Five New Faculty Appointed:
The Division of Rheumatology is pleased to announce the recent appointment of five new faculty members.

**Dr. Kwanghoon Bobby Han, MD** has been appointed as a Clinical Assistant Professor. Dr. Han has a strong interest in translational research and clinical investigation. He will work in collaboration with the Elkon Lab and other interested members of the Division to build a Clinical Trials Program within the Division of Rheumatology. In addition, Dr. Han will have an active clinical program mostly based at UWMC. Dr. Han obtained his MD from Seoul National Academy in South Korea. He completed his Internal Medicine training at Western Pennsylvania Hospital and completed a Fellowship at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School.

**Dr. Christian Lood, PhD** has been appointed as a Research Assistant Professor. Dr. Lood has been working in the Elkon lab as a postdoctoral fellow for the past three years. He obtained a PhD degree in the field of Biomedicine-Rheumatology from Lund University and has significant research experience in Immunology/Autoimmune disease. He worked with internationally renowned research scientists, Drs. Bengtsson and Sturfelt at the University of Lund. Dr. Lood has been extremely productive, including his most recent publication in Nature Medicine. Dr. Lood’s lab is based at South Lake Union. His primary research focus is to identify the causes of neutrophil mediated inflammation and to find methods to block the inflammation.

**Dr. Elizabeth Wahl, MD, MAS** has been appointed as an Acting Instructor. Elizabeth graduated from Yale University with a Bachelor of Science in Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology in 1999. In 2003, she completed a predoctoral fellowship in bioethics at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. She returned to Yale University for her medical school, residency in internal medicine, and clinical rheumatology fellowship training. She comes to us from the University of California, San Francisco where she held the title of postdoctoral fellow/clinical instructor since 2013. Dr. Wahl’s primary clinical site of practice is at the VA-Seattle. In addition to her clinical work, she will continue her research on Quality of Care and Patient-reported Outcomes.

**Dr. Salah-Uddin Ahmed, PhD** has been appointed as an Affiliate Associate Professor effective November 1, 2016. Dr. Ahmed currently holds a faculty title of Associate Professor (with tenure) within the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Washington State University, College of Pharmacy in Spokane, Washington. He is well funded with one R01, one R21 and a grant from the Arthritis Foundation all centered around his research in rheumatoid arthritis. Dr. Ahmed will be an asset to the Division and add substantively to the research base. In addition to his research collaborations with the Division faculty, Dr. Ahmed will also participate in teaching in the MSRTP Program and student research program through mentoring activities.

**Dr. Tal Gazitt, MD, MSc** has been appointed as an Affiliate Instructor. Dr. Gazitt recently completed her Rheumatology Fellowship in June 2016. She received her MD/MSc from Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, Israel in 2009. She completed her Internal Medicine Residency Program at the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center in San Jose, CA. Dr. Gazitt has a clinical appointment at The Polyclinic. She will also continue to work with the Division on her research project at SLU. She will participate in teaching and mentoring activities on an ad hoc basis providing lab mentoring to foreign visiting scientists, medical students, and Rheumatology fellows.
RHEUMATOLOGY RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT: GILTIAY LAB & B CELLS IN SLE

B-cells play a key role in the immune defense against pathogens, but sometimes instead of fighting foreign antigens, B cells become reactive against the body’s own tissues. This abnormal B cell activation can lead to autoimmune diseases such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), Sjogren's syndrome, and vasculitis. Production of pathogenic autoantibodies by B lymphocytes and formation of immune complexes are the hallmarks of the SLE disease process. Beyond producing autoantibodies, B-cells also promote disease pathogenesis by secreting pro-inflammatory cytokines and by activating T cells. Given their important role in disease development, it is not surprising that in the recent years several approaches for targeting B cells in autoimmune diseases were developed and are now present in drugs such as Belimumab and Rituximab.

Research in Dr. Giltiay's Lab at SLU is aimed at understanding how pathogenic B cells arise in SLE. They also investigate the role of different subsets of B cells and their relation to disease activity. Their recent data indicates that an increase in the expression of Toll-like receptor 7, an intracellular RNA-sensing receptor, expressed in B cells can drive certain types of B cells to become activated and to produce pathogenic autoantibodies. While genetic studies have supported a link between polymorphisms in the TLR7 gene in humans and SLE susceptibility, our study provides new insights into how human B cell might be affected by dysregulation in TLR7. We are using advanced approaches, such as multi-parameter phenotyping, BCR-sequencing and auto-antibody arrays to gain new knowledge about the origin of pathogenic B cells in SLE. B cell profiling, combined with other diagnostic markers, can be very useful to monitor disease activity, predict disease flares and ultimately, can help choosing the best treatment options for patients.

Dr. Giltiay has been a Research Assistant Professor with the Division since 2014. Her recent publications appear in the Journal of Experimental Medicine, Journal of Immunology, and Arthritis Research and Therapy.

FACULTY PROMOTIONS & AWARDS

Congratulations to our recent faculty promotions: J. Chad Byrd, MD, PhD – Clinical Assistant and Professor Eric Sasso, MD- Affiliate Professor.

We congratulate Drs. Gregory Gardner, Julie Carkin, Philip Mease, and Philip Moberg for being listed as Top Doctors in Seattle Met for 2016. We thank them for their continuous efforts in providing outstanding patient care.

Dr. Grant Hughes was nominated for the Department of Medicine Mentoring Award and the Bruce C. Gilliland Award for Excellence in Teaching of Residents & Fellows.

ACR ABSTRACTS & PRESENTATIONS

The Division of Rheumatology has over 16 abstracts accepted for the American College of Rheumatology 2016 Annual Meeting. This year’s annual meeting took place from November 11th-16th in Washington D.C.

Plenary Sessions:

Novel Anti-malarial drug derivative inhibited type I Interferon production and autoimmun inflammation through inhibition of cGAS-STING pathway in Trex1-/- mouse

Oral Presentations:

Perioperative Use of Synthetic Disease-Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs or Tumor Necrosis Factor α Inhibitors Does Not Associate with Increased Rates of Post-Operative Infections

Immune complex-mediated TLR8 activation shifts neutrophils from phagocytosis to NETosis through furin-dependent shedding of FcgRIIA

Poster Sessions:

- Improving Pneumococcal Vaccination Rates for Immunosuppressed Patients in an Academic Rheumatology Clinic
- Discrepancy in Reported and Actual Rates of Counseling on Teratogenicity and the Need for Contraception When Initiating Mycophenolate in Women of Childbearing Age
- Frailty Is Associated with Decreased Physical Function in Adults with Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Expansion of Transitional B Cells in SLE Patients Correlates with Increased Toll-like Receptor 7 Expression
- Low plasma concentrations of Apolipoprotein M correlate to disease activity and endothelial dysfunction in SLE
- Immunologic, Clinical and Demographic Correlates in 51 Cocaine Users with Serum Anti-neutrophil Cytoplasmic Antibodies
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- Correlates of Spontaneous Cytokine Production in Individuals Undergoing Interferon-Gamma Release Assay Testing
- Cell-Mediated Neutrophil Lysis-a Mechanism Promoting Hypercitrullination in Rheumatoid Arthritis?
- Dissecting the Role of Single Complement Deficiencies in a Novel Model for Apoptotic Cell-Induced Lupus
You can support programs and initiatives in the Division of Rheumatology. We have established four Professorships and eight endowments through generous donations. In addition, several gift funds target specific programs such as the Rheumatology Fellowship Fund, the Rheumatology Discretionary Fund, and the Rheumatology Research Fund for Junior Faculty.

Send Checks to:
Division of Rheumatology, Campus Box 356428,
1959 NE Pacific St, Seattle, WA 98195

To learn more about these opportunities for giving, please visit: http://depts.washington.edu/rheum

**DIVISION GRANTS**

**Dr. Keith Elkon** and **Dr. Bobby Han** were selected to join the Lupus Clinical Investigators Network (LuCIN)- a North America based clinical trials network funded by the Alliance for Lupus Research (ALR) and the Lupus Research Institute (LRI) for the purpose of conducting safe, rapid and coordinated evaluation of new treatments for lupus. LuCIN includes SB of the preeminent academic research centers in the United States and Canada.

**Dr. Keith Elkon** received a grant from Pfizer to support a two year research fellowship in his lab for the project, “The Clinical Significance of Cyclic GMP-AMP in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus”.

**Dr. Jenna Thomason** has been awarded a grant from the UW Department of Medicine internal pilot program. She will be using the funds to support aggregating data to answer her current research question; does using the high salt avidity double stranded DNA ELISA activity of lupus? She has also been selected as this year’s Arthritis Foundation Fellow. This funding is to be used solely for the purposes of supporting the fellow’s training. As the AF Fellow, Dr. Thomason will represent our Division at several AF sponsored events throughout the United States and Canada.

**NIH T32 Training Grant** through a competitive review process the following trainees were selected for funding under the Rheumatology Training Grant for the 2016-2017 academic year:

- **Holly Akilesh**, PhD- Postdoctoral Fellow working in Dr. Jane Buckner’s lab.
- **Elizabeth Dam**, PhD- Postdoctoral Fellow working in Dr. Jessica Hamerman’s lab.
- **Emily Harris**- Predoctoral Short Term Summer Research program working in Dr. Bernard Ng’s lab.
- **Judy Jiao**, MD-ACGME Fellow working in Dr. Christian Lood’s lab.
- **SuFey Ong**, PhD- Postdoctoral Fellow working in Dr. Steven Ziegler’s lab.
- **Hasib Yousufzai**- Predoctoral Short Term Summer Research program working in Dr. Christian Lood’s lab.

**NEW RHEUMATOLOGY FELLOWS**

**Dr. Percy Balderia** completed medical school at the University of the Philippines Manila School of Medicine. He completed his residency at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philidelphia, PA.

**Dr. Meredith Barnes** completed medical school at Emory University School of Medicine. She completed her residency at the University of Washington, Seattle WA.

**Dr. Andrew Vasoncellos** completed Medical School at Ross University School of Medicine. He completed his residency at the New York Methodist Hospital & Weill Cornell Medical College in Brooklyn, NY.

**DIVISION PUBLICATIONS**


