



2022 Summer Newsletter

Volume 27, Issue 3

Table of Contents

- I. [Editor's Note](#)
- II. [President's Letter](#)
- III. [SPP History](#)
- IV. [Institution Highlight](#)
- V. [Fall Meeting Information](#)
- VI. [Important Items](#)
- VII. [Committee Reports](#)
- VIII. [Upcoming Meetings of Interest](#)
- IX. [Organization](#)

Editor's Note

It's another hot summer here in Little Rock, but your editor is managing to beat the heat with air conditioning and a swimming pool. It is my hope that all of you are also surviving it. Similarly, COVID-19 has once again reared its ugly head with new variants and another surge, so be careful out there!

I am saddened to report the passing of one of our institutions in pediatric pathology, **Enid Gilbert-Barness**, who died peacefully on April 28, 2022. Enid was a pillar of our profession, serving as SPP President in 1986. Besides her many other accomplishments, she took over the reins of editing Edith Potter's *Pathology of the Fetus and the Newborn*, producing her first edition, "*Potter's Pathology of the Fetus, Newborn, and Child*" in 1997. I was assigned the task of reviewing this text for *American Journal of Clinical Pathology*, which was most fortunate because at the time I was studying for the Pediatric Pathology board exams. Her book introduced me to a new academic world, the study of fetal and infantile development and disease, and I became a convert. I had the pleasure of getting to know her personally afterwards, and she was always a kind, soft-spoken, and gentle soul in those encounters, even hosting me for dinner after I completed the board exam in Tampa. Later while SPP President, I was asked by an anonymous donor to establish an Enid Gilbert-Barness Prize to recognize annually the impact of an outstanding pediatric pathology paper, and with the help of the Awards Committee, that award continues to honor her name. Enid will truly be missed.

If you wish to write a memorial for Enid, see <https://www.legacy.com/enid-gilbertbarness>. A memorial service can be found at <http://youtube.com/enid-gilbert/>. Thanks are due to **Jeff Goldstein** for sharing this information.

Vijay Joshi has notified me that he and **Prashant Jani** have established a website for his CME Course entitled “Essentials of Pediatric Pathology”. It is available free of charge to anyone interesting in learning pediatric pathology. This website may have particular utility for places where pediatric pathology training is not readily available. It is available at: <https://iwilljoin.today/PediatricPathology>.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming SPP meeting, to be held in Rochester on October 6-9. As per our president **Laura Finn**'s message below, a lot of hard work has gone into this meeting, our first in-person one for over two years now. I would also like to thank the Committees for their hard work, as seen in the reports listed below.



David Parham, MD
Newsletter Editor

President's Letter

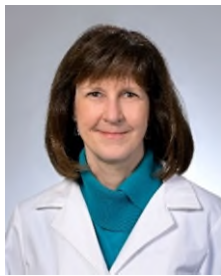
Dear SPP Members,

As heat waves are breaking records world-wide this summer, I'm focusing on autumn in NY. The 2022 Fall Meeting in Rochester, NY (October 6 – 9) will be the first ever hybrid offering by the SPP. The Steering Committee is working hard to finalize the events that will guarantee a wonderful in-person experience, including a chartered Tour Boat Cruise on the historic Eric Canal, a banquet at the George Eastman Museum, a National Historic Landmark, and the return of the Poster-Blitz. Moreover, the entire scientific program featuring a fabulous line-up of speakers will be live-streamed, allowing virtual participation for those unable to travel.

The view from the SPP Oval office is spectacular. I've been privileged to see the dedicated and creative work that our members are undertaking such as updated placental handling guidelines from the Perinatal Committee, the creation of a LinkedIn profile and SPP Facebook group by the Informatic & Communication Committee, the implementation of a Membership Benefit Packet by the Membership Committee, the coordinated development of enhanced awards by the Finance and Research & Awards Committees and the re-envisioning of workshops by the Workshop Subcommittee, among others. These excellent efforts will help to increase the SPP's exposure and to address the recommendations from our membership. The executive committee is working to finalize the comprehensive SPP Policies & Procedure Manual, a compilation of committee expectations and timelines as well as standard operations of the Society. With the help of AOE staff, this decades-old endeavor may finally become a 'living' document, readily available for reference.

I would like to say 'Thank-You' to all committee members for your support of the SPP and to all Society members for your steadfastness towards our mission and for avowing the notion that the “new normal” will continue to improve.

And here's the first bit of proof – I look forward to seeing everyone in Rochester!



