Building a Healthier Future for All
The Department of Surgery
By the Numbers*

14 Clinical Divisions/Sections
44 Clinical Faculty (BMC)
1 ACGME-Accredited Surgical Residency
37 Interns and Residents
2 ACGME-Accredited Surgical Fellowships
4 Fellows
5 CPME-Accredited Podiatric Residency Residents
7,393 Operations
71,315 Outpatient Visits
36,315 Outpatient Visits
7,393

By the Numbers*
Highlights
Alumni Profile
Faculty
Introduction
Support Surgery
Research
Clinical Divisions/Sections
Clinical Faculty (BMC)
Fellows
ACGME-Accredited Surgical Residency
ACGME-Accredited Surgical Fellowships
1
2
3
4
2
1
1
5
3
4

* July 1, 2017 — June 30, 2018

Message from the Chair

It has been a little over a year since I took the honor of becoming Chair of the Department of Surgery. When my appointment became public, some of my fellow new chairs around the nation privately confided to me that my first year would be difficult, but advised me to persevere and persist and I would "get through it." To some eyes, the fact that I happen to be female and nonwhite would make it even more challenging to lead an important Department of Surgery at a historically significant hospital located in a tradition-rich city and region. Prepared as I was to meet the challenge, I was in for a very pleasant surprise. Since day one, colleagues throughout BUSM and BMC, especially my fellow surgeons, have been incredibly welcoming and supportive. This has enabled me — joined by a remarkably talented, dedicated, and hardworking team of faculty, trainees, and staff — to focus our collective efforts on what matters most: building a healthier future for all, which is the theme of this year’s annual report. As you will discover on the following pages, we are making considerable progress toward that goal.

I understand better now why I did not face the hurdles my well-meaning colleagues suggested I might. This is a very special place that, since its founding in 1837, has been defined by diversity. In fact, we were born this way. One of BUSM’s founding institutions, New England Female Medical College, was the first medical school in the country to train women as physicians, including, in 1864, Rebecca Lee Crumpler, the first black female physician. This is also where, in 1890, Charles Eastman became the first Native American physician.

Today, that legacy of diversity and inclusion lives on at BUSM/BMC and the Department of Surgery. Indeed, our department is widely considered a model of diversity — to quote Massachusetts Bay Colony governor John Winthrop, we are a "city on a hill," to be emulated. Our faculty, trainees, and staff hail from all regions of the nation and the globe, and from all walks of life, reflecting the wonderful diversity of the world in which we live and the patients we care for. I am very proud to be among them.

I hope you will enjoy reading our annual report, and encourage you to keep abreast of our activities throughout the year on Twitter (@BMCSurgery). If you have comments to share with me or would like to receive future communications about the department, please contact us at surgery@bu.edu.

Jennifer F. Tseng, MD, MPH
James Utley Professor and Chair of Surgery,
Boston University School of Medicine,
Surgeon-in-Chief, Boston Medical Center

Boston Medical Center

It has been a long, proud history with roots that extend back more than 150 years. In 1873, Boston University School of Medicine opened its doors, bringing the New England Female Medical College with the medical staff of the Massachusetts Homoeopathic Hospital. Dr. Israel T. Talbot was the first chairman of the Department of Surgery while also serving as the first dean of Boston University School of Medicine.

The modern history of the Department of Surgery at Boston University dates to 1946, when Dr. Reginald H. Smithwick was recruited from Massachusetts General Hospital to serve as Surgeon-in-Chief and Chairman of Surgery at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM). Dr. Smithwick served in those positions for nearly 20 years.

Among the surgeons who have led and contributed to the international stature of the Department of Surgery throughout the ensuing decades are Drs. Richard Egdahl, John Mannick, Lester Williams, Peter Madsen, Robert Hobson, Edward Spatz, James Becker, and Gerard Doherty. In July 2017, Jennifer F. Tseng, MD, MPH, was recruited as Chair and Utley Professor of Surgery at Boston University School of Medicine and Surgeon-in-Chief at Boston Medical Center.

The Department of Surgery comprises 14 divisions or sections and includes 44 full-time clinical faculty members at Boston Medical Center. A well-established relationship with Boston Children’s Hospital provides shared faculty in pediatric critical care and pediatric general surgery, as well as pediatric training for residents. The department also has 10 affiliated Boston University School of Medicine faculty members from Roger Williams Medical Center, the Veterans Administration (VA) Boston Healthcare System, and Cape Cod Hospital (Cape Cod Healthcare).

The Department of Surgery has had a unique partnership with the Department of Surgery at the VA Boston Healthcare System, a relationship that extends back to the 1950s. The departments of Surgery at both hospitals are well-integrated, collaborating not only on the training of medical students, residents, and fellows, but also on many research and clinical programs. Under the leadership of Kamal Itani, MD, Chief of Surgery, the VA Boston Healthcare System Department of Surgery is a valued partner of the Boston University School of Medicine/Boston Medical Center Department of Surgery.

The department also has close ties to the Department of Surgery at Roger Williams Medical Center, led by Chairman N. Joseph Esposito, MD, MS. Roger Williams Medical Center has a proud history of more than a century, and is the largest academic Comprehensive Cancer Center in Rhode Island.

