

The NICHD Connection

March 2015

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Bio Careers Webinar Recap: "How to Be Competitive for the Industry Job Market"

By Yvette Pittman, PhD

You may be asking yourself: "What do industry companies want to see in a candidate?" or "To be more competitive, how can I highlight the skills and experiences from my Ph.D. or postdoctoral training?" Lauren Celano, the founder and CEO of Propel Careers, led a great webinar last month about ways to become a better industry candidate. Her take-home message: companies want to hire scientists who have good technical skills **AND** have excellent organizational, leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills, **AND** positively impact their communities.

WHAT DO INDUSTRY COMPANIES VALUE?

Industry companies value teamwork. Have you worked on a multidisciplinary project with scientists outside of your expertise? Are you working with your lab mates to solve a complex experimental problem? These are excellent examples that highlight your ability to work within a team environment.

In addition to demonstrating teamwork, leadership experience in research and non-research activities is a must. This could be within, or external to, your current academic institution/NIH. For example, have you trained students or lab members in techniques or participated as the lead organizer for a grant writing opportunity? Perhaps you have served on a committee for a scientific society or graduate student association. Companies also look to see if you have been involved in any community service activities, for example, volunteering for a charity or tutoring underprivileged children.

BEYOND THE TECHNICAL SKILLS

Most employers will assume that you have very strong scientific and technical skills, but they want to know the other transferable skills you could bring to their organization—communication (oral and written), project management, budgeting, people management, and time management, for example. All of these are skills that can be honed in the laboratory setting.

Industry companies appreciate candidates who are strategic about their career paths and who use their experiences to develop professionally. Companies want to see that your accomplishments fit your personal goals, and more importantly, that you are building skills for what you want to do next. Your resume and cover letter allow you to tell a story—remember you have to package your skills and experiences well.

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Letter from the Editor

Keeping my words short with the large amount of material contributed to this issue—just check out the table of contents! I would, however, like to draw your attention to a new column this month: “**Meet Our New NICHD Fellows.**” On a quarterly basis, we will publish a brief introduction of fellows who have joined our institute over the preceding few months. If you recognize one of our new fellows in the hall or at a seminar, please be sure to give them a warm welcome. Who knows, that fellow might become your next collaborator.

Your Editor in Chief,
Shana R. Spindler, PhD

Are you a new fellow who would like to be introduced by *The NICHD Connection*? Please contact our editor at Shana.Spindler@gmail.com.

Bio Careers Webinar Recap (continued from page 1)

When interviewing for an industry job, you should be prepared to discuss the non-technical aspects of your scientific experiences. Prepare tangible examples for the transferable skills mentioned above. For example, an interviewer may ask about your organizational skills. You could discuss your ability to manage multiple projects in the lab, or how you organized a departmental seminar series for postdocs and graduate students. The webinar introduced numerous examples of transferable skills relevant to particular career paths. 

Lauren ended her session with a reminder that you are creating a brand for yourself. You should show that you are a great scientist, but you also need to convey that you are motivated, professional, impactful to your communities, and leadership-oriented.

If this webinar sounds interesting to you, access the full recorded session at <http://biocareers.com/tv/job-search-how-be-competitive-industry-job-market>

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Provided courtesy of:
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Transferable Skills for Different Roles

