

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**5th ANNUAL  
PEDIATRIC  
EARLY CAREER  
RESEARCHER  
CONFERENCE**

Tuesday, August 15, 2023  
Health Sciences Research Building  
Emory University



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Sponsored by the NICHD-supported Atlanta  
Pediatric Scholars Program, K12HD072245

# WELCOME

Dear Colleagues,

We welcome you to the 5th Annual Pediatric Early Career Researcher Conference. We are so excited to have you here with us, and we look forward to an informative and engaging day.

This year's conference features a record-breaking 43 abstracts from 40 of our talented trainees and junior faculty members. We have a packed agenda of oral and poster presentation sessions that will explore child-health research happening at Emory University and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

We are delighted to have Dr. Grace Aldrovandi, a physician-scientist and Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases at UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital, and a Professor of Pediatrics at the David Geffen School of Medicine of the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Aldrovandi also serves as a member of the External Advisory Board of the Atlanta Pediatric Scholars Program. Dr. Aldrovandi's presentation, "Beyond Nutrition: Exploring Human Milk Metabolomics and its Impact on Infant Health", will be an inspiration for clinical and basic scientists alike.

In addition to the formal sessions, we also have several social events planned, which will give you the opportunity to network with other attendees and make new connections. We hope that you will take advantage of these opportunities to build relationships and collaborate on future projects.

We know that you have busy schedules, so we appreciate you taking the time to attend this conference. We believe that the investment of your time will be well worth it, and we are confident that you will leave feeling motivated and full of new ideas.

Thank you again for joining us!

Sincerely,



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Vice Chair for Research,  
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Aflac Children's Chair for  
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**Stacy Heilman, PhD**

*Conference Co-Chair  
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Children's Cystic Fibrosis and  
Airway Disease (CF-AIR)  
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## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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**Grace M. Aldrovandi, MD, CM**  
*Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases  
UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital  
Professor of Pediatrics  
David Geffen School of Medicine  
University of California, Los Angeles*

Dr. Grace Aldrovandi is a physician-scientist and Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases at UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital and a Professor of Pediatrics at the David Geffen School of Medicine of the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Aldrovandi received her undergraduate and her medical degree from McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She completed an internship and residency at McGill, as well as a research fellowship in pediatric infectious diseases at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is a board-certified pediatric infectious diseases specialist with over 20 years' experience in caring for both general pediatric infectious diseases as well as HIV-infected children and their families. Dr. Aldrovandi's research interests include pediatric HIV, the effects of breast milk on child health and infections in immunocompromised children. She has published more than 200 peer review publications in such journals as Nature, Journal of Virology, and the New England Journal of Medicine and multiple book chapters. She has been a member of many National Institutes of Health study sections and lectured throughout the world.

Dr. Aldrovandi has had continuous NIH funding for over 20 years, and in recognition of her significant contributions was honored with the prestigious Elizabeth Glaser Scientist Award. She and her collaborators were the first to describe increased morbidity and mortality among HIV-exposed uninfected infants, an essential discovery with potential implications for improving health outcomes in this vulnerable population. Dr. Aldrovandi's laboratory is at the forefront of investigating microbial communities' role in various compartments, ranging from mucosal (breast, vagina, rectum, oral) to non-mucosal (skin) regions. Their pioneering work demonstrated the presence of perturbations in the microbiome of infants born to HIV-infected women, despite the infants not being infected with HIV. Employing sophisticated bioinformatics approaches, they have skillfully modeled microbial maturation and strain transfer from breast milk to infant stool, unveiling new insights into this crucial area of research.

Having played prominent leadership roles in several NIH-funded clinical trials Networks, Dr. Aldrovandi has a deep understanding of the collaborative efforts essential for transformative research in the field. This unique perspective allows her to identify opportunities for innovative and impactful investigations.

Dr. Aldrovandi is deeply committed to nurturing the next generation of scientists and has actively engaged in mentoring activities to encourage underrepresented Latino and African American high school students to pursue careers in STEM fields. Her mentoring efforts have garnered attention and recognition, with a feature on Despierta America, highlighting the impact of their work in inspiring and guiding young minds towards scientific excellence. Moreover, Dr. Aldrovandi has had the privilege of mentoring numerous talented individuals, guiding them through their academic and research journeys. Her mentorship has been instrumental in helping these individuals secure prestigious awards and grants, including T32, K08, K23, K99, R01, and a Doris Duke Award.

