

WCM Peds News



Weill Cornell Medicine

Department of Pediatrics Newsletter

May 2021



Message from the Chair

As the availability of vaccines and number of fully vaccinated individuals continues to increase across the country, I am looking forward to a long-awaited summer of revitalization and joy. We are reuniting with family and friends in person, and we are starting to plan delayed vacations, in-person school semesters, and attending Broadway shows once again. I am so encouraged that **vaccines are now available for children 12 years and up**, and vaccine trials for even younger ages are well underway. We are finally able to fathom containment of this devastating and challenging pandemic that will allow us to regain our lives as we knew them.

At the same time, we are concerned about vaccine hesitancy and the availability of vaccines in local communities, and uncontrolled SARS-CoV-2 infection rates in other parts of the world including India and Brazil and must continue to fight for **health equity**. I am humbled and motivated by the tireless efforts of our Pediatrics Department. In recent weeks, faculty have volunteered their time between their clinical hours to administer vaccines at underserved neighborhoods in New York City, and our residents quickly organized a fundraiser for the COVID-19 AmeriCares relief effort to India's COVID surge.

We marked Weill Cornell Medicine's 3rd Annual **Diversity Week** with Department Grand Rounds on "Diversity in GME Training" presented by Dr. William McDade, ACGME's Chief Diversity Officer, and a Professors Rounds focusing on anti-Asian bias. Additionally, faculty and staff participated in sessions throughout the week as panelists, presenters, or attendees to gain knowledge and further the goals of social and health justice.

May also kicked off with **Nurses Week**. While we are grateful for our Pediatric Nursing team every single day, we are thrilled to have an occasion to formally celebrate their work and achievements. In case you missed it, check out this wonderful [tribute video](#) to the expertise, dedication and resilience of NYP's nursing team and what it means to be a nurse during a pandemic.

We also celebrate the achievements of our faculty, residents, fellows, and staff participating in the 2021 Virtual **Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS)** meeting, which spans several weeks this year. The Department is well represented across the subspecialties, with 38 posters and oral presentations. For details, see this year's [WCM Guide to Abstracts](#).

This month, we also mark a few **departures and arrivals**. Please join me in congratulating **Gerald Boshi** on his well-deserved retirement after many years of outstanding leadership and service to the Department of Pediatrics, which will benefit from his legacy for years to come. I am excited to welcome **Anita Mesi** to the Department as our new Chief Administrative Officer; see below for details about her many accomplishments, which span our three missions of clinical care, education, and research. While she officially starts June 1, Anita has already started working on several initiatives including Return to Campus and clinical integration. I would also like to recognize and thank Child Life Services Director **Sharon Granville** for her transformative leadership and dedication to children, families and staff, and wish her well as she leaves NYP for a new opportunity.

Finally, I would like to thank the **Return to Campus** committee who begins meeting this month to make recommendations on how we work and interact over the Summer and in the Fall with the new recognition of the advantages of virtual communication, but also restore the advantages of spontaneous conversations and in-person interactions.

I continue to be grateful for your ongoing flexibility and strong commitment to children and families.

Sallie

p.s. Join us for **Grand Rounds now in its new time, noon on Tuesdays**, allowing individuals to conveniently tune in from wherever they are -- one of many adjustments to take advantage of new virtual opportunities!

Anita Mesi, M.B.A. Joins Pediatrics as New Chief Administrative Officer



We are pleased to welcome **Anita Mesi, M.B.A.** as the new Chief Administrative Officer of the Department of Pediatrics at Weill Cornell Medicine and NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, effective June 1, 2021. She succeeds **Gerald Boshi** who has retired after his many years of outstanding service, commitment, and dedication to the Department, which experienced considerable growth and success under his excellent management, advocacy, and leadership.

Ms. Mesi received her Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Hunter College in 2004 and her Master of Business Administration in Finance and Investments and Organizational Behavior-Human Resource Management from the Zicklin School of Business, Baruch College in 2010. She joined our organization in 2002 as an intern while an undergrad pre-dental student at Hunter, but in turn, stayed and built her professional career as an academic administrator at Weill Cornell Medicine, holding several positions in the Departments of Biochemistry, Population Health Sciences (previously known as the Department of Public Health) and Medicine.

Since January 2016, she has been the Administrator for the Division of General Internal Medicine in the Weill Cornell Department of Medicine, where she helped build the research infrastructure and oversaw the growth of several clinical, education, and academic programs. While in her role in General Internal Medicine, she has also been serving as the Administrator for the university-wide Cornell Center for Health Equity since its launch in 2018.

Ms. Mesi comes to us as an accomplished and high performing academic administrator, an influential and thoughtful leader, having a deep understanding of complex academic environments, and with experience in planning, design and implementation of strategic initiatives, process improvement, budgeting and negotiations, financial and operations management, and a track record of building strong relationships across all levels. Her values, leadership skills and experience will be instrumental, and we look forward to her guidance as we continue to build on the excellence and outlook for our Department.

Pediatrics Steps Up, Helps Vaccination Effort

Faculty from the Department of Pediatrics at joined other healthcare professionals to help administer COVID vaccines at New Jerusalem Baptist Church in Jamaica, Queens in an effort to help underserved communities and in the spirit of promoting health equity.

The vaccination program was spearheaded by WCM's Clinical Translation Science Center (CTSC) in partnership with the Community Health Network (CHN) and FEMA to bring vaccination opportunities to local churches. Thank you to all who provided their time and expertise -- including in between their own clinical shifts!



2021 PAS Meeting

At this year's all-virtual Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) Meeting, there are 38 presentations by the WCM Department of Pediatrics, with faculty, residents, fellows and staff presenting platforms, workshops, plenaries, posters, SIGs and other sessions across sub-specialties.

For a full list of the Department's PAS activities this year, see our [Guide to 2021 Abstracts](#)

While we could not hold our traditional PAS Attendees' Dinner at PAS, we were thrilled to gather near campus to take a moment and celebrate everyone's conference achievements!



Awards & Accomplishments



Dr. James Killinger received a Presidential Citation from the Society of Critical Care Medicine “For outstanding contributions to the Society of Critical Care Medicine” for 2020.



Dr. Tatiana Ndjatou (PGY-3) received the **2021 WCM Pioneers in Diversity Louis Wade Sullivan Award**, which honors a resident or postdoctoral fellow who has been an outspoken champion for health promotion and a public health advocate, especially for medically underserved populations. During her residency, Dr. Ndjatou has been an active member of the Pediatric Diversity Coalition and the Minority House Staff Council, through which she has discussed initiatives to increase diversity representation among residents and faculty. She also serves as the first nominated American Academy of Pediatrics Section of Pediatric Trainees Executive Coordinator of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and is an adviser for the Switch it Up Break it Down Program, which focuses on children residing in the Harlem community making healthy lifestyle choices. [Read more](#)

Activities and Service

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- **Dr. Marisa Censani** was invited to be an Expert during the Breakfast with Experts during the Obesity Medicine Association (OMA) virtual Spring 2021 Conference on the topic of Treating Obesity in Pediatric Patients.
 - **Dr. Michelle Loy** was elected to serve as a member of the Executive Committee of the Section on Integrative Medicine (SOIM). The term begins on November 1, 2021 and extends through the close of the 2024 AAP National Conference & Exhibition (NCE).
 - **Vanessa Singh, RN** become a certified asthma educator and is a champion for the Breathe NY. Her new designation is Vanessa Singh, RN, BSN, AC-E.
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THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who donated and showed up to Yoga for a Cause!

TOGETHER, WE RAISED \$1,220 FOR THE COVID-19 RELIEF EFFORT IN INDIA WITH 100% OF DONATIONS GOING TO AMERICARES!

LOVE, WEILL CORNELL PEDS RESIDENTS

Recent Publications

1. Manukumar Honnayakanahalli Marichannegowda, Michael Mengual, Amit Kumar, Elena E. Giorgi, Joshua J. Tu, David R. Martinez, Xiaojun Li, Liping Feng, **Sallie R Permar**, Feng Gao. [Different evolutionary pathways of HIV-1 between fetus and mother perinatal transmission pairs indicate unique immune selection pressure in fetuses](#). Cell Reports Medicine. (CR-MEDICINE-D-20-00358R1). Preprint.
2. **Yuen, A., Rodriguez, N., Osorio, S. N., Nataraj, C., Ward, M. J., Clapper, T. C., Abramson, E., & Ching, K.** (2021, accepted manuscript). [Simulation-based Discharge Education Program for Caregivers of Children with Tracheostomies](#). Hospital Pediatrics, 11(6), 1-9.
3. Wan, Z, **Pascual V.** [Breaching self-tolerance by targeting the gatekeeper](#). J Exp Med. 2021 May 3;218(5):e20210322. doi: 10.1084/jem.20210322. PMID: 33847707
4. **Littner, M.** [Mindful Practice: Gut Check](#). JAAPA, Vol 34, No. 5, May 2021. Published in JAAPA, Journal of the American Academy of PAs as reflective piece. Mr. Littner is a PA in Inpatient pediatrics at NYP Komansky Children's Hospital.
5. Fassel, H, H Chen, M Ruisi, N Kumar, M, DeSancho, **KA Hajjar.** [Reduced Expression of Annexin A2 is Associated with Impaired Cell Surface Fibrinolysis and Venous Thromboembolism](#). Blood, 137 (16): 2221–2230, 2021. PMID: 33512476.
6. Comment on Fassel et al: [A novel "vascular" thrombophilia](#) by Ravi K Alluri and Keith R. McCree, Cleveland Clinic. Blood, 22 April 2021, Vol 137, No. 16: 2133–2134.
7. Cines DB, **Bussel JB.** [SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine–Induced Immune Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia](#). NEJM. 2021 April 16. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMe2106315 (over 150,000 page views as of 5/12)
8. **Friedman J, Lame M,** Clark S, Gogia K, **Platt SL, Kim JW.** [Telemedicine Medical Screening Evaluation Expedites the Initiation of Emergency Care for Children](#). Pediatr Emerg Care. Apr 9 2021.
9. Garrido C, Curtis AD, Dennis M, Pathak SH, Gao H, Montefiori D, Tomai M, Fox CB, Kozlowski PA, Scobey T, Munt JE, Mallroy ML, Saha PT, Hudgens MG, Lindesmith LC, Baric RS, Abiona OA, Graham B, Corbett KS, Edwards D, Carfi A, Fouda G, Van Rompay KKA, De Paris K, **Permar SR.** [SARS-CoV-2 Vaccines Elicit Durable Immune Responses in Infant Rhesus Macaques](#). bioRxiv. 2021 Apr 6;2021.04.05.438479. doi: 10.1101/2021.04.05.438479. Preprint
10. **Ono JG, Worgall S.** [More Evidence for Inborn Dysregulation of Sphingolipid Metabolism in Children with Asthma?](#) Am J Respir Crit Care Med. 2021 Apr 1;203(7):792-793. doi: 10.1164/rccm.202102-0419ED. PMID: 33617753; PMCID: PMC8017576.
11. **Kowalsky RH,** Fine S, Eisenberg M. [Exclusion of SARS-CoV-2 from Two Maine Overnight Camps July-August 2020](#). Disaster Med Public Health Prep. 2021 Mar 25; 1-10. doi: 10.1017/dmp.2021.86. Online ahead of print.
12. **Giulino-Roth L,** Pei Q, Buxton A, Bush R, Wu Y, Wolden SL, Constone LS, Kelly KM, Schwartz CL, Friedman DL. [Subsequent malignant neoplasms among children with Hodgkin lymphoma: a report from the Children's Oncology Group](#). Blood. 2021
13. **Llaurador G, Giulino-Roth L.** [AYA Considerations for Aggressive Lymphomas](#). Curr Hematol Malig Rep. 2021 Mar 16. doi: 10.1007/s11899-021-00607-7. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33728589.
14. **Kim J, Gueye-Ndiaye S,** Mauer E, **Modi VK, Perlman J, Veler H.** [Polysomnography use in complex term and preterm infants to facilitate evaluation and management in the neonatal intensive care unit](#). J Clin Sleep Med. 2021 Mar 23. doi: 10.5664/jcsm.9264. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33755011.

See more [Department publications](#)

Recent Presentations

International

- **Dr. Thanakorn Jirasevijinda** was a presenter at a Roundtable session, "Publishing in Communication: Meet the Editors" at the International Conference on Communication in Healthcare, 4/15/2021.
- **Dr. Nicole Kucine** was an Invited keynote speaker at the European Association for Haematopathology - Society for Hematopathology (EAHP-SH) Annual Meeting (Virtual), presenting "Diagnosis and Disease Features of Classical Myeloproliferative Neoplasms in Children and Adolescents," 4/28/2021.

National and Regional

- **Dr. Karen Acker** served as a panelist for Playbill's Centerstage With Healthcare Heroes, a health and wellness series partnership with Weill Cornell Medicine. The session focused on Pediatric Care and was moderated by Tony nominee Rory O' Malley (Hamilton, Book of Mormon), 4/21/2021. [Watch video](#).
- **Dr. Ana Maria Rodriguez Barreto** (Genetics Fellow PGY-4) gave a platform presentation on "Genotypic Abnormalities in Bloom Syndrome" at the Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting, 4/14/2021. Co-authors included Dr. Chris Cunliffe, Nathan A. Ellis, and Maeve Flanagan.
- **Dr. Marisa Censani** gave Grand Rounds at NYP Brooklyn Methodist on "Obesity in the Child and Adolescent: Guidelines and Challenges," 3/3/2021.
- **Dr. Timothy Clapper** gave the Keynote Address at the 2nd Annual CUNY-NYSIM Simulation summit on "Exposing and addressing mislearning and proficiency gaps using simulation and gaming," 4/9/2021.
- **Dr. Timothy Clapper** and **Dr. Kevin Ching** (along with Dr. Kapil Rajwani) delivered an invited workshop for the NYSIM and the 22 schools that are part of CUNY (CUNY-NYSIM Simulation Summit), 4/9/2021.

- **Alexander Finkel, SW** presented "Just Because You Carry It Well Doesn't Mean It's Not Heavy: How the Implementation of Recurring Wellness Groups Helps to Lighten the Load" at the Association of Pediatric Oncology Social Workers (APOSW) annual conference, 4/14/2021. Ms. Finkel, who is a social worker at NYP/WCM, presented on the wellness sessions she facilitated for the pediatric residents.
- **Dr. Duncan Hau** presented "Child Survival: A Global Health Challenge" at the NYP Queens Department of Pediatrics Grand Rounds, 4/22/2021.
- **Dr. Rachel Kowalsky** gave Emergency Grand Rounds at Louisiana State University Medical School on "Narrative Medicine: Where Medicine and Story Meet," 4/7/2021. Dr. Kowalsky also presented "Our Break Room: Reading and Writing our Way to Wellness" to the WCM Department of Anesthesia Wellness Series, 4/1/2021.
- **Dr. Jennifer Levine** served as a panelist at A 20/20 View of Genetics & Genomics: Bridging Personalized Medicine & the Role of the Social Worker hosted by the Association of Pediatric Oncology Social Workers (APOSW), 4/14/2021.
- **Dr. Elizabeth Poole-Di Salvo** served as a panelist at the 2021 NYP Autism Awareness Virtual Community Outreach Fair for "Transition During the Early Years," 4/26/2021.

See more [Department presentations](#)



Dr. Karen Acker during Playbill's Centerstage with Healthcare Heroes

Getting to Know...Dr. James Killinger



Dr. James Killinger is Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and Associate Attending Pediatrician in the Division of Pediatric Critical Care Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine and NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. He also serves as the Medical Director for the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

- **How many years have you been at WCM:** 7 years
- **What is your favorite part of the workday?** I am most productive in the early hours of the day. Rounds start early (and on time!) when I am on service.
- **Where do you live now:** My wife, Elga, and I moved to the Upper West Side in 2004 when I started fellowship. We have moved around a bit within the neighborhood, and have lived (with our two children) in the west 70s and Riverside for the last 8 years. No plans to move again.
- **What is the best vacation you ever took and why:** I was fortunate to take a month long vacation with my brother in between my junior and senior years in college. We explored the west by riding dune buggies in Coos Bay, Oregon; stage diving while House of Pain played at an outdoor music festival in Bremerton, Washington; tubing down the Blackfoot River in Missoula, Montana; exploring Yellowstone, Bryce, and Zion National Parks; playing craps at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas; and body surfing at the Wedge in Newport Beach, Ca. It was more than 25 years ago, and was a great trip for us. I could never do that trip again, but I feel very lucky to have shared those experiences with my brother.
- **What is the next place to visit on your bucket list:** I've never been to Portugal. I think that would be fun.
- **What do you enjoy doing when you are not working:** I enjoy spending my non-working hours with my family. Elga and I have a son (12), and a daughter (9). Weekends are spent going to soccer games, swim practices, tennis lessons, and walking our dachshund, Ruby. Covid has kept us mostly in New York, but we try to make it to Philadelphia to see our families who all live in the Philadelphia area.