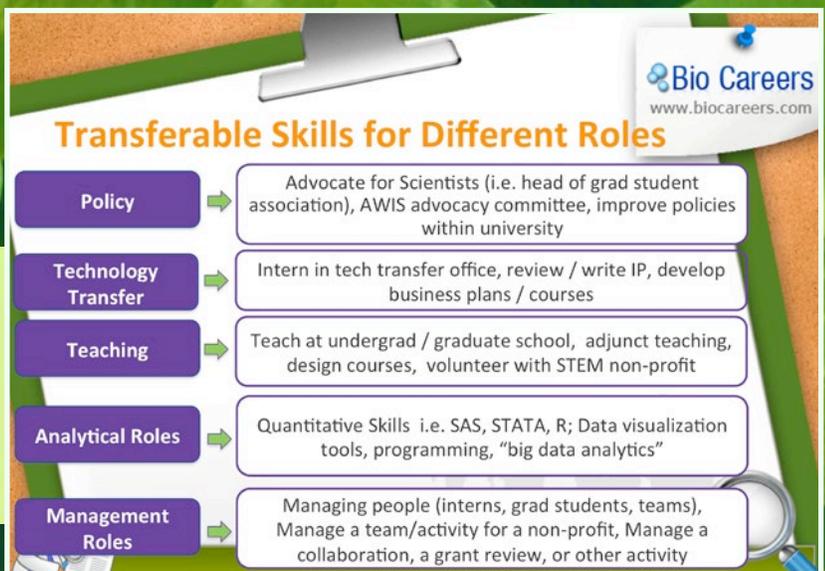
Research and Development	Managing a research collaboration, doing translational research, intern with startup, write patents, business plans
Medical Affairs, Clinical Research	Translational disease research, clinical research, biomarkers, experience with IRB's, regulatory / clinical courses
Business Development	Tech Transfer Internships, Intern at Startup, Business Development Plans, Business Course(s)
Marketing Communications	Technical & non-technical writing, Social Media, Public Relations, blog writing, design flyers/marketing materials, Giving Lab Tours, use programs i.e. Illustrator
Product/project / Alliance Management	Organize/Lead collaborations or activities, work with people of different backgrounds, gain "big picture", manage budgets, Gantt charts
Strategy Consulting	Consulting club, case competitions, business courses, leadership roles in organizations, tech transfer internships



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Transferable Skills for Different Roles

Intellectual Property	Write IP, review IP, tech transfer internship
Grant Writing	Write grants solely, contribute to grants, review grants, administer grants, do annual reporting for grants
Entrepreneurial Company	Set up a lab (with 1 st time PI), intern with a startup, work on an industry collaboration, wear many hats
Regulatory	Develop processes, develop SOP's and protocols, train people, QC data, contribute data to a regulatory filing
Technical Sales	Manage relationship with vendors, manage the purchasing process, install equipment, train people on techniques



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Transferable Skills for Different Roles

Policy	Advocate for Scientists (i.e. head of grad student association), AWIS advocacy committee, improve policies within university
Technology Transfer	Intern in tech transfer office, review / write IP, develop business plans / courses
Teaching	Teach at undergrad / graduate school, adjunct teaching, design courses, volunteer with STEM non-profit
Analytical Roles	Quantitative Skills i.e. SAS, STATA, R; Data visualization tools, programming, "big data analytics"
Management Roles	Managing people (interns, grad students, teams), Manage a team/activity for a non-profit, Manage a collaboration, a grant review, or other activity

Bio Careers Webinar Recap (continued from page 3)

SELECT Q&AS FROM “HOW TO BE COMPETITIVE FOR THE INDUSTRY JOB MARKET”

Q: *How do you advise getting a discussion started with your supervisor [about volunteering outside the lab] or should you volunteer behind the scenes?*

A: For many grants funded by the NIH, PIs have to include a paragraph about career plans of postdocs. A tool called myIDP by Science Careers is meant to be used for career assessment to see what areas would be interesting, and there is a tool to talk with your PI about career planning and opportunities. If you feel like you're not going to get any traction from your PI, find opportunities that are an hour or two hours a week, not too much time out of the lab initially, just to make sure you really are interested in a specific career path. When you approach your PI, you'll be more confident about that career track.

Q: *Is a selected skills section on a resume OK?*

A: Yes, jobs might not need all of the technical skills you've developed. Mention that you have additional skills to those listed on the resume.

Q: *What's the best way to highlight certain roles without having gaps in experience?*

A: One way is to have different sections within your resume. Maybe within your resume, you have relevant medical writing experience and then you have one section that says relevant technical experience.