Laura Finn, MD
SPP President

SPP History – 25 Years Ago

SPP President **James Dimmick** bemoaned the pressures of medical laboratory restructuring, which was affecting pathologists in both Canada and the United States. His own department had reorganized from 10 programs into 5, and regional health care initiatives were continuing to favor integration with other academic hospital laboratories. A perceived need to reduce reduplication drove behind these efforts, which left less time for supporting the unique clinical and research mandates of each individual group. Dr. Dimmick invited those involved in such efforts to discuss them informally at the upcoming Fall meeting, preferably at the bar!

Institution Highlight

Conversation with Dr. Angshumoy Roy, Director, Cancer Genomics, Texas Children's Hospital
David Parham, Editor, SPP Newsletter
August 2, 2022

*Ed. Note: As part of an ongoing series of conversations about what's happening in different pediatric hospital pathology departments and divisions across the country, I contacted **Dr. Angshumoy Roy**, who is Director of Cancer Genomics at Texas Children's Hospital for the past seven years and Associate Professor at Baylor College of Medicine. If you would like to have someone in your division interviewed, please contact me at dparhamlr@aol.com.*

Hello, Dr. Roy, and thanks for allowing me to interview you. Why don't we begin by talking about what's been going on with cancer genomic testing at Texas Children's Hospital (TCH) in general?

Thanks for the opportunity, Dr. Parham! The Cancer Genomics laboratory at Texas Children's Hospital (TCH) is within the Division of Genomic Medicine in the Department of Pathology. We have been offering clinical genetic laboratory services for tumor testing for a number of years, including DNA and RNA-based profiling of tumors. We have witnessed an expansion of our services both in response to request by clinicians for tumor genomic profiling as well as diagnostic testing requests from our pathology colleagues within the Anatomic Pathology (AP) Division with whom we collaborate to identify molecular testing needs and services.

As I recall, your work in BCOR-related tumors first brought me in contact with you several years ago. How did that come about?

We worked on BCOR in 2014-5 with my colleague Dr. Will Parsons in Oncology. The initial work was based on a serendipitous discovery made during a study involving large scale clinical genomics for childhood cancer patients. We tested two clear cell sarcomas of the kidney (CCSK), and analytical methods revealed internal tandem duplications of the BCOR gene. This led us to test all of the material in our files and to collaborate with others having similar material. We found that this alteration is a key feature of most CCSK, and it led to upregulation of genes similar to those affected in BCOR:CCNB3 fusion tumors. We submitted our manuscript to Nature Genetics, only to find that a group of researchers from the National Research Institute in Japan had submitted similar findings in a manuscript pending publication. However, we were able to publish our findings in a related journal, Nature Communications, in 2015.

This led later to discovery of similar *BCOR* ITD alterations in a low grade pediatric soft tissue sarcoma, the primitive myoid mesenchymal tumors of infancy, by Cristina Antonescu and a large number of collaborators at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Although these tumors have similar histological and genetic features, I was surprised because of the differing clinical behavior. These ITDs have now also been reported in a subset of CNS tumors.

I understand that your recent work has been to offer clinical testing for overgrowth syndromes and somatic mosaicism. Could you please tell us something about that?

About three to four years ago, our Vascular Anomalies Center asked us to provide clinical testing for both syndromic and non-syndromic patients with overgrowth and isolated vascular anomalies that are now known to be caused by somatic mosaic mutations. Systemic targeted therapy has become available to prevent progression of these disfiguring diseases, and so the ability to recognize atypical or early cases has become critical to patient management. Insurance has covered the cost of this testing, making it attractive from an administrative standpoint.

Our current next-generation sequencing (NGS) panel covers point mutations in 29 genes. Because these are somatic mosaic mutations, it is crucial to obtain tissue rather than blood or saliva for DNA testing. We offer testing from both FFPE and fresh-frozen tissue but prefer the former as we can rely on tissue histopathological examination performed by our AP colleagues. Interestingly, we find it difficult to predict what proportion of the mutation may be seen in any given tissue, as abnormal tissue may be negative and *vice versa*. Our clinical experience with somatic mosaic testing was described in an SPP meeting abstract in 2021, and I should note that many of these mutations were originally described by the laboratory of **Kyle Kurek**, currently at the University of Calgary.

What challenges have you faced in converting research testing to laboratory testing?

Developing high-complexity Laboratory Developed Testing (LDT) for clinical genomics requires thorough planning, resource allocation, and rigorous validation. Fortunately, we have an excellent team of laboratory technologists and bioinformaticians, and supervision provided by highly experienced colleagues, Drs. Kevin Fisher and **Lola Lopez-Terrada**, to make this less daunting.

