



2022

Winter Newsletter

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Editor's Note

This edition starts with the sad news that one of our founding parents, **M. Daria Haust**, died on January 11, 2022. Daria served as SPP President in 1983 and led the reorganization of the Pediatric Pathology Club into the Society for Pediatric Pathology. This reorganization included formulation of new bylaws and led the way to the establishment of American Board of Pathology certification in Pediatric Pathology. As noted below in the History section, Daria also founded the International Pediatric Pathology Association. This group continues as a major international forum for pediatric pathology and hosts a yearly course series that serves physicians and children from many countries. Daria continued to give a steady presence at our meetings and a strong voice to matters that concerned her. She will be missed!

On the happy side, our SPP members continue to make the news. Another of our stalwarts, **Cyril D'Cruz**, writes that he and another SPP luminary, **Vijay Joshi**, have been elected as Diamond Jubilee Honorees for the New Jersey Society of Pathologists. For this honor they are joined by nationally recognized academic pathologists including Michael Klein, Elizabeth Montgomery, Gene Seigal, and Virginia LiVolsi. Cyril writes that in spite of a string of calamities he managed to survive and thrive, thanks to the support of many wonderful persons.

On September 2020, **Vijay Joshi** was also interviewed by the online publication The Pathologist (for details see <https://thepathologist.com/outside-the-lab/peer-to-peer-with-vijay-joshi>), and he gave insights into what inspired his interest in pediatric diseases and propelled his lifetime journey to attract others to our great profession. He noted that **Daria Haust** served as one of his mentors and recommended him to a faculty position at Montreal Children's Hospital. Vijay has written extensively on placental diseases and

neuroblastomas, and I recommend giving this a good read to learn more. Let's give our hearty congratulations to both Vijay and Cyril for representing the SPP!



David Parham, MD
Newsletter Editor

President's Letter

Hope everyone had a safe, relaxing holiday season! On the East Coast, we have been hit hard by omicron which put a little damper on my holiday season. I hope that your hospitals have been managing to stay ahead of the curve.

Covid has not slowed down the SPP's Executive Committee and Board of Directors work over the fall and winter months. We recently signed the contract with SAGE publishing for another five years of partnership for the PDP journal and completed the last steps on the ACCME's reaccreditation. I have been fortunate to work with an extraordinary group of volunteers in my tenure as President.

After careful thought and consideration regarding Covid-19 and the different variant spikes, as well as the safety of our meeting attendees, the SPP has made the difficult decision to **transition the March 19-20, 2022 SPP Spring Meeting in Los Angeles, CA to a virtual meeting during the same timeframe!** We are working on the virtual meeting plan – we will have additional information forthcoming, soon. Given the format transition, there has been a temporary hold placed on meeting registration. **For those that have already registered, we will be reaching out to each of you individually with more information on options and next steps.**

We are saddened to continue missing the in-person engagement with the SPP community but hope to be able to bring the group together again in Rochester, NY for the 2022 SPP Fall Meeting.

Thank you for your patience as we navigate the continued impacts of Covid-19. All my best to each of you, and I look forward to your virtual presence at our next meeting.



Debra Heller, MD
SPP President

SPP History – This Time 25 Years Ago

In the Winter 1996 SPP newsletter

(<https://www.sponline.org/assets/Newsletter/1996%20Winter%20Newsletter.pdf>), **Ron Jaffe**, Publications Chair, announced the publication of a new journal, Pediatric and Developmental Pathology (PDP). **Denis Benjamin** served as the first Editor-in-Chief. Ron called on SPP members to send ALL publications to this journal, and he promised added attractions such as new sections and more color illustrations. Editors **Don Singer** and **Jim Dimmick** promised to stay on as Editors of Perspectives in Pediatric Pathology, and articles for them were solicited to be included in future issues of PDP.

Virginia Anderson reported on the October 1996 meeting of the International Pediatric Pathology Association (IPPA), which was held in Budapest, Hungary. **Daria Haust** was recognized for her role as founder of the IPPA, which was then about to celebrate 25 years of service (now 50! – Editor).

Update on Current Work

Dealing with SARS-CoV-2: Getting Ahead of the Curve The Los Angeles Children’s Hospital Experience

An Interview with **Alexander Judkins**, Chief of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, by David Parham, MD

Note: Alex and his staff were featured in the lead article in the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles publication, Research LA, 2021. This interview largely references that article, which I used to compose questions. Congratulations, Alex and staff!

From the article, it appears that you started thinking about impact that Covid would have on the lab at an early date. What led you to first start planning for a probable pandemic?

- A. We have a team approach. Our director of the microbiology laboratory, **Jennifer Dien-Bard**, was on top of it from the beginning. This made all the difference in our initial response, since we began to stockpile supplies and prepare for the testing impact on our laboratory.