Q: *How can we make a long (10 years) postdoc career “sexy” for industry?*

A: Focus on technical expertise that you've gained during that time, your proficiency with subject matter, and new work that you've done during that time. Play up experiences gained that required a long postdoc (big paper, management experiences, technical expertise, etc). *Note:* We realize that NIH postdocs are limited to five years.

Where to find industry job postings

- » Journals in your specific field
- » [Science Careers](#)
- » [Bio Careers](#)
- » [Indeed](#)
- » [Biospace](#)
- » [Medzilla](#)
- » [The Scientist Magazine](#)

NICHD Exchange Recap: The Many Faces of Mitochondria in Health and Disease—It's Not Just About ATP

By Anthony J. Hickey, PhD

If you were to ask a biological scientist (and many non-scientists for that matter) about mitochondria, most would give you the standard answer that mitochondria function as “the powerhouse of the cell.” But this statement fails to truly reflect the complexity, dynamics, and even elegance of these vital cellular organelles. Four NICHD experts explained through their own work how mitochondria are more than just cellular batteries during February’s NICHD Exchange meeting: “The many faces of mitochondria in health and disease—it’s not just about ATP!”

Mitochondria are unique organelles in eukaryotic cells, both in structure and evolutionary history. They have their own genome, which replicates independently from the cell’s nuclear DNA. Current evolutionary theory regarding mitochondrial origin states that these organelles descend from a bacterium (most likely Rickettsia) that was engulfed by an ancient eukaryotic precursor cell. The mitochondria escaped digestion and flourished within its new host by providing large amounts of ATP, a high energy molecule used to “fuel” almost all biochemical processes. With time, the two cells developed an endosymbiotic relationship, where neither could live independently of the other, giving rise to what is believed to be the first eukaryotic cell.^{1,2}

Dr. Tracey Rouault opened the meeting with her talk “Mitochondrial Energy Capture: A Complex Key to Mammalian

Evolution and Health.” Mitochondria generate the bulk of the cell’s energy through the creation of an electro-chemical gradient that ultimately provides energy for the synthesis of ATP.¹ Dr. Rouault and her colleagues asked where the energy to create the electro-chemical gradient comes from.

It turns out that iron-sulfur clusters within mitochondrial proteins are key. They allow for the low energy capture and transfer of electrons through the electron transport chain, a process required for electro-chemical gradient formation. The synthesis of these iron-sulfur complexes themselves is complex. It involves the gradual assembly of multiple proteins onto a scaffolding protein named ISCU. After synthesis, the iron-sulfur clusters are transferred from ISCU to recipient proteins with the help of multiple molecular chaperones and co-chaperones. Dr. Rouault and her team have identified three key amino acids (Leucine, Tyrosine, Arginine) that engage these co-chaperones to ensure clusters are transferred to the correct location.³

Dr. Rouault concluded her talk by discussing a recessive, hereditary muscle disease associated with iron-sulfur biogenesis. Symptoms include exercise intolerance, mitochondrial iron overload, and deficiencies in the production of specific



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NICHD Exchange Recap

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iron-sulfur proteins. Individuals afflicted with this myopathy make little to no functional ISCU protein. DNA sequencing of patient samples identified a single nucleotide change within this gene that results in the abnormal splicing of the gene's transcribed RNA product.⁴

Dr. Rouault's laboratory entered into a collaboration with a pharmaceutical company known to design customized antisense oligonucleotides that can bind target RNA molecules. They hoped to generate oligonucleotides capable of preventing abnormal splicing of the ISCU transcript. Their preliminary results indicate that antisense oligonucleotide therapy is a viable line of investigation for treatment of this rare disease.

During the next talk, Dr. Jennifer Lippincott-Schwartz elaborated on the unique structure and physiology of mitochondria and its important role in maintaining metabolic homeostasis of the cell and the organism. She seeks to understand how mitochondria help cells to survive under different environmental conditions, specifically starvation.