For one thing, the College of American Pathologists requires external proficiency testing as part of their accreditation standards. This has been a particular challenge, since there are no standards available for external proficiency testing in somatic mosaicism. We have met this requirement by using blinded repeats as part of our testing, and if a network of labs would be willing to share samples, that would be another possible avenue.

Development of in-house testing instead of using a proprietary supplier of reagents has also offered advantages and well as challenges. On the one hand, we are nimble about adding of new testing as the literature develops, rather than waiting for the next proprietary version. However, the Federal Drug Administration has become increasingly interested in the regulation of Laboratory Developed Testing (LDT), and new legislation may add another layer of oversight to future test development.

What can you tell me about your other laboratory testing?

For one thing, we have been offering a 57 gene test for germline mutations causing susceptibility to hereditary cancer. Initially, blood was the primary sample, but since COVID-19, saliva testing has become quite common. An exception is with leukemia patients, with whom we use skin biopsies in order to avoid contamination by tumor cells. While chromosomal microarrays are best for revealing losses, gains, and loss of heterozygosity, the 57-gene NGS panel is primarily for identifying germline point mutations and small insertions/deletions. However, with newer analytical methods, these NGS tests can also detect copy number alterations that are above a certain size.

Not infrequently, our germline hereditary cancer test orders are a result of a finding in the tumor report that is suggestive of a germline mutation, as for tumor-only testing there is no way to definitively distinguish between tumor and constitutional origin of a mutation.

If a germline mutation is found in the proband, then we intend to offer free testing for the family, including parents and siblings. Other centers offer similar services, so we had to ask our administration to agree to a similar arrangement in order to avert loss of testing, but the costs are generally covered overall. We and others have found that other family members are very receptive to testing, and the Cancer Genetics clinic in the Hospital also offers cancer surveillance in order to detect early-stage lesions.

What effect has the COVID epidemic had on your testing?

Two years ago, the effects of the pandemic made routine testing difficult. For one thing, there was tremendous need for viral testing in Microbiology, so we pitched in with personnel, reagents, and equipment, leaving us short-staffed for tumor testing. However, we also saw a big drop in the volume of samples coming, as surgical procedures decreased in volume, and so the impact was somewhat mitigated for a short period of time. The situation has been complicated with longer-term issues including shortages in reagents and plastics, creating a supply chain problem that persists to this day. These problems have largely been alleviated more recently, but we have learned to carefully plan our reagent and material purchases and to make them much earlier than before COVID.

Thanks for the interview, Angshumoy, and I wish you well.

Once again, thank you for highlighting us in the newsletter!



Angshumoy Roy, MD, PhD
Director, Cancer Genomics
Texas Children's Hospital

Fall Meeting Information

- The 2022 Fall Meeting will be held on October 6-October 9, 2022, at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Committee meetings will be held on October 6, 2022.
- [Click here](#) to view the preliminary schedule.
- More information on the 2022 Fall Meeting is available at [this link](#).

Important Items



Reminders

- [REGISTER](#) for the Fall Meeting
 - October 6-9, 2022 – University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, NY
 - Committee meetings will be held on October 6th.
- Slide Survey 2022
 - Don't forget to [register](#) for the 2022 Slide Survey online activity! Case Set 1 is available now. Case set 2 is expected to be released in August 2022. Case Set 3 will be released in the fall.

Committee Reports



Education Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- The Education Committee is excited about upcoming changes to the Fall and Spring annual meetings. The 2022 Fall Annual Meeting is being planned as a hybrid event. The 2023 Spring Annual Meeting will be condensed, with workshops set to occur at a different time. Offering workshops as separate, standalone activities will allow the SPP to highlight expertise within our membership and attract a wider audience. More information is forthcoming as the Education Committee and Executive Committee develop future plans.
- Plans for the 2022 Fall Annual Meeting are being finalized. The Perinatal Slide Session Cases are being chosen and Abstracts are being selected.

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- The Education Committee is working to finalize the 2022 Spring Annual Meeting Outcomes Report.
- Join us for the 2022 Fall Annual Meeting in Rochester, NY from October 6th- October 9th.



Lauren Parsons, MD
Chair, Education Committee

Fellowship Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- Fellowship Committee is in the process of soliciting for new fellows to join the SPP, with the start of 2022/2023 fellowships.
- Fellowship Committee is underway with the call for Junior member committee service applications.
- The Fellowship Committee has also facilitated the update request with Program Directors for the website and to update the current list of fellows for 2022/2023.
- A PP Fellow Survey is under development and will be shared with the Fellowship Committee once completed. The goal will be to help everyone in the society understand trends to help with future improvement efforts.

