the LCME Survey Team visit a few months from now.



In December, the SOM faculty and the NYMC Board of Trustees approved the replacement of SOM's existing Faculty Constitution and Bylaws with a newly revised SOM Faculty Bylaws document. The years-long effort stemmed initially from the faculty's review of tenure bylaws and was further accelerated by findings from our institutional self-study in preparation for LCME reaccreditation.

The new Faculty Bylaws incorporate several positive changes in faculty governance and academic management. Among them are a rebalancing of clinical and basic science faculty senate voting membership, the opportunity for all faculty members to vote for full-time faculty senators to represent their NYMC affiliate site, a transparent faculty-led nomination and elections committee to appoint members to newly defined standing committees of the faculty, and the elimination of modified "clinical" titles for our clinical faculty.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Kathryn Spanknebel, M.D., dean of faculty and academic affairs, Faculty Senate president Carl Thompson, Ph.D., and secretary Dana Mordue, Ph.D., as well as the entire executive committee of the Faculty Senate and the department chairs for their support in achieving these important changes that support our faculty.

We are progressing well with the searches for new academic chairs in pediatrics, medicine, urology, and otolaryngology and expect to welcome candidates for our new chair of pediatrics to campus for in-person visits soon. We have also attracted many excellent applicants for our two junior basic sciences faculty positions, which reflects the strength of our educational and research programs.

Dr. Schluger Unveils His Vision for the SOM

I also want to celebrate the dedication and hard work of several members of the SOM senior administration who have had title changes that allow for a more consistent alignment of positions. Jennifer Salcedo, M.D., M.P.H., is now dean of graduate medical education; Susan Rachlin, M.D., is now senior associate dean for



student affairs; Mary Petzke, Ph.D., is now associate dean for medical student research; and LaShari Valentin, Ph.D., is now associate dean of academic affiliations and clinical programs.

Since becoming dean, I have met with small groups of medical students during monthly lunches in my office. These meetings have been an excellent opportunity to get to know our students, hear firsthand what is on their minds, and discuss areas of importance in the medical profession.

In the coming months, I look forward to many opportunities to celebrate the accomplishments of our students, including at the induction ceremonies for Alpha Omega Alpha and the Gold Humanism Honor Society, on Match Day, and of course, at commencement, which all be firsts for me as dean of the SOM. Best wishes for a wonderful spring semester.

Sincerely,

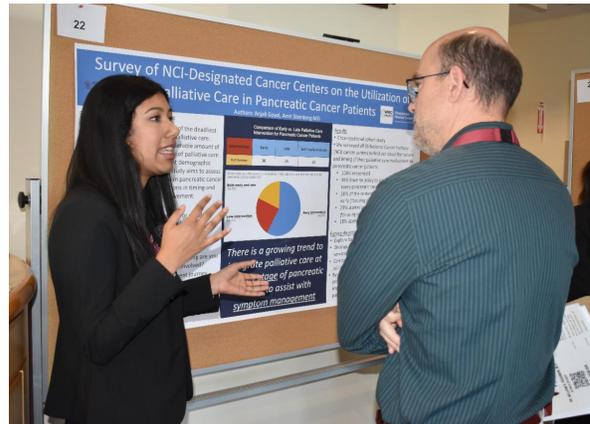
Neil W. Schluger, M.D.
Dean of the School of Medicine
Professor of Medicine

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Future Healers: 2023 Forum Highlights Medical Student Research

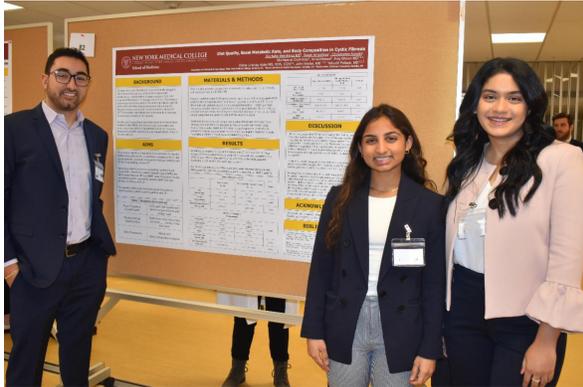
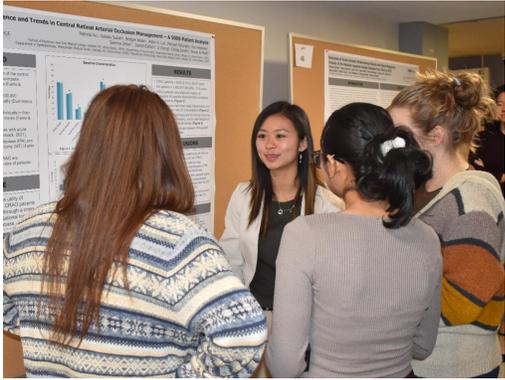
Nearly 100 medical students showcased their research at the 28th Annual Medical Student Research Forum on December 8. Through poster and oral presentations, the student research covered a wide range of topics in basic and clinical sciences, including screening and treatment of H. pylori to prevent gastric cancer in high-risk immigrant populations, the prevalence of hypertension in rheumatoid arthritis patients, brain-responsive neurostimulation in children, and autonomic dysfunction in autoimmune encephalitis.