Offering a full range of specialty and subspecialty services, Roger Williams Medical Center performs approximately 3,700 inpatient and outpatient surgical procedures annually, and is a major source of teaching and training for Boston University School of Medicine/Boston Medical Center.

This annual report provides an overview of some of the clinical programs, research, and educational initiatives of the previous year (July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018), and highlights some of the many accomplishments and activities of our faculty, trainees, and alumni. We invite you to visit our website and follow us on social media to keep abreast of our activities throughout the year.

Dr. Israel T. Talbot, the first chairman of the Department of Surgery.
Department Leadership

Jennifer F. Tseng, MD, MPH
James Utley Professor and Chair of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine
Surgeon-in-Chief, Boston Medical Center

David McAneny, MD
Vice Chair of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine
Chief Surgical Officer, Boston Medical Center

Cullen Carter, MD
Surgery Clerkship Director

Tracey Dechert, MD
Associate Chair, Faculty Development and Diversity

Alik Farber, MD
Associate Chair, Clinical Operations

Tony Godfrey, PhD
Associate Chair, Research

Donald Hess, MD
Associate Chair, Education Program Director, Surgery Residency

Division and Section Leadership

Peter Burke, MD
Chief, Section of Acute Care and Trauma Surgery

Catherine Chen, MD, MPH
Chief, Section of Pediatric Surgery

Alik Farber, MD
Chief, Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery

Geoffrey Habershaw, DPM
Chief, Division of Podiatric Surgery

Jason F. Hall, MD, MPH
Chief, Section of Colon and Rectal Surgery

Donald Hess, MD
Chief, Section of Minimally Invasive and Weight Loss Surgery

Karl Karlson, MD
Chief, Division of Cardiac Surgery

Virginia R. Little, MD
Chief, Division of Thoracic Surgery

David McAneny, MD
Chief, Section of General Surgery
Chief, Section of Surgical Endocrinology
Chief, Section of Surgical Oncology

Matthew Nuhn, MD
Chief, Division of Transplant Surgery

Robert Schulze, MD, MBA
Section Chief, Surgical Critical Care Clinical Associate Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Jaromir Slama, MD
Chief, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Faculty

Aaron Richman, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Sabrina E. Sanchez, MD, MPH
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Cardiac Surgery

Karl Karlson, MD
Division Chief
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Nikola Dobrilovic, MD, MBA
Associate Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Colon and Rectal Surgery

Jason F. Hall, MD, MPH
Section Chief
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Angela Kuhnen, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

George Kasotakis, MD, MPH
(through 8/2018)
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

* Recommended for
Minimally Invasive and Weight Loss Surgery
Donald Hess, MD
Section Chief
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Brian Carmine, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Cullen Carter, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Luise I. Pernar, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Pediatric Surgery
Catherine Chen, MD, MPH
Section Chief
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School

Konstantinos Papadakis, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School

Jason Smithers, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School

Jay Wilson, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
Jaromir Slama, MD
Division Chief
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Nilton Medina, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Smita Ramanadham, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Podiatric Surgery
Geoffrey Habershaw, DPM
Division Chief
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

David Negron, DPM, MBA
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Justin Ogbonna, DPM
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Hau Pham, DPM
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Wei Tseng, DPM
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Vitaliy Volansky, DPM
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Surgical Endocrinology
David McAneny, MD
Section Chief
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

F. Thurston Drake, MD, MPH
Lacicle N. Tauten Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Surgical Oncology
David McAneny, MD
Section Chief
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Michael R. Cassidy, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Maureen Kavanah, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Tevish Sachs, MD, MPH
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Jennifer F. Tseng, MD, MPH
James Ullery Professor and Chair of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Thoracic Surgery
Virginia R. Little, MD
Division Chief
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Kei Suzuki, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Transplant Surgery
Matthew Nuhn, MD
Division Chief
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Amitabh Gautam, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Marina Malikova, PhD, MSc,
MA, CCRA, RAC
Executive Director, Surgical Translation Research Operations and Compliance

Amy Rosen, PhD
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Pamela Rosenkrantz, RN,
BSN, MEd
Instructor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Sing Chau Ng, MS
Staff Biostatistician, Administrative Director, SÖAR

Emeritus
Robert Beazley, MD
Professor Emeritus of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Jonathan Woodson, MD
Professor Emeritus of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) BOSTON HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
General Surgery
Kamal Itani, MD
Chief of Surgery, Veterans Affairs Boston Healthcare System
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

P. Marco Fisichella, MD, MBA
Associate Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School

Jason S. Gold, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School

Research
Qi Chen, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor, Boston University School of Medicine

Hillary Mull, PhD
Research Assistant Professor, Boston University School of Medicine

Amy Rosen, PhD
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Jinghua Yang, PhD
Associate Professor, Boston University School of Medicine

Surgical Research
Tony Godfrey, PhD
Associate Chair of Research
Professor of Surgery and
Computational Biomedicine,
Boston University School of Medicine

Marina Malikova, PhD, MSc,
MA, CCRA, RAC
Executive Director, Surgical Translation Research Operations and Compliