Meet the First Authors

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T3+Dex Generates Functional T-Tubules in hiPSC-CM (p 1323)

Shan Parikh is an aspiring physician-scientist training under Dr Bjorn Knollmann at the Vanderbilt Center for Arrhythmia Research and Therapeutics (VanCART). Prior to beginning his MD/PhD, Shan completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Connecticut, where he studied Physiology and Neurobiology. His interest in studying heart disease originated while working at Temple University School of Medicine, where he joined the laboratory of Dr Thomas Force to explore in vivo models of heart failure. He is fascinated by the potential of pluripotent stem cell-derived cardiomyocytes for repair of the failing heart and is focused on enhancing his understanding of their biology and developing expertise for their use in disease modeling. After completing his MD/PhD, Shan intends to pursue a clinical and research career devoted to the investigation and treatment of heart disease. While at home, Shan enjoys riding his bike, hiking, spending time with his family, and filling his home with plants.

XBP1u Maintains VSMC Homeostasis (p 1331)

Guizhen Zhao is a PhD candidate in an 8-year Bachelor–PhD program in Physiology and Pathophysiology at Peking University in Beijing, China. She earned a BS in Basic Medicine in 2014, and is currently conducting her PhD research in Dr Wei Kong’s lab. Her research interest focuses on the phenotypic transition of vascular smooth muscle cells at the onset of aortic aneurysms. During her leisure time, she enjoys reading, sports, and traveling. Her favorite motto is, “Never despair, but if you do, work on in despair.”

Cellular Basis of Cardiocutaneous Syndromes (p 1346)

Dr Jennifer Karmouch is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. She earned a BS in Biochemistry from the University of Ottawa, Canada. Prior to joining Dr Ali J. Marian’s laboratory, an opportunity to combine an interest in international scientific collaboration along with her love of Paris Fashion week, compelled Jennifer to complete a PhD in Molecular Genetics at Paris Descartes University in Paris, France. Jennifer’s love of challenges allowed her to switch topics from the neuromuscular junction to the heart, where she has been intrigued by the cellular basis of cardiac dysfunction in patients with arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy. With the support of an excellent mentor and interdisciplinary collaborations, Dr Karmouch has received multiple awards for her work, including the Fondation Leducq Young Investigators Award in 2016 and Best Abstract Award at the CVRI symposium in 2017, all while taking care of her newborn son. Just after Jennifer received a provisional acceptance letter from Circulation Research, Hurricane Harvey flooded her new home. However, she worked day and night on a canoe using a typewriter and candlelight to complete the requested experiments.
Myeloid-Mediated Cerebrovascular Disease and Stroke (p 1360)

Dr Christine Hollander earned her PhD in Genetics from the George Washington University, and did her doctoral research with Dr Albert Fornace at the National Institutes of Health. She is currently a member of Dr Li Yang’s lab at the National Cancer Institute. Christine’s expertise is in using mouse models to answer fundamental questions concerning cancer, most recently focusing on the role of inflammation in metastasis. Her detour into cardiovascular research began with her discovery of spontaneous stroke in a mouse model used to study metastatic progression of mammary cancer. She believes that attention to detail is the most important aspect of being a good scientist. Outside of the lab, Christine enjoys spending time with family, exercising, and anything outdoors.

Cardiac Pyruvate Oxidation in Late Pregnancy (p 1370)

Dr Laura X. Liu is currently a scientist in the Department of Discovery Biology at the biotech company Cytokinetics. She earned her BA at the University of Colorado in Biochemistry and Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology (MCDB). She completed her PhD in the laboratory of Dr Zoltan Arany at Harvard University, where she studied cardiac metabolism during exercise and pregnancy. Subsequently, she worked in Dr Anthony Rosenzweig’s laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital, investigating post-translational modifications that occur in the heart in response to exercise. She is driven by discovering new therapeutics in the muscle biology field. Outside the laboratory, she enjoys hiking, running, and volunteering with various organizations, including the Prison Literature Project and CASA (CourtAppointed Special Advocate) of San Mateo.

Proarrhythmic Loss of Junctional Coupling in HF (p 1379)

Dr Di Lang earned his BS and MS degrees in Biomedical Engineering from Zhejiang University in China in 2005 and 2008 and a PhD in Biomedical Engineering from Washington University in St. Louis in 2013. Subsequently, he moved to the University of California Davis for postdoctoral training with Dr Donald Bers and now works as a Research Associate at the University of Wisconsin Madison. His research focuses on the mechanisms of heart rhythm disorders at multiple levels, from intracellular signaling and protein interaction to electrophysiology of intact hearts. His work will serve as the basis for developing future strategies to treat cardiac arrhythmias. In his spare time, Di enjoys spending time with his wife and son.

Thyroid Function and Atherosclerotic Outcomes (p 1392)

Dr Arjola Bano earned a medical degree in 2010 from the University of Tirana, Albania, followed by 4 years of training in Internal Medicine. As part of her residency in Internal Medicine, she studied Endocrinology at the University Hospital Center of Bicetre, Paris, France. In August 2014, she moved to Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, Netherlands, where she pursued a PhD in Clinical Epidemiology and Internal Medicine, working with Dr Robin Peeters. She has performed some epidemiological research, using data from the Rotterdam Study, a large prospective population-based cohort study. Her research is focused on the role of thyroid function on cardiometabolic health. In the future, she hopes to combine research and clinical practice. Arjola loves contemporary art and jazz music.
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