"This year's forum continued the yearly upward trend in participation. More importantly, the presentations were of uniformly high quality, both in terms of professional format and scientific rigor," said Mary Petzke, Ph.D., associate dean for medical student research. "Peer-reviewed scholarly products are scientific currency, and as I spoke with the presenters, I was impressed by the number of projects that had been published or accepted for publication in high-quality journals and had been presented by the student author at national conferences. I would like to especially thank the mentors, both within and beyond NYMC, for their dedicated commitment and investment of time and resources. Students are always seeking research opportunities, and it is these dedicated faculty and clinicians who enable their success."

The day opened with remarks by Neil W. Schluger, M.D., dean of the SOM and professor of medicine.

“The joy and excitement of research is that you ask a question and answer it, and in doing so you create knowledge. The hope is that knowledge will at some point improve someone’s life somewhere in the world. As physicians, we seek to improve the lives of our patients, and research is really where that begins. Why is that person suffering from that disease? Why doesn’t this drug work? What causes that illness? We frame questions and design experiments, and if we’re lucky, patient and work hard, we get those answers. I think that is one of the most intellectually exciting and personally satisfying things we can do as physicians.” [Read more.](#)



Clinical Skills and Simulation Center Looks Forward to Expansion



As the Clinical Skills and Simulation Center (CSSC) looks forward to celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, planned renovations have been announced that will greatly expand the facilities to better serve the more than 4,000 students, physicians, residents, and other allied health professionals it serves annually.

The expansion, which is expected to be complete within one year, includes two additional standardized patient exam rooms, an advanced ultrasound laboratory, and specialty

training suites to support orthopedic training, cardio-pulmonary care, labor and delivery, adult and pediatric emergency care, operative simulation, critical care, and advanced procedural competences. The suite will be equipped with sophisticated simulators, such as a birthing mom and a full-scale anesthesia manikin, laparoscopic simulators, virtual reality training solutions, and will be furnished with scrub sinks to promote best practices for infection control. Additionally, a three-bed patient care unit will function as a multi-purpose simulation room and can be configured as a trauma/triage care unit, emergency department, and/or a post-operative/recovery care unit. Each bed in this unit will be in its own examination bay, equipped with a monitor, headwall, and appropriate examination/resuscitation equipment. [Read more.](#)

In addition, CSSC director **Katharine Yamulla, M.H.E.A.**, has taken on an added role as assistant dean of clinical skills education and assessment. In this new role, Yamulla will oversee campus-wide clinical skills education and assessment to create a bridge between the academic and clinical communities and enhance affiliation agreements between the College and community partners through interprofessional training opportunities.

SOM Student Ariel Yusupov Secures Spot in Westchester County Biosciences Accelerator Program

Ariel Yusupov, M.S., SOM Class of 2026, is one of just 12 budding entrepreneurs chosen to participate in the Westchester County Biosciences Accelerator Program this year. Yusupov was selected for the highly competitive program for his biotechnology startup F.I.G. (Factor Induced Gene) Therapeutics, which

developed a gene therapy, currently focused on prostate cancer, that utilizes over-expressing transcription factors in cancer to drive a multi-modal therapeutic.

Prior to medical school, Yusupov spent more than a decade working in both academia and industry, for Pfizer and Johnson and Johnson, where he led prostate cancer research and developed expertise in lipid nanoparticle-based RNA therapeutics and gene therapy.

“I developed this gene therapy, primarily as a means to overcome the resistance seen in current prostate cancer treatments, in between finishing graduate school and my career in industry, but I was never able to further progress it, until now,” says Yusupov. “The Westchester County Biosciences Accelerator Program was a perfect fit for what I needed. I’m thrilled to have been chosen to participate in this incredible program that provides opportunities for innovators like me to devote their future careers to developing novel therapies that cure patients.” [Read more.](#)



Faculty Promotions

Congratulations to our faculty who have achieved promotion in rank.