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- The Fellowship Committee will slate interested Junior SPP members on SPP Committees in late-July/early-August.
- The Committee will be liaising with the I&C Committee to discuss Slide Survey advertisement opportunities.
- The Committee would also like to pursue the development of a 1-hour lecture to comprehensively talk about the pediatric pathology fellowship and SPP.



Amer Heider, MD
Chair, Fellowship Committee

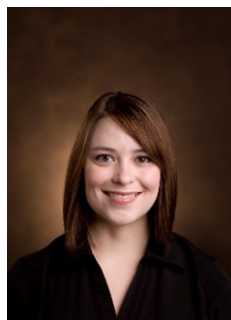
Finance Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- The Finance Committee recently met with the society's Merrill Lynch representative to discuss the SPP financial portfolio. The portfolio is currently reacting to what is occurring in the economy with inflation and rising rates; however, the portfolio was constructed in a way that plans for volatility and it is well diversified. At this time, the Society will weather the storm and look at making changes in the future as needed. The SPP financial portfolio continues to demonstrate significant growth.
- The Spring 2022 Meeting budget has been reconciled. The meeting was well attended and performed well financially.
- The committee finalized their Committee Guidelines and Procedures Manual.
- Finance leadership has continued to focus efforts on creating systems for monitoring funds and reporting.

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- The Finance Committee has been working in conjunction with the SPP leadership and the Research & Awards Committee to determine the best way to spend the additional award funding that was approved at the Spring 2022 Board of Directors meeting.
 - Young Investigators Award increased by \$10,000
 - New international award for \$10,000
 - New open grant for \$35,000
- The committee is looking forward to a hybrid meeting format for the Fall 2022 Meeting.



Jennifer Black, MD
Chair, Finance Committee

Membership Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- The April Membership Committee review of applications and status transition requests resulted in the following:
 - New Emeritus Members: 1
 - New Regular Members: 7
 - Junior to Regular Transitions: 1

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- Retention Efforts:
 - Work to include instructions on joining a committee and information regarding renewal in upcoming newsletters
 - Help develop a "Membership Highlight" article for newsletters
- The last membership application and transition request review was completed, July 2022. The next review will occur in October 2022.

- The Membership Committee will identify attendee ribbons to order for the next in-person meeting, Fall 2022. We hope these ribbons will help us all provide a warm welcome for our new and junior members!
- The Membership Committee will be investigating a “Mentor Program”, liaising with the I&C and R&A Committees to discuss options. The aim is to develop a thoughtful plan to provide an opportunity for mentor/mentee interaction.



Erin Rudzinski, MD
Chair, Membership Committee

Publications Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- The *PDP* transitioned to a fully virtual Journal as of January 2022
 - The first issue was the *Perspectives* issue and was published as a Nxtbook, the March/April, May/June and July/August issues are available on-line as Nxtbooks
 - The SPP is sending blast notifications to paying SPP members/subscribers upon the launch of each issue. Check your In-Box for “PDP Release Notifications”
 - The SPP has also sent email instructions on how sign up for *PDP* notifications via the *PDP* website
- SAGE has notified the SPP that the impact factor for the *PDP* is 2.266
 - This is the highest impact factor ever for *PDP*

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- The Publications Committee will be providing questions for the bi-annual SPP membership survey
- In conjunction with the I&C Committee, the Publications Committee has reviewed the proposal for Dr. Mike Arnold’s podcast
- The goals of the *PDP* will continue to be pursued, including maintaining publishing standards, expanding journal discoverability, lower the review turnaround time and maintain paper flow, increase the impact factor, and expand diversification of the editorial board



Bruce Pawel, MD
Chair, Publications Committee

Informatics & Communication Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- The I&C Committee is in the process of creating a Facebook page for the SPP.

- The page will allow for current members to connect (outside of annual meetings), and to bring other groups of pathologists to the SPP.
- The Twitter account has 2,460 followers (155 new since October 2021) and continues to maintain an active social media presence.
- Dr. Sonja Chen, Archives Director, is leading a project to review and organize SPP archives along with several I&C members.
- The podcast has been approved by the Executive Committee, and the committee plans to launch the first episode by the fall.

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- The I&C Committee is working with the Publications Committee to create a podcast that will be centered around the *PDP* and highlight different aspects of the SPP.
- The committee is also working on several other initiatives to increase our social media presence and advertise the SPP to a broader audience.
- The committee is developing a library of laboratory information system templates.