The impact on the supply chain for infectious disease testing was enormous. How did you begin reinforcing your supplies, and on what did you focus?

- A. The key for our successful early response was working with our supply department to make sure we had sufficient swabs, transport media, and PCR reagents, and we stockpiled them before the testing volume became overwhelming. We were fortunate in having good relations with our commercial suppliers, which enhanced our ability to get supplies.

Your team approach to solving this management quandary was ingenious. Whom among your staff had the greatest role to play?

- A. Besides Jenn, our clinical lab director, **Maurice (“Mo”) O’Gorman**, is a natural leader and an outstanding laboratorian. He worked to partner with Jenn, to interface with the hospital, and to develop lines of communication with our administrative and clinical leadership. Our bioinformatics director **Xiaowu Gai**, and his Bioinformatics team began viral genome sequencing as soon as we started

to receive specimens. Our COVID-19 team met every day for planning and for assessing what was working or not working. This team approach was critical to success.

Early on, you recognized the importance of genetic testing. How did this influence your subsequent testing?

- A. In the initial phase lacking adequate therapy or vaccination, it wasn't clear what testing would be most clinically important. After we developed a diagnostic test, we then worked to improve our efficiency. Once serology became available, Mo also began adapting that for our laboratory. We also collected convalescent serum in order to support clinical trials on its effectiveness as a therapy. We identified genetic features of pediatric infections, and then we compared these features with viruses causing adult infections, using sequencing to identify differences among our patients with immune deficiencies. Once we learned what features were more valuable in predicting disease severity and outcome, they received our major focus. We worked with our PCR reagent supplier Thermo-Fisher to develop more efficient testing. This helped us to recognize the new Omicron strain cases early on. Our PCR testing continues to evolve as we look for new strains.

What role did bioinformatics have, and how was this resource utilized?

- A. Xiaowu and our Biopathology Center have a strong Bioinformatics division, and it developed pipelines for whole genome sequencing and data analysis that led to several papers on COVID-19 and what features are important in pediatric diseases. Our team approach identified personnel with research experience in viral genomics, and we then called upon them for their expertise. Our team became an academic unit and began scholarly work, and it was a real pleasure for me to be a part of the excitement.

What has been the ultimate impact of your early development of lab testing? How were you able to deal with the FDA?

- A. Early on, we were able to provide testing for a number of Los Angeles institutions in order to help our local colleagues. We saw our expertise grow and become recognized, such as Mo's participation in high impact webinars on PCR and serology testing. Our staff has been interviewed in national publications, such as Jenn's article in the Washington Post. The FDA and CDC have been criticized for slowing down the initial response to the pandemic, but this has been a novel situation. We followed guidelines and received early approval, but our experience still showed that flexibility is limited when dealing with the challenges and limitations of laboratory developed tests being regulated through the FDA.

The four-hour turnaround time (TAT) for putting test results in the electronic record is an amazing feat. How was that accomplished?

- A. Jenn and virology did wonderful work, facilitated by front-in coordination and support by our institution's divisions for managing people and resources. By the end of the first year, the test volume was as great as if we had added an entire new laboratory. Also important in TAT was coordination with the clinics for testing patients being admitted for other diseases. Jenn developed a strategy to have several different tests going at one time, in case one instrument went down or we had a bad run. We ran different tests on different instruments, with overlap in throughput (about 6 runs/day). We also validated a number of different tests to use for backup.

What role has your Bioinformatics division in the Center for Personalized Medicine had on subsequent developments in COVID-19?

- A. Jenn's development of saliva testing led to the recognition that it's currently the best sample to use. We have also described mutational changes associated with long term infections occurring with immune-compromised patients and the risks they entail for the emergence of new variants. This information has led to better handling of cancer patients in order to prevent infections and their spread. All of these factors go beyond simply testing for diagnosis, and we hope to continue this work.

What academic accomplishments has this work generated?

- A. Since the pandemic began, our group has published 17 papers, given 14 invited presentations, and received 2 grants.

Tell us about your group's work with multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C).

- A. Xiaowu is currently still working on this project, correlating genetic changes of patients with MIS-C both at the virus level and the host level. This is exciting work that hopefully will yield new insight into the pathogen-host interaction in this disease.



Alex Judkins, MD
Chief of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Children's Hospital Los Angeles

Important Items



Reminders

- Save the date: Spring Meeting
 - March 19-20, 2022 – Virtual
 - The abstract submission deadline has passed.
 - Registration will re-launch soon! [Click here](#) for more information.
- Slide Survey 2022
 - Registration will launch in the spring, and release of Case Set 1 is currently planned for late April.