Dr. Lippincott Schwartz and her team demonstrated, using their renowned expertise in fluorescent microscopy, that starvation initiates a process in cells where fatty acids are trafficked from lipid droplets to mitochondria. Her lab elucidated the role of autophagy during this process, a mechanism employed by cells during starvation, where cellular organelles are broken down and recycled,⁵ which turns out to be critical for replenishing lipid droplet stores during starvation by transferring fatty acids to them from membranes.

Dr. Lippincott-Schwartz next asked how lipid

droplets interact with mitochondria to initiate fatty acid transfer, which appears to be through direct contact. Under starvation conditions, mitochondria convert from being individual bacteria-like organelles into a network of fused interconnected tubules.⁵ The disruption of fusion leads to fragmented mitochondria and an uneven distribution of fragment-lipid droplet interaction. Some mitochondria receive little to no fatty acids, while others receiving fatty acids at toxic levels. This also causes a disruption in fatty acid transfer and subsequent oxidation, which is evident from an increase in lipid droplet size. Eventually these molecules begin to accumulate in the cytoplasm at dangerous levels, requiring the cells to secrete them into the extracellular environment where they can be taken in by neighboring cells.

Dr. Lippincott-Schwartz concluded her talk discussing the ramifications such events have, not only on the physiology of the cell, but for the entire body as well. Some mitochondrial diseases are associated with high serum levels of fatty acids, and her lab's findings add to our understanding of the adverse effects associated with diseases such as obesity and diabetes.

Dr. Danuta Krotoski, the third presenter of the afternoon, focused on the clinical aspects of mitochondrial dysfunction. Mitochondrial diseases have a large range of presentations, including neurological disorders, stroke, ataxia, epilepsy, migraines, exercise intolerance and myopathy. Thus far, 100 different mitochondrial disease genes have been identified, but the number is sure to increase.

Dr. Krotoski's talk, "Mitochondrial disorders: a tale of two genomes," introduced the dilemma that mitochondrial disease can result from

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NICHD Exchange Recap (continued from page 6)

mutations in either mitochondrial or nuclear genome. While 42 mitochondrial diseases are known, she suggested the potential for more due to the difficulty in identifying and diagnosing these diseases, compounded by the multiple biochemical pathways that mitochondria influence and continuous crosstalk between the mitochondria and nucleus.

To illustrate the complexity of diagnosing and treating mitochondrial disease, Dr. Krotoski discussed three types of mitochondrial disorders: MELAS, Leigh's syndrome, and POLG mutations.

MELAS (mitochondrial encephalomyopathy, lactic acidosis, and stroke-like episodes) is a rare syndrome caused by 17 different mutations in mitochondrial DNA.⁶ While no two patients have exactly the same clinical presentation, symptoms can include muscle weakness, strokes, headaches, and anorexia.

Leigh's syndrome, in contrast, results from mutations in over 30 different nuclear and mitochondrial genes.⁷ Children afflicted with this syndrome may show no signs in the early stages of their development. However, after a traumatic insult, such as illness or infection, these children develop lesions in their central nervous systems, followed by a decline in cognitive development. Currently, there are no effective therapies for this syndrome, which is in most cases fatal.

The final class of diseases we discussed

results from a mutation in the nuclear gene POLG, which encodes the mitochondrial DNA polymerase- γ , an enzyme necessary for synthesis of mitochondrial DNA. Disruption of this gene is associated with multiple disorders, including Alper-Huttenlocher Syndrome and myoclonic epilepsy myopathy sensory ataxia. Symptoms range from seizures and psychomotor impairments to blindness.⁸

Dr. Krotoski concluded her talk by elaborating on measures that NICHD researchers are taking to ease the difficulties of identifying and diagnosing mitochondrial disease. The NICHD is involved in the Mitochondrial Disease Sequence Data Repository Consortium (MseqDR), a collaboration of mitochondrial biologists from around the world who collect and make available phenotypic and genotypic data of various mitochondrial diseases.^{9,10} NICHD also provides support to the North American Mitochondrial Disease Consortium (NAMDC), a part of the NIH Rare Diseases Consortium. The group includes a network of clinical investigators and clinicians studying mitochondrial disease, patient registries, and clinical trials related to mitochondrial diseases.¹¹

Dr. Neelakanta (Ravi) Ravindranath concluded the NICHD Exchange with his talk entitled "Mitochondrial DNA replacement for the treatment of mitochondrial diseases and infertility." He presented the potential of restoring fertility to individuals suffering

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NICHD Exchange Recap (continued from page 7)

from mitochondrial disease using a technique called spindle transfer.