- **What do you do to stay active:** Not enough. Covid has hurt my physical conditioning. I like to run, and have been trying to get back into that recently. I used to be pretty active in Soul Cycle, but Covid clipped that and no room for a Peloton in our small apartment. I do walk to work most days, so I get my steps in.
- **What is the last tv show you binge-watched or the last book you read and loved?** I really enjoyed the Netflix series, *Babylon Berlin*. I also loved *The Americans*.
- **Who is your hero or inspiration:** My mother, Mary Ann, was a remarkable woman.
- **How would your 10 year old self react to what you do now?** When I was 10, I was sure that I was going to be a lawyer like my mother. I think 10 year old me would be very surprised that I became a physician.
- **What makes you feel at peace:** Walking with my kids to school.
- **Interesting fact you want to share:** I was once a lifeline on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire." My cousin Jen was the contestant, and she called me (well Meredith Vieira called me) to ask: What is known as the powerhouse of the cell? I earned my cousin \$25,000 for that answer.

If you would like to be featured in a future faculty spotlight, or have new suggestions for questions, let us know!

Research Highlights



Dr. Oleh Akchurin received a 2020 Hartwell Individual Biomedical Research Award from The Hartwell Foundation. The award will provide funding for 3 years at \$100,000 direct cost per year to support Dr. Akchurin's research project entitled "Immunophenotyping of Peripheral Blood Monocytes to Personalize Treatment of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)," 04/01/2021-03/31/2024. [Read more](#)



Dr. Virginia Pascual received a Lupus Research Alliance grant for "Immune Responses with SARS-CoV-2 Vaccines in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus Patients: A Multicenter North American Observational Study," 4/2021-3/2023.



Dr. Fanny Augusta Vatter has been selected for a CTSC TL1 Training Award for "Exercise-induced exosomes provide a therapeutic potential for breast cancer prevention" for the funding period 7/1/2021 through 6/30/2022.

Vice Chair's Corner: Quality and Patient Safety

By Vice Chair for Quality and Patient Safety Nena Osorio, M.D.

Solutions for Patient Safety (SPS) Updates

Leadership Methods training will be conducted as part of the SPS Culture Wave journey. This training provides resources and approaches to help facilitate communication with the frontline workforce, identify and escalate safety concerns and further the culture of safety within the pediatric setting.

The **Safety Coach** program is the last step in the SPS Culture Wave journey and is a way to provide real-time, peer-to-peer coaching. Safety Coaches are frontline team members who are trained in giving positive feedback and utilization of safety behaviors to engage with their peers and support interdisciplinary communication.

Leadership Methods and the Safety Coach program will roll out early this summer and together will enhance the culture of safety work Weill Cornell Pediatrics has been engaged for several years with the goal of decreasing patient and staff harm and increasing staff engagement and empowerment.

Congratulations to **Dr. Megan Toal** and **Dr. Emily Echevarria**!

Their projects “Using Self-Reporting Event System to Identify Potential Social Determinants of Health in Safety Events in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit” (Dr. Toal) and “Kangaroo Care to Improve Parent Satisfaction and Decreased Depression/Anxiety Associated with NICU Hospitalization” (Dr. Echevarria) have been selected by the Quality Improvement Academy (QIA) leadership to be included in their advanced QI training and faculty development program!