Request for Newsletter Survey Completion

We hope you enjoyed last year's three newsletter editions. Moving forward, newsletters will be sent quarterly. As we continue to work to make changes and improvements, we kindly request your feedback. A short survey can be accessed [here](#) and should only take a few minutes.

We appreciate your input and assistance to ensure that the newsletters are as beneficial as possible to members.

Call for Newsletter Articles

Calling all would be reporters, bloggers, raconteurs, and town gossips! Do you have any newsworthy ideas for an article that would be of interest to our readership? If so, please [email the Editor](#). Meeting reports are especially welcome. It only takes a few paragraphs!

Committee Reports



Education Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- The 2021 Fall Annual Meeting occurred October 8th – 9th, 2021. There were a total of 278 attendees. Feedback indicates that the meeting was well received.
- The SPP participated in the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Accreditation Interview on November 9th. The final Accreditation Decision will be communicated in March 2022.

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- Planning for the 2022 Virtual Spring Annual Meeting is underway. Visit the SPP website for more information.
- The SPP will submit its 2021 Annual Report to the accreditation board, the ACCME, by March 31, 2022.



Sanda Alexandrescu, MD
Chair, Education Committee

Membership Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- Membership application and transition request review resulted in acceptance of one new affiliate member, one new junior member, ten new regular members, and two individuals which transitioned to emeritus membership.
- The committee reviewed and provided feedback for the development of a membership communication plan in conjunction with the SPP I&C Committee.

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- The first quarter membership application and transition request review is currently underway. The second quarter review is set to occur in April 2022.
- The committee is nearing the completion of the development of a member benefits letter, which outlines the myriad benefits of joining the SPP for new members.
- Liaising with the I&C Committee, the Membership Committee would like to expand the SPP's outreach, including the SPP presence on various social media platforms.
- As always, ideas for improvement and outreach are welcome.



Erin Rudzinski, MD
Chair, Membership Committee

Perinatal Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- For the first time the Perinatal Slide Session was accredited for CME credit at the 2021 Fall Annual Meeting.
- Updates to the Perinatal Pathology Course webpage are in development.
- Curbside Perinatal Consultation sessions launched in November. Thus far there have been 4 successful sessions led by Dr. Ernst with an excellent turn-out.

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- Upcoming Perinatal Symposiums
 - 2022: Evaluation of Birth Defects Due to Teratogenic versus Genetic Effects in Perinatal Pathology
 - 2023: New Insights into the Early Detection and Long-term Health Consequences of Pregnancy Complications
- The next Perinatal Business Meeting will be held at the 2022 Spring Annual meeting on Friday, March 18th from 5:00 pm – 5:30 pm.



Eumenia Castro, MD, PhD
Chair, Perinatal Committee

Publications Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- The Publications Committee was engaged for input on the SAGE/SPP contract renewal, the contract has been officially signed by both the SPP and SAGE. As a reminder, the new contract includes online-only subscription option for the *PDP Journal*.
- The Publications Committee was also engaged to provide input on the developed *Editor-in-Chief* contract between the SPP and Dr. Pierre Russo. This contract has also been executed by both Dr. Russo and the SPP, and is active from January 1, 2022 until January 1, 2027.

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- The upcoming *Perspectives* issue will be a virtual format, a flipbook (nxtbook) and is nearing completion.



Monique De Paepe, MD
Chair, Publications Committee

Informatics & Communication Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- Additional website updates and improvements were made.
- The I&C Committee assisted with planning and executing a successful Virtual Fall Meeting.
- The 2021 Fall SPP Newsletter was distributed and posted to the website. Newsletters will be released quarterly moving forward.

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- Dr. Sonja Chen, Archives Director, will be heading up a project to review and organize SPP archives along with several I&C members.
- We continue to maintain an active social media presence on Twitter ([@SocPediPath](https://twitter.com/SocPediPath)) and through the pediatric pathology forum. Dr. **Michael Arnold**, Social Media Director, is leading this work.
- Committee members will assist with the digital aspects of the upcoming Spring Meeting.



Jason Jarzembowski, MD, PhD
Chair, Informatics & Communication Committee

Upcoming Meetings of Interest

| <i>Meeting</i> | <i>Meeting Dates and Location</i> |
|---|---|
| USCAP Annual Meeting | March 19-24, 2022 – Los Angeles, CA |
| ASIP Annual Meeting at Experimental Biology | April 2-5, 2022 – Philadelphia, PA |
| International Paediatric Pathology Association (IPPA) Advanced Course | May 7-13, 2022 – Egmond aan Zee, Netherlands |
| American Association of Neuropathologists 98 th Annual Meeting | June 9-12, 2022 – Bonita Springs, FL |
| International Paediatric Pathology Association (IPPA) Update | The 2021 course has been postponed until: June 18-21, 2022 – Crowne Plaza, Rome, Italy |

SPP Organization

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