Mitochondria, and the DNA contained within, are inherited exclusively from an individual's mother. The egg contains approximately 100,000 of these organelles, all of which are maternally derived; conversely, sperm contribute (almost) no mitochondria to newly fertilized eggs. The mitochondrial health of the mother is therefore a crucial component in determining the health and, in some cases, viability of her children.¹²

Spindle transfer offers promise in restoring fertility to patients suffering from mitochondrial disease, specifically from mutations in the mitochondrial DNA. This procedure involves replacement of the nucleus in oocytes from healthy donors with nuclear DNA from a patient's own oocytes prior to *in vitro* fertilization. This creates healthy oocytes containing the patient's nuclear DNA and the donor's healthy mitochondria. While researchers have used this approach to generate viable and healthy transmitochondrial monkeys,¹³ it has only been used with human oocytes to generate blastocysts and embryonic stem cell lines (in non-federally funded studies).¹⁴

Spindle transfer, while promising, is not free from either technical or ethical issues. One limitation of this technique is that small amounts of diseased mitochondria can be carried over with the nuclear DNA, which can result in low levels of heteroplasmy—a situation that arises when cells contain mixed populations of healthy and mutant mitochondrial DNA.¹⁵ Their proportion in the cell relative to their healthy counterparts, however, would be low.

A major ethical issue with spindle transfer is that this technique would result in the generation of offspring having DNA from three genetic sources: the mother, the father,

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and the donor. The effects that this would have on the development and characteristics of a future individual are unknown.

Dr. Ravindranath concluded his talk with the clinical status of cytoplasmic transfer in the United States and United Kingdom. While cytoplasmic transfer is not currently permitted in the United States as a means of assisted reproductive technology, the FDA is currently considering it. A committee of the Institute of Medicine has been appointed to discuss the social and ethical issues of the procedure. On February 3, 2015 (one day after this NICHD Exchange was held), the House of Commons voted to approve spindle transfer for use in the United Kingdom, however it has yet to be approved in the House of Lords.

The role played by mitochondria in the health of both the cell and of the entire individual is complex and multifaceted, yet it is part of a very delicate system in which the smallest of perturbations can have drastic consequences. While mitochondrial disease is mercifully rare, it does cause great hardship for the individuals who suffer from it; yet the difficulty in diagnosing mitochondrial disease may suggest it is not as rare as currently thought. The collaboration of many minds, and the fusion of multiple perspectives, will be required to combat mitochondrial disease and give those suffering from it better prospects for survival and quality of life. And thus ensure that NICHD fulfills its mission to ensure that every person is born healthy and wanted, that women suffer no harmful effects from reproductive processes, and that all children have the chance to achieve their full potential for healthy and productive lives, free from disease or disability.

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Interesting Opportunity: OITE Management Boot Camp

By Payal Ray, PhD

Many NIH fellows will be managers, in some capacity, during their careers. With an aim to introduce fellows to management skills, the Management Boot Camp offered by the NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) prepares senior postdocs who will soon make the transition from the proverbial ivory tower to the “real world.” However, that does not mean fellows who continue in academia do not need to learn these skills too.

As a fifth-year postdoc looking to transition to a non-bench career, I signed up for the OITE Management Boot Camp and was rewarded with a wonderful two-day experience that revealed how non-academic professional lives differ from the laboratory setting. The workshop, offered twice a year, is run by OITE staff and requires a commitment of two complete days. The format of the workshop includes teamwork, role-playing, and brainstorming to explore the essential elements of managerial preparation and responsibilities.