Dr. Megan Toal



Dr. Emily Echevarria

WCM Peds In the Media

- **Dr. Sallie Permar** (11 Alive Atlanta, 4/30/21) Without vaccines yet for children, what should you do before taking your kids to summer camp? <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/without-vaccines-yet-for-children-what-should-you-do-before-taking-your-kids-to-summer-camp/85-0ac111e6-292f-4d02-9307-7462874c1a50>
- **Dr. Amal Khidir** Gulf Times, 4/28/21) WCM-Q paediatrician wins prestigious scholarship award. <https://www.gulf-times.com/story/690114/WCM-Q-paediatrician-wins-prestigious-scholarship-a>
- **Dr. Dyan Hes** (WUSA-9, Wash DC) Preventing Food Allergies in Children. <https://www.wusa9.com/article/entertainment/television/programs/great-day-washington/preventing-food-allergies-in-children/65-f19345ae-fe7a-4bec-9719-3663f727de3b>
- **Dr. Sallie Permar** (WCM Newsroom, 4/26/21) New Clues to the Conundrum of Mother-to-Child HIV Transmission <https://news.weill.cornell.edu/news/2021/04/new-clues-to-the-conundrum-of-mother-to-child-hiv-transmission>
- **Dr. Rachel Kowalsky, Dr. Mary Birmingham, and Dr. Shari Platt** (KevinMD, 4/24/21) Dying of loneliness: the COVID-19 epidemic in children and adolescents <https://www.kevinmd.com/blog/2021/04/dying-of-loneliness-the-covid-19-epidemic-in-children-and-adolescents.html>
- **Dr. David Lyden** (Weill Cornell Medicine Newsroom, 4/23/21) Physician-Scientist Inducted into Association of American Physicians <https://news.weill.cornell.edu/news/2021/04/weill-cornell-medicine-physician-scientist-inducted-into-association-of-american>
- **Dr. Karen Acker** (Playbill, 4/21/21) Watch Rory O'Malley Host a Discussion With Pediatric Care Physicians in Centerstage With Healthcare Heroes <https://www.playbill.com/article/watch-rory-omalley-host-a-discussion-with-pediatric-care-physicians-in-centerstage-with-healthcare-heroes>
- **Dr. James Bussel** (MedPage, 4/16/21) J&J tries to distance itself from AstraZeneca vax <https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/covid19vaccine/92145>
- **Dr. Marisa Censani, Dr. Jeffrey Dayton, and Dr. Cori Meredith Green** (New York Daily News, 4/12/21) America's top priority: We urgently need a comprehensive plan to give kids their lives back <https://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-oped-americas-top-priority-20210412-n7772tcyhfjdauok42ks6kaa-story.html>
- **Dr. Sallie Permar** (National Geographic, 4/2/21) Science/Coronavirus Coverage: What we know so far about the effort to vaccinate children <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/what-we-know-so-far-about-the-effort-to-vaccinate-children>
- **Dr. Veronica Ortiz (PGY1)** (Bronx Times, 4/2/21) Einstein medical students celebrate Match Day <https://www.bxtimes.com/einstein-medical-students-celebrate-match-day/>

America's top priority: Help kids

As pediatricians at a New York City hospital hit hard by the pandemic, we would not minimize the seriousness of COVID-19 and agree that it is essential to control its spread. Our hospitals are still caring for children with multisystem inflammatory syndrome, a serious but rare condition seen in children that is linked to COVID.

However, the effects of social isolation and limited in-person instruction are placing an entire generation's long-term well-being at risk. We are now at the tipping point where it is no longer about whether school, camps and activities should restart, but how we can help them implement the CDC's strategy for helping them.

Across our three pediatric disciplines — cardiology, obesity and mental health — we have seen the devastating consequences the COVID-19 pandemic is having on our young patients' health and happiness.

After reopening our pediatric cardiology offices to more routine outpatient visits in the summer of 2020, we began noticing common complaints among our patients: their ability to exercise had declined and they fatigued more easily during activities. One teen athlete, so out of shape, was no longer able to compete after returning to soccer. That was one of many patients whose fitness had declined because of a lack of access to physical activities.

New York Daily News, April 12, 2021

BE OUR GUEST

BY DR. MARISA CENSANI,
DR. JEFFREY DAYTON
AND DR. CORI MEREDITH GREEN

a study comparing cardiopulmonary exercise stress test results between children and young adults up to age 21 who were tested at three to six months into the pandemic to those tested before COVID-19 restrictions were implemented. Our study, published in the journal Pediatric Cardiology, demonstrated a measurable decline in the physical fitness of children during the pandemic. These findings suggest that the loss of opportunities for children to participate in organized school, recreational activities and summer camps contribute to a decline in their cardiovascular health, placing them at risk for long-term disorders, including obesity.

In our obesity practice, we are seeing children who had been making progress losing weight before the pandemic return with an average weight gain of 10 to 20 pounds due to the lack of physical activity, sedentary remote learning, poor sleep and poorly balanced dietary choices. Many of our families have lost consistent access to nutritious and adequate foods, such as fresh produce, and instead are eating more processed foods.

Before COVID-19, obesity affected almost one-fifth of American children ages 2 to 19 years of age. Now, these numbers are expected to rise, with modeling studies predicting at least a 3-4% weight gain in children during the pandemic. These changes will have longstanding consequences if not addressed immediately. Children with obesity are more likely to become adults with obesity, who develop associated health problems including type 2 diabetes, stroke and heart disease.