Leanne Levin, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Medicine

Charles Stier, Ph.D.
Professor of Pharmacology

First-Year Students Participate in Career and Wellness Intercession Program



First-year medical students returned from winter break in January for a two-day career and wellness intercession, sponsored by the Office of Student Affairs, designed to further introduce them to the vastness and diversity of career possibilities available to them as future physicians and provide them with a variety of wellness-related tools to support them in medical school. Through a series of sessions, students learned about numerous career specialty paths directly from practicing clinicians, researchers, educators, and

administrators. They also had the opportunity to participate in workshops on the characteristics and value of a respectful learning environment and narrative medicine, learn how to administer vaccines, and develop strategies to foster their well-being, including art marking as a wellness outlet. The event concluded with an interactive activity designed to emphasize the value of communication and teamwork.



AMWA Student Chapter Hosts Medical Workshop for High School Students

The NYMC Student Chapter of the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) hosted a Medical Mavens Workshop for more than 20 high school students at the Clinical Skills and Simulation Center on December 4 to offer an introduction to life as a medical student. Designed to simulate real medical environments, each of the stations was transformed into a lifelike patient examination room, allowing the high school students to gain firsthand experience with SimMan, Harvey, eye task trainers, and ear task trainers with reflex hammers and tuning forks. The evening culminated with the high school students having the opportunity to try on white coats.



"We hoped providing the students with this tangible experience would be more than symbolic; we wanted it to be a moment of true inspiration for them and nurture a deeper emotional bond with the path they wish to pursue," said Ashley Rosenberg and Mathuchena Karthikeyan, SOM Class of 2026 and co-presidents of the NYMC AMWA Chapter.



"Having the girls wear white coats was cool to see. It gets around the whole phenomenon of if you can't see it, you can't be it...my grandmother was a field worker and ended up working in farms and factories her whole life. My mom went to college and had the inkling that maybe she wanted to go to medical school. She never had the social support to make that a reality, so I really appreciated being involved because I saw my

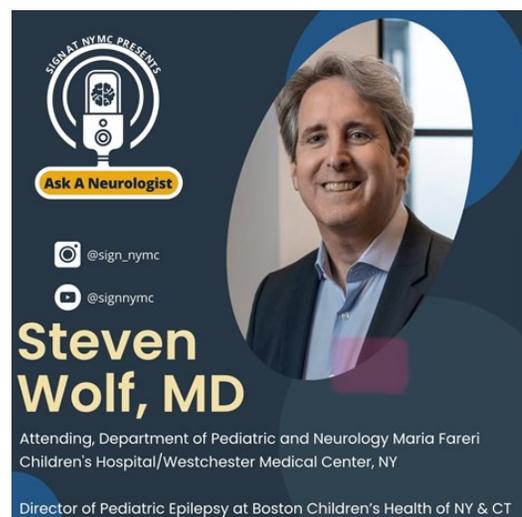
mother in those girls," said Ivan Dominguez, SOM Class of 2026.

SIGN Hosts "Ask a Neurologist" Podcast Series

In a pioneering move, the NYMC Student Interest Group in Neurology (SIGN) has introduced a compelling podcast series titled "Ask a Neurologist," featuring interviews conducted by medical students with experts in the field of neurology on a range of neurological topics.

"Our goal is to shed light on the different specialties within the field of neurology, and importantly, a glimpse into the life of physicians within and beyond the clinic," said SIGN co-presidents Sahdev Baweja, SOM Class of 2026, and Michelle You, SOM Class of 2025.

To date, several SOM faculty members have been featured, including Tracey Milligan, M.D., professor and chair of the Department of Neurology and an expert in the field of epilepsy; Stephan Mayer, M.D., professor of neurology and of neurosurgery and an expert in the field of neurocritical care; Steven Wolf, M.D., clinical professor of pediatrics and an expert in the field of pediatric epilepsy; Fawaz Al-Mufti, M.D., associate professor of neurology, neurosurgery, and of radiology, who is a triple board-certified neurologist, neurointensivist, and neuroendovascular surgeon; and most recently, Gurmeen Kaur, M.B.B.S., assistant professor of neurology and of neurosurgery, and Fabio Danisi, M.D., associate professor of neurology.



Faculty Appointments *(September 7, 2023 through January 2, 2024)*

Welcome to our new faculty from across our affiliate sites.

CAREMOUNT MEDICAL

Jessica Rosenblum, D.O., M.P.H.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology

GREENWICH HOSPITAL

Alissa Greenberg, M.D.