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## MORNING AGENDA

Time	Presentation
	<b>Career Development Hour/Breakfast with the Experts (Café Area)</b>
<b>8:00 - 9:00 am</b>	<p><b>Topic: Study Design</b>  <b>Shasha Bai, PhD</b>            Director, Pediatric Biostatistics Core</p> <p><b>Topic: Biosketch and Personal Statement</b>  <b>Julie Hawk, PhD</b>            Grant Proposal Development Associate</p> <p><b>Topic: Partnerships</b>  <b>Stacy Heilman, PhD</b>            Associate Vice Chair for Research</p> <p><b>Topic: Team Science</b>  <b>Nael McCarty, PhD</b>            Marcus Professor of Cystic Fibrosis</p>

Time	Presentation
	<b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b>
<b>9:00 - 9:15 am</b>	<p><b>Lucky Jain, MD, MBA</b>            George W. Brumley, Jr. Professor and Chair            Department of Pediatrics            Emory University School of Medicine            Chief Academic Officer, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta</p> <p><b>Clinton Joiner, MD, PhD</b>            Vice Chair for Research, Department of Pediatrics            Chief Research Officer, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta            Aflac Children's Chair for Hematology            Director, Section of Hematology            Aflac Cancer and Blood Disorders Center            Professor of Pediatrics, Emory University School of Medicine</p>
	<b>Current and Previous K12 Scholars and Accomplishments</b>
<b>9:15 - 9:30 am</b>	<p><b>Stacy Heilman, PhD</b>            Associate Professor            Associate Vice Chair for Research            Department of Pediatrics            Emory University</p>

Basic Science Oral Presentations	
9:30 - 9:45 am	 <p><b>Chao Chen, PhD</b> Mitochondrial metabolic flexibility is critical for CD8 T cell anti-tumor immunity.</p>
9:45 - 10:00 am	 <p><b>Omotayo Farinre, PhD</b> Early ART plus immune interventions to limit SIV reservoir establishment in infant rhesus macaques.</p>
10:00 - 10:15 am	<b>BREAK</b>
10:15 - 11:00 am	<b>Basic Science Mini-Presentation Poster Session</b> <i>13 Poster Presentations (2-minute presentations)</i>
Basic Science Oral Presentations (continued)	
11:00 - 11:15 am	 <p><b>Hunter Jonus, PhD</b> Dual GD2 and PTK7 Targeted <math>\gamma\delta</math> T cell Immunotherapy for Neuroblastoma.</p>
11:15 - 11:30 am	 <p><b>Anna Oeur, PhD</b> Pupillary Light Response Deficits in 4-Week-Old Piglets and Adolescent Children After Low-Velocity Head Rotations and Sports-Related Concussions.</p>
11:30 - 12:15 pm	<b>Basic Science Poster Session, Set A (Café Area)</b>
	<p><b>A1.</b> Single-cell profiling of acute myeloid leukemia identified ARMH1, a novel protein, associated with proliferation, migration, and drug resistance. <b>Mojtaba Bakhtiari, MD</b></p> <p><b>A2.</b> Butyrate supplementation during pregnancy reduces injury in murine model of neonatal intestinal inflammation. <b>Stefi Barbian, MD</b></p> <p><b>A3.</b> Evaluation of the Immune Checkpoint Siglec-15 in Promoting Immune Dysregulation in Pediatric Lymphomas. <b>Dailia Francis, MD, PhD</b></p> <p><b>A4.</b> Time-Sensitive Changes in Serum Biomarkers Following Rotational Head Injury in a Piglet Model. <b>Colin Huber, PhD</b></p>

**A5.** Utilizing chemotherapy to enhance the anti-tumor properties of ex vivo expanded  $\gamma\delta$  T cells in acute myeloid leukemia.