We are also seeing how the pandemic has exacerbated an already existing mental health crisis in youth. Before the pandemic, one in five children had a mental health problem, and suicide was the second leading cause of death in children beginning at age 10. Now, youth with mental health concerns are pouring into our pediatric primary care offices.

Some refuse to leave their homes because they are scared of the COVID-19 virus. Some are experiencing excessive grief due to losses they experienced while others worry about whether their parents' unemployment threatens their housing or what they will eat.

Every week, more children screen positive for mental health concerns, and more children say they are having thoughts about suicide. School-aged children tell us they would rather die than live in a world with COVID-19. Social isolation is a risk factor for suicidal behaviors, while feeling connected

and engaged in school and activities are protective factors. Our youth are isolated right now with so much uncertainty about the future, making it harder to cultivate hope and resilience during these times.

Across the country, too many children might not even see a specialist or stay in the emergency room for days waiting for one of the few inpatient psychiatry beds that are still open, a dire shortage that has only worsened with the pandemic.

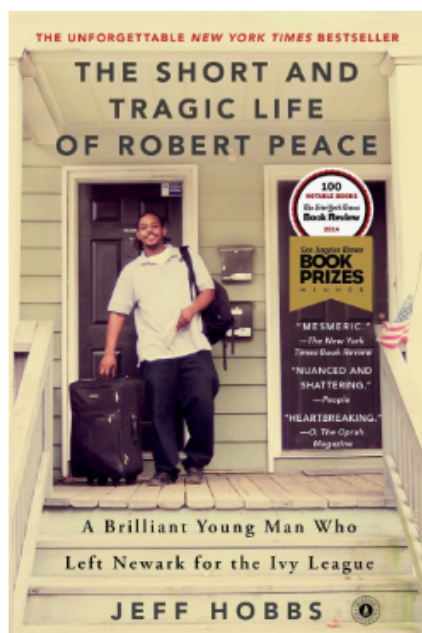
We must intervene now to prevent further health complications and mitigate the detrimental effects this pandemic is having on children.

We must ensure schools receive funding to provide essential healthy meals to families and physical activity outdoors or virtually. We should be urgently vaccinating teens 16 and over, and every pediatric clinic should have the Pfizer vaccine available for that group, with plans to rapidly vaccinate younger children before the next school year as soon as a vaccine is authorized for younger ages.

Children are our future, and we must prioritize their well-being right now.

Censani, Dayton and Green are pediatricians specializing respectively in obesity, cardiology and mental health at NewYork-Presbyterian Komansky Children's Hospital and are associate professors of clinical pediatrics at Weill Cornell Medicine.

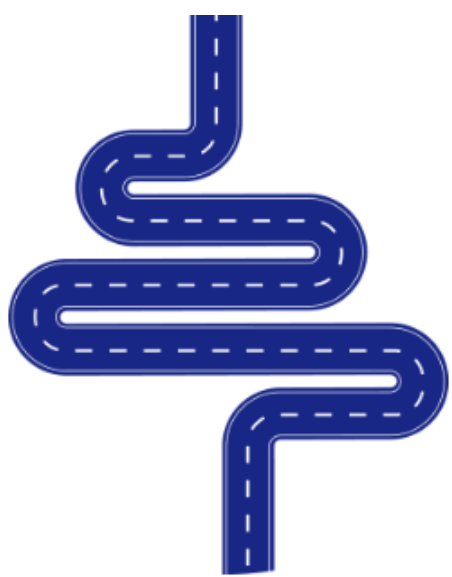
Events



Pediatrics Department Faculty Book Club

Monday, May 24, 2021, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Please join us for our next book club! We will be discussing *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace* by Jeff Hobbs. The discussion will be moderated by Tricia DeLaMora. Check your email for the Zoom link or contact Sue Bostwick, sbbostwi@med.cornell.edu



New York City Take Steps Walk + Virtual

Join the Weill Cornell Pediatric Gastroenterology team!

Thursday, June 17, 2021

5:30 pm Check-in and Festival Start

7:00 pm Walk Start

Peds GI Team Page: [Sign Up/Donate](#)

Contact team leader: Neera Gupta, neg9020@med.cornell.edu

Virtual Residents Graduation Ceremony

Friday, June 18, 2021, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

For details: contact Esther Rodriguez, esr2003@med.cornell.edu

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Deadline for June issue: May 24th



Weill Cornell Medicine
Pediatrics



New York Presbyterian Kids
Komansky Children's Hospital