DAY ONE RECAP

The topics covered on the first day included motivating and team-building exercises, emotional intelligence development, and diversity in the workplace. The workshop begins with tips on handling the manager’s most important resource: the team.

To motivate a team, a manager wears many hats, such as those of a supervisor, a mentor, an advocate, and a coach. Each of these roles encompasses unique aspects of leadership that one draws upon in diverse situations. During

the session, we learned that managers must:

- » Realize that all individuals are not motivated the same way
- » Learn to delegate tasks efficiently to get the work done effectively
- » Recognize that not everyone likes to be rewarded the same way
- » Not use fear or negative tactics as a primary motivational tool, it may work with some individuals but not all
- » Not use a lot of gratuitous praise or rewards
- » Promote collaboration, mutual respect, and integrity in the team and never set up competition within team members
- » Be prepared to support employees when they make a mistake
- » Be aware of training and support resources in the organization or institution
- » Remember that communication is the key to successful management

While most of this may sound like common sense, a key element behind a good manager is emotional intelligence (EI), that is, the ability to recognize our own feelings and those of others. The boot camp introduces five key competency areas in EI:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-regulation
3. Motivation
4. Social Awareness
5. Social Skills.

The good news about EI is that you can train yourself to excel in these areas. To learn about EI skills, you can start with freely available online assessments or buy a book (there are

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Interesting Opportunity: OITE Management Boot Camp

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several good books that address EI in depth).

The second session of day one addressed a pertinent issue: diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Most organizations are a melting pot of culture, gender, sexual identity, physical abilities, age, and other factors. Data has shown that diversity enhances the creativity of teams—fellows at the NIH can attest to that fact.

As a manager, it is important to harness the full potential of your team and to provide a supportive environment. To do so, one must be aware of unconscious biases as well as elements of stereotyping and micro aggressions. Stereotypes tend to distort our perceptions and impact our judgement about people. Micro aggressions are verbal or non-verbal behavior directed towards a certain group. Statements such as “That’s so gay” or “Your English is so good, where are you really from?” indicate assumptions about individuals and may affect decision-making. A manager committed to diversity spends time identifying diversity blind spots, uses inclusive language and images, makes the work environment accessible, designs hiring processes that minimize personal bias, and models good behavior.

DAY TWO RECAP

Day two consisted of a panel discussion by managers from diverse areas, such as industry, academia, and administration

on the best practices of management. This year the panelists unanimously agreed that communication is the key to successful management. Other pieces of management-focused advice that I gleaned from the panelists include the following:

- » Quickly learn how to manage people under and above you
- » Take opportunities to train in management issues
- » You have something to learn from everyone
- » Try to cultivate skills you will need at your next job
- » Do not stagnate

Day two also addressed hiring and interviewing practices. Although at this point in your postdoctoral training, hiring and interviewing concepts may seem to be a distant issue, it is still useful to know the process so that you are a step ahead when the time comes. The hiring process can be long and complicated, but you can adopt simple steps to make it easier:

1. Analyze your needs and create a job description for advertising
2. Involve the Human Resources office early to make sure you are complying with company policies
3. Set a hiring timeline and stick to it
4. Use phone interviews to pre-screen
5. Conduct structured interviews—establish a screening process to maintain consistency

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Interesting Opportunity: OITE Management Boot Camp

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Finally, we tackled the most difficult topic in the entire workshop: conflict resolution. Most of us are uneasy with conflicts, but let's face it, you will likely encounter conflicts in the workplace at some point. During conflicts, one must respond constructively by taking a practical approach, as opposed to adopting a destructive approach like yelling, being sarcastic, or threatening others. During the boot camp, small groups of workshop participants discuss seven constructive responses to conflict. These can be classified as active (perspective taking, creating solutions, expressing emotions, and reaching out) and passive (reflective thinking, delay responding, and adapting). You can become a conflict-competent manager using the above-mentioned strategies.