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Medicine

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/METROPOLITAN

Andrea Bulbena, M.D., Ph.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Robert Holland, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine

Jessy Joseph, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Hannah Liss, D.D.S.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Dental Medicine

Hassan Naqvi, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

MIDHUDSON REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Isaac Bruck, M.D., Ph.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine

NORTHERN WESTCHESTER HOSPITAL

Dayna Yardeni-Lord, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine

OPEN DOOR FAMILY MEDICAL CENTERS

Neil Shah, D.D.S., M.S.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Dental Medicine

ST. MARY'S GENERAL HOSPITAL/ SAINT CLARE'S HEALTH

Saloni Brahmhatt, M.B.B.S.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine

Nader Mahmood, M.D.

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Medicine

Anoshia Raza, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine

WESTCHESTER MEDICAL CENTER

Orna Alpert, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

WESTCHESTER MEDICAL CENTER *(continued)*

Yasin Essa, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery

Stephanie Gandelman, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Neurology

David Gellman, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Krizia Gupiteo, D.O.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Nao Hara, M.D., Ph.D.

Instructor of Pathology, Microbiology, and Immunology

Rachel Hirschberger, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and of Neurology

Brandon Jacobi, D.O.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Ashley Kakkanatt, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine

Anusha Lekshminarayanan, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine

Matthew Li, Pharm.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery

Naomi Oyemwense, M.D.

Instructor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Sarah Parauda, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Neurology

Barnard Partiula, D.O.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine

Gabriel Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Instructor of Surgery

Juan Sanchez, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Christina Scelfo, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology

Mia Castro, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology

Alan Stein, M.D.
Instructor of Neurosurgery

Cynthia Cohen, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine

Gladys Torres-Ortiz, Ph.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Jason Elyaguov, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Urology

Emily Zimmerman, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology

SOM Class of 2027 Celebrates Friendsgiving



The annual tradition of Friendsgiving was celebrated by members of the SOM Class of 2027 on November 16. The celebration, which brings first-year medical students together to express thanks to their peers and mentors for supporting them through the first few months of medical school, began with fun activities in the Mods, including trivia, Pictionary, and ping pong ball relay races, before everyone headed to Nevins Auditorium for a toast by Neil Schluger, M.D., dean of the SOM.

Students also heard from several faculty and staff speakers who were chosen by the first-year students for having made a particularly strong impact on them during their first block of classes. Students then went on to enjoy a grand Friendsgiving dinner, including turkey and the traditional accompaniments. [Read more.](#)

Student Profiles

Jessica Rosen Runs for a Purpose at the New York City Marathon

Jessica Rosen, SOM Class of 2024, brought awareness to endometriosis with every step she took at the New York City Marathon. Representing Team EndoStrong on November 5, Rosen was one of 50,000 runners traveling 26.2 miles across the five boroughs and raised \$4,000 for the Endometriosis Foundation of America in a commendable four hours, 19 minutes, and 23 seconds.

Being a part of Team EndoStrong holds a special significance for Rosen, who has family members and friends who were diagnosed with endometriosis, a disease that causes tissue similar to the inner lining of the uterus to grow outside the uterus. “My family and friends had consistent pelvic pain, heavy menstrual bleeding, and other symptoms from a young age, and were often told that it was all part of being a woman,” said Rosen. “I saw the struggle that they went through just to obtain some validation that what they were experiencing was actually something more.” [Read more.](#)



James Williams' Journey from the NFL to NYMC

Of the 460,000 National Collegiate Athletic Association student-athletes in the United States, fewer than two percent will go on to be professional athletes. The average medical school acceptance rate in the U.S. is five percent. These odds do not faze **James**



Williams, SOM Class of 2025, who, before being accepted into NYMC's SOM, spent two years in the National Football League as an offensive lineman.

Williams valued the transition period before enrolling in the SOM and sees the impact it has had on his life today. "Consistency is important. Even if you cannot see a way to get where you want to be, being consistent allows you to learn new things and you'll see opportunities begin to open up," he says. [Read more.](#)

Faculty and Student Publications and Accolades

Fawaz Al-Mufti, M.D., associate professor of neurology, neurosurgery, and of radiology, was recently inducted into Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Honor Society. Sigma Xi is one of the oldest and largest scientific organizations in the world, with a distinguished history of service to science and society for more than 125 years. Scientists and engineers, whose research spans the disciplines of science and technology, comprise the membership of the Society, including more than 200 Nobel Prize winners.

The following is a selection of recent publications by SOM faculty and students. View the [full list of publications](#).

Malik Bisserier, Ph.D., assistant professor of cell biology and anatomy and of physiology, published "[Lifetime Evaluation of Left Ventricular Structure and Function in Male ApoE Null Mice After Gamma and Space-Type Radiation Exposure](#)" in *Frontiers in Physiology*.