Michael Arnold, MD, PhD
Chair, Informatics & Communication Committee

Research & Awards Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- Following the Spring 2022 meeting, the Research & Awards committee had the following membership updates:
 - Dr. Jefferson Terry rolled off as the Chair of the committee, replaced by Dr. Benjamin Wilkins, MD, PhD.
 - Dr. Karen Chisholm replaced Dr. Wilkins as the Abstract Director
 - Dr. Selene Koo replaced Dr. Chisholm as the Awards Director.
 - Dr. Jonathan Bush and Dr. Raffaella Morotti completed their terms on the committee
 - Dr. Terry Morgan and Dr. Michael Covinsky requested to remain on the committee for an additional three-years.
 - New members to the committee are:
 - Dr. Claudia Salgado
 - Dr. Dina El Demellawy
 - Dr. Hao Wu
- A. James McAdams Short-Term Study Stipend is awarded to either a pediatric pathologist to offset expenses of gaining expertise in a specialized area of pediatric pathology that is not available at their home institution, or to a pathology resident with interest in pediatric pathology who is at an institution without an accredited pediatric pathology fellowship program to rotate at a children's hospital with a strong pediatric pathology experience.
 - Awarded to Isabel Colmenero, MD, Consultant Pediatric Pathologist at Birmingham Children's Hospital, UK, who will be studying with Dr. Reyes-Mugica at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- The 2022 Fall Meeting Abstract Submission Site launched July 5, 2022. Deadline for submission: August 1, 2022.



Benjamin Wilkins, MD, PhD
Chair, Research & Awards Committee

Practice Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- The Practice Committee met in June to touch base on projects that are in the works, and to brainstorm new projects.

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Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- Dr. Sanda Alexandrescu, Dr. Veena Rajaram, and Dr. Bonnie Cole will be collaborating to gain traction on a Brain Tumor Molecular Testing Guidelines Project. The goal will be to develop guidelines regarding tissue utilization and the scope of molecular testing for pediatric brain tumors.
- Dr. Alanna Church has drafted a survey titled *Evaluate the Use of Molecular Assays by Pathologists Caring for Children with Solid Tumors*. The survey will help to identify the baseline practice as well as barriers and inequalities in testing. The Committee is currently in the process of reviewing the survey and preparing feedback for Dr. Church.
- The Committee is also interested in addressing the College of American Pathologists (CAP) requirements for cytopathology data collection and reporting and how they apply to pediatric pathology practice. Dr Portia Kreiger is working on an email communication that will be forwarded to CAP representatives by Dr. Lopez-Terrada for review.



Dolores Lopez-Terrada, M.D., Ph.D.
Chair, Practice Committee

Perinatal Committee

Highlights from Last Quarter

- The Curbside Perinatal Consultation sessions continue to be well received with lots of enthusiasm. The sessions are an avenue to help pathologists solve difficult and unique perinatal cases. Live interactions and collaborations provide those that join with an opportunity to build their confidence. The sessions are open to anyone.
- The committee continues to address relevant issues such as, placentophagy and perinatal pathology reporting.

Announcements and Upcoming Initiatives

- 2022 Fall Annual Meeting – Perinatal Committee Meeting:
 - The recent Supreme Court decision of Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization affects how products of conception and fetal demise pathology reports may be perceived in light of abortion restrictions in many states. At its next meeting during the 2022 Fall Annual Meeting, the Perinatal Committee will be discussing the potential significance of semantics as well as the pathologist's role in providing evidence of a live birth. All are welcome to join in the discussion. The discussion will be led by Dr. Amy McKenney.
- Upcoming Perinatal Symposia
 - 2022: Rochester: 10/5/2022 – 10/9/2022
 - Perinatal: Evaluation of Birth Defects Due to Teratogenic versus Genetic Effects in Perinatal Pathology
 - 2023: Portland: 10/3/2023 – 10/8/2023
 - Perinatal: New Insights into the Early Detection and Long-term Health Consequences of Pregnancy Complications



Eumenia Castro, MD, PhD
Chair, Perinatal Committee

Upcoming Meetings of Interest

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Meeting Dates and Location</i>
Paediatric Pathology Society 2022 Meeting	September 8-9, 2022 – <i>Virtual</i>
SPP Fall 2022 Meeting	October 6-9, 2022 – <i>University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, NY</i>
USCAP Annual Meeting	March 11-16, 2023 – <i>New Orleans Convention Center and Hilton New Orleans Riverside – New Orleans, LA</i>
American Association of Neuropathologists 99 th Annual Meeting	June 8-11, 2023 – <i>The Regency Monterey – Monterey, CA</i>

SPP Organization

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