**Navdeep Jhita, MD**

**A6.** Increased Level of IGFBP2 promotes Tumor metastasis in SHH Medulloblastoma.

**Haritha Kunhiraman, PhD**

**A7.** Deep phenotyping of inflammatory proteins after elexacaftor/ tezacaftor/ ivacaftor therapy in cystic fibrosis.

**Hazel Ozuna, PhD**

**A8.** Pharmacological Modulation of Stemness Pathways to Inhibit the Proliferation of the HIV Reservoir.

**Inna Ruiz-Salinas, PhD**

**A9.** DFMO inhibits LIN28B and decreases viability of Group 3 Medulloblastoma cells.

**Shubin Shahab, MD**

**A10.** *Not available*

**A11.** Disruption of the serine-producing pathways slows progression of the Sonic Hedgehog-driven medulloblastoma.

**Andrey Tikunov, PhD**

**A12.** Inducing Stenotic Hemodynamics in an In Vitro Bioprinted Pulmonary Vein Mimic Induces Rapid Endothelial to Mesenchymal Transition (EndMT) in Endothelial Cells.

**Martin Tomov, PhD**

**A13.** Elucidating the effects of combination therapy with Venetoclax and IAP inhibitor AZD5582 in SIV-infected, ART-suppressed macaques.

**Benedict Ukhueduan, PhD**

**12:15 - 12:55 pm**

**Lunch Break - Boxed lunches served in HSRB Café**

## AFTERNOON AGENDA

<b>12:55 - 1:00 pm</b>	<b>Announce winners for Best Basic Science Oral and Poster Presenters</b>	
<b>1:00 - 2:00 pm</b>	<b>Keynote Presentation</b>	
	<p><b>“Beyond Nutrition: Exploring Human Milk Metabolomics and its Impact on Infant Health.”</b></p> <p><b>Grace M. Aldrovandi, MD, CM</b>            Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases            UCLA Mattel Children’s Hospital            Professor of Pediatrics            David Geffen School of Medicine            University of California, Los Angeles</p>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Presentation</b>	
	<b>Current and Previous K12 Scholars and Accomplishments</b>	
<b>2:00 - 2:15 pm</b>	<p><b>Stacy Heilman, PhD</b>            Associate Professor            Associate Vice Chair for Research            Department of Pediatrics            Emory University</p>	
	<b>Clinical &amp; Outcomes Research Oral Presentations</b>	
<b>2:15 - 2:30 pm</b>		<p><b>Paul George, MD</b>            Are children with sickle cell disease at particular risk from the harmful effects of air pollution? Evidence from a large, urban/peri-urban cohort.</p>
<b>2:30 - 2:45 pm</b>		<p><b>Dunia Hatabah, MD</b>            Low arginine bioavailability and clinical outcomes in children with sickle cell disease (SCD) hospitalized with vaso-occlusive pain episodes (VOE).</p>
<b>2:45 - 3:00 pm</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
<b>3:00 - 4:00 pm</b>	<b>Clinical &amp; Outcomes Research Mini-Presentation Poster Session</b> <i>18 Poster Presentations (2-minute presentations)</i>	

Clinical & Outcomes Research Oral Presentations ( <i>continued</i> )	
<b>4:00 - 4:15 pm</b>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div> <p><b>Marcos Mills, MD</b></p> <p>Bedside Cardiac Ultrasound in the Pediatric CICU: The Modern Physical Exam.</p> </div> </div>
<b>4:15 - 4:30 pm</b>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div> <p><b>Chris Rees, MD, MPH</b></p> <p>Derivation and Internal Validation of Novel Risk Assessment Tools to Identify Young Children at Risk for Post-Discharge Mortality in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Monrovia, Liberia.</p> </div> </div>
4:30 - 5:15 pm Clinical & Outcomes Research Poster Session, Set B (Café Area)	
	<p><b>B1.</b> Distinguishing MIS-C Features from Febrile Patients Evaluated for Kawasaki Disease Pre-Pandemic <b>Marissa Bass, MD</b></p> <p><b>B2.</b> Evaluating the Association Between Structural Racism and Acuity of Illness at Initial Presentation in Pediatric Patients with Solid Tumors. <b>Alexandra Cathcart, MD</b></p> <p><b>B3.</b> Mortality and outcomes of children with tracheostomy before and after implementing high-fidelity simulation-based tracheostomy education. <b>Mary Ellen Fain, MD</b></p> <p><b>B4.</b> The Utilization of Vasopressor Infusions during Pediatric Liver Transplantation and Association with Postoperative Outcomes. <b>Laura Gilbertson, MD</b></p> <p><b>B5.</b> Longitudinal Surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 (SARS) IgG Antibodies in Pediatric Healthcare Workers (HCW). <b>Dunia Hatabah, MD</b></p> <p><b>B6.</b> Association of Age with Acuity and Severity of Illness at Initial Presentation in Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults with Leukemia. <b>Tarun Jain, MD</b></p> <p><b>B7.</b> Incidence, Risk Factors, and Outcomes of Postreperfusion Syndrome in Pediatric Liver Transplantation. <b>Ashley Joseph, MD</b></p> <p><b>B8.</b> Steroid-Associated Adverse Events are Dose-Dependent Following Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation for Pediatric Hematologic Malignancies. <b>Robert Lisac, MD</b></p> <p><b>B9.</b> An Educational Intervention for Caregivers of Children with Motor Delay on a Social Media Platform: Parent Recruitment and Engagement. <b>Larken Marra, PhD</b></p>