As a final word of advice, never shy away from opportunities (such as the OITE Boot Camp or the workshops provided by the NICHD Office of Education) to increase your management skills. Always be aware of resources that can help you and your employees (for starters, check out management-related books at the OITE library). Last but not the least, remember that communication is the key to successful management.

Interested in this "Interesting Opportunity"? Visit https://www.training.nih.gov/leadership_training to get started.

HELPFUL MANAGEMENT BOOKS AND WEBSITES

- » *At the Helm: Leading Your Laboratory*, by Kathy Barker
- » *Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior*, McGraw Hill publications
- » *Manager's Toolkit: The 13 Skills Managers Need to Succeed*, Harvard Business School Press
- » *Eat That Frog! 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time*, by Brian Tracy
- » <http://www.ihhp.com/free-eq-quiz/> (five minute test on your Emotional Intelligence)
- » <http://testyourself.psychtests.com/bin/transfer?req=MnwzMDM4fDl3MDA2NDR8MXwxfDE=&refemtp=> (comprehensive, 45 minute, Emotional Intelligence test)

Meet Our New NICHD Fellows

Please join *The NICHD Connection* in welcoming the following fellows to the NICHD family.

Are you new to the NICHD and would like to be introduced in this newsletter? Please send you name, home country or state, PhD institution, NICHD mentor, and area of research to our editor Shana Spindler at Shana.Spindler@gmail.com.



DR. MEDHA RAINA

Home country: India
PhD institution: The Ohio State University
NICHD mentor: Dr. Gisela T. Storz



DR. DANFENG (DANI) CAI

Home country: Nanjing, China
PhD institution: Johns Hopkins University
NICHD mentor: Dr. Jennifer Lippincott-Schwartz
Area of research: Stem cell biology



DR. BIN ZHAO

Home country: China
PhD institution: Karolinska Institute, Sweden
NICHD mentor: Dr. Paul Love
Area of research: T cell immunology



DR. SHAKIB OMARI

Home state: Middle Island, NY
PhD institution: University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
NICHD mentor: Dr. Sergey Leikin, Dr. Jennifer Lippincott-Schwartz
Area of research: Collagen trafficking in a mouse model of Osteogenesis Imperfecta



DR. SUBHASIS RAY

Home country: India
PhD institution: NCBS, TIFR, Bangalore, India
NICHD mentor: Dr. Mark Stopfer
Area of research: Sensory Coding and Neural Ensembles



DR. RAFFAELLO VERARDI

Home country: Italy
PhD institution: University of Minnesota, MN
NICHD mentor: Dr. Anirban Banerjee
Area of research: Structural Biology and Enzymology

March Announcements

ACT NOW! ONLY TWO SLOTS LEFT FOR THE 2015 TMT COMPETITION

The deadline to register for the 2015 Three-minute Talk has been extended, but there are only two spots left! Due to the extended registration period, the new date for the workshop with the Alan Alda Center is scheduled for **Monday, March 23**. The second workshop of the series, with public speaking coach Scott Morgan, will be held mid-April. Please contact Dr. Yvette Pittman (Yvette.Pittman@nih.gov) for more information.

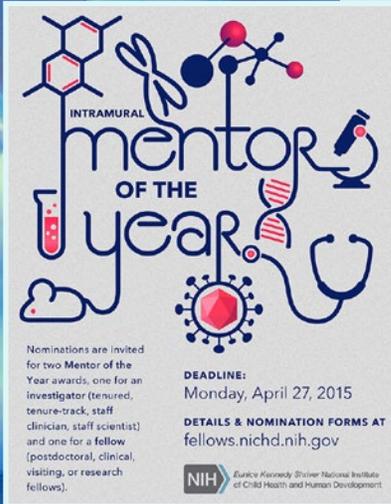
ELEVENTH ANNUAL RETREAT REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

NICHD fellows are welcome to register for the Eleventh Annual Meeting for Postdoctoral, Clinical, and Visiting Fellows and Graduate Students at <http://retreat.nichd.nih.gov/registration.html>. The theme this year is "Communicating Science," with keynote speakers Graham Chedd and Dr. Toby Freedman. Speaker profiles, meeting agenda, and poster information can be found on the retreat website at <http://retreat.nichd.nih.gov>. If you are interested in covering any part of the meeting for *The NICHD Connection*, please contact our editor Shana Spindler at Shana.Spindler@gmail.com. See you there!