Maria Castaldi, M.D., clinical professor of surgery; **Mathias Palmer, M.D. '21**; **Jorge Con, M.D.**, associate professor of surgery; and **Roberto Bergamaschi, M.D., Ph.D.**, professor of surgery, published "[Robotic-Assisted Surgery Training \(RAST\): Assessment of Surgeon Console Ergonomic Skills](#)" in the *Journal of Surgical Education*.

Patricia DeLaMora, M.D., clinical assistant professor of pediatrics, published "[Corrigendum: Increase in Pediatric Recurrent Fever Evaluations During the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic in North America](#)" in *Frontiers in Pediatrics*.

Oleg Epelbaum, M.D., clinical associate professor of medicine, published "[Good COP or Bad COP: How Much Steroid is Enough to Avoid Relapse?](#)" in *Respiratory Medicine*.

Patricia Gerbarg, M.D., clinical assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, published "[Breath-Body-Mind Core Techniques to Manage Medical Student Stress](#)" in the *Journal of Medical Education and Curricular Development*.

Emad Ghaly, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics; and **Alexander Shilkrut, M.D.**, clinical assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology, published "[Comparison of Proposed National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Panel Recommendations With Newborn Sepsis Risk Calculator in Term Neonates Exposed to Maternal Chorioamnionitis](#)" in *Pediatrics and Neonatology*.

Michael Goligorsky, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine, pharmacology, and of physiology, published "[Glomerular Microcirculation: Implications for Diabetes, Preeclampsia, and Kidney Injury](#)" in *Acta Physiologica*.

Sachin Gupte, M.D., Ph.D., professor of pharmacology, published "[G6PD Orchestrates Genome-Wide DNA Methylation and Gene Expression in the Vascular Wall](#)" in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*.

Somar Hadid, SOM Class of 2026; and **Erika Brutsaert, M.D., M.P.H.**, clinical assistant professor of medicine; published "[Hypothalamic-Pituitary Dysfunction in Sturge-Weber Syndrome: Case Report and Review of the Literature](#)" in the *Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

Xiu Min Li, M.D., M.S., published "[Medicine Targeting Epithelial-Mesenchymal Transition to Treat Airway Remodeling and Pulmonary Fibrosis Progression](#)" in the *Canadian Respiratory Journal*.

Shekher Maddineni, M.D., clinical associate professor of radiology and of surgery; **Danielle Maraia**, SOM Class of 2024; **Grigory Rozenblit, M.D.**, professor of radiology and of surgery; **Sam McCabe, M.D.**, clinical associate professor of radiology; **Perry Gerard, M.D.**, professor of radiology and of medicine; and **Justin McCool, M.D.**, clinical assistant professor of radiology, published "Sharp Recanalization of CBD Occlusion in Patient With Second Orthotopic Liver Transplant With Cocoon Syndrome" in *Radiology Case Reports*.

Tracey Milligan, M.D., chair and professor of Department of Neurology, published "Developing a Curriculum for Functional Neurological Disorder in Neurology Training: Questions and Answers" in *Neurologic Clinics*.

Jeremy Rosenblum, M.D., associate professor of pediatrics, "Consensus Recommendations in the Management of Ewing Sarcoma From the National Ewing Sarcoma Tumor Board" in *Cancer*.

Esther Sabban, Ph.D., the Sidney E. Frank Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and professor of biochemistry and molecular biology; and **Roxanna Nahvi, M.D.'23, Ph.D.'23**, published "Potential Benefits of Intranasal Neuropeptide Y Include Sustained Extinction of Fear Memory" in the *Journal of Neuroendocrinology*.

Amir Steinberg, M.D., associate professor of medicine, published "Returning to Employment Following Allogeneic Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant: A Major Problem Among Survivors" in *EJHaem*.

Dong Sun, M.D., Ph.D., professor of physiology; and **Michael Wolin, Ph.D.**, professor of physiology, published "Superoxide Mediated Upregulation of MMP9 Participates in BMPR2 Destabilization and Pulmonary Hypertension Development" in *Antioxidants*.

Keila Veiga, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics, published "Deficiency of Adenosine Deaminase 2: Clinical Manifestations, Diagnosis, and Treatment" in *Rheumatic Diseases Clinics of North America*.

Alice Zhang, SOM Class of 2024; **Sima Vazquez**, SOM Class of 2024; **Ankita Das**, SOM Class of 2024; **Eris Spirollari**, SOM Class of 2024; **Joseph Turkowski, M.D.**, assistant professor of surgery; and **Irim Salik, M.D.**, clinical associate professor of anesthesiology, published "High Area Deprivation Index is Associated With Increased Injury Severity in Pediatric Burn Patients" in *Burns*.



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