**B10 and B11.** *Not available*

**B12.** Positive Bacterial Blood Cultures and Time to Positivity in Children: Should Empiric Antibiotics be Reconsidered Sooner?

**Pratik Patel, MD**

**B13.** GLP-1 Receptor Agonists - A Potential New Medication for Pediatric Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease.

**Ana Ramirez-Tovar, MD**

**B14.** Caregiver Measures of Stress in Recollection of Childhood Seizure Events.

**Caroline Ray, MD**

**B15.** A group coaching pilot to study the feasibility and impact of cognitive-emotional skills in pediatric cardiology fellows.

**Zahidee Rodriguez, MD**

**B16.** Professional Development Curriculum to Promote Well-being Amongst Pediatric Cardiology Fellows.

**Zahidee Rodriguez, MD**

**B17.** Adherence to Resuscitation Ergonomics Amidst High Rates of PICU Staff Turnover.

**Ila Sehgal, DO**

**B18.** Investigating Rurality and its Association with Initiation of Childhood Cancer Survivor Care.

**Liberty Strange, MD, MPH**

**B19.** A Comparison of Postoperative Analgesia for Nuss Procedure with Cryoablation Patients Receiving Single Shot Nerve Blocks (SSRNB) with and without Patient Controlled Intravenous Analgesia (PCIA).

**Renee' Tolly, MD**

**B20.** Outpatient Utilization of the RAM Cannula for Nasal Noninvasive Ventilation in Children.

**Brittany Truitt, MD**

**5:15 pm**

**Announce winners for Best Clinical & Outcomes Research Oral and Poster Presenters and Closing Remarks (Café Area)**

**5:15 - 6:00 pm**

**Networking Hour (Café Area)**

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Stacy Heilman, PhD\*  
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Benjamin Kopp, MD, MPH\*  
Wilbur Lam, MD, PhD  
Claudia Morris, MD, FAAP\*  
Sunil Raikar, MD  
Michelle Wallace, MD  
Jason Yustein, MD, PhD

**We thank our faculty judges for their time and expertise ensuring our early career researchers receive the recognition they deserve.**

Grace Aldrovandi, MD, CM (*UCLA*)  
Hanna Alemayehu, MD  
Holly Bauser-Heaton, MD, PhD  
Satheesh Chonat, MD  
D. Wade Clapp, MD (*Indiana University*)  
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Gordon Ramsay, PhD  
Christina Rostad, MD  
Lisa Satlin, MD (*Icahn School of Medicine*)  
Rabin Tirouvanziam, PhD  
Patricia Zerra, MD

**A special thanks to our esteemed faculty and staff for their contributions, time, and expertise in organizing this important event.**

Carla Armour  
Shasha Bai, PhD  
Maryam Ehteshami, PhD  
Justin Ferretti, MPH  
Debra Hamilton, MA, PsyS  
Julie Hawk, PhD  
Kristen Herzegh, MPH

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Nael McCarty, PhD  
Clovis Sarmiento, MD  
Megan Vallowe, PhD  
Tracy Willoughby, MPHc



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# THANK YOU

We are extremely grateful for all our presenters, attendees, and partners who helped make this year's event an unforgettable experience! Thank you so much for being a part of it!

Please take about five minutes to complete our [Feedback Survey](#)  
We look forward to your input.



# We'll see you next year!