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March Announcements (continued from page 14)



DO YOU HAVE AN OUTSTANDING MENTOR?



The time has come for you to nominate your fellow or PI for the DIR's **2015 Mentor of the Year awards**. This is a wonderful opportunity to recognize an individual whose mentoring has made a difference in your life here at NIH!

Below is the link to obtain information about the NICHD's two annual Mentor of the Year Awards, one for a **fellow** and one for an **investigator**. Please submit your nomination form and 500-word (maximum) narrative electronically to Yvette Pittman (Yvette.Pittman@nih.gov). The submission deadline is **Monday, April 27th**. Dr. Pittman will also be happy to answer any questions you may have about the nomination instructions and selection process.

<https://science.nichd.nih.gov/confluence/display/fellows/Mentor+of+the+Year+Awards+2015>



CONGRATS TO CAITLIN (KATIE) FOX, 2015 GSRA WINNER



NICHD Graduate Student Katie Fox (Chitnis lab) received a prestigious Graduate Student Research Award (GSRA) at the 11th Annual NIH Graduate Student Research Symposium in January. Her poster, titled "Fishing for Factors in Self-organization of Biological Systems: Heparan Sulfate Proteoglycans Regulate FGF Signaling in the Zebrafish Lateral Line," received one of two best poster awards in the Biochemistry/Genetics/Cell & Molecular Biology category. Caitlin's partner program for her PhD studies is Johns Hopkins University. Check back in next month's issue for a look at Caitlin's research.



CONGRATS TO DR. JULIAN LUI, ENDOCRINE SCHOLAR AWARD WINNER



The NICHD Connection is happy to announce that Dr. Julian Lui will receive the Endocrine Scholar Award in Growth Hormone Research from the Endocrine Society this year. This one-time, \$60,000 research grant provides research and career development support for one year to fellows who are researching growth hormone disorders. Dr. Lui will be recognized for his excellent research proposal at the Endocrine Society's Annual Awards Dinner this month.

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March Announcements

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ANNOUNCING AN OPPORTUNITY TO WIN A \$1000 TRAVEL AWARD

The FARE (Fellows Award for Research Excellence) competition provides recognition for outstanding scientific research. FARE 2016 winners will each receive a \$1,000 travel award to facilitate the presentation of their exciting, novel research at a scientific meeting. Eligible fellows may submit an abstract online from **February 18 – March 18, 2015** via <http://www2.training.nih.gov/transfer/fareapp>

Abstracts will be evaluated anonymously on the basis of scientific merit, originality, experimental design and overall quality/presentation. The top twenty-five percent of applicants will receive a travel award to be used between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2016.

The FARE 2016 competition is open to postdoctoral IRTAs, CRTAs, visiting fellows and other fellows with less than 5 years total postdoctoral experience at the NIH intramural research program. In addition, pre-IRTAs performing their doctoral dissertation research at NIH are eligible to compete. Visiting fellows/scientists must not have been tenured at their home institute at the time of submission. Questions about eligibility should be addressed to your institute's scientific director.

More information regarding the FARE Rules and Regulations can be found at https://www.training.nih.gov/assets/FARE2016_Rules.pdf

Winners will be announced by August, 14, 2015. Questions and concerns can be directed to The FARE 2016 Committee: FARE@mail.nih.gov

March Events

MONDAY, MARCH 23

TmT Workshop: "Improvisation for Scientists"
Led by the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science

This workshop will use improvisational theater games to help scientists learn how to connect with and engage their audience more.

Registration required. Please contact Dr. Yvette Pittman (Yvette.Pittman@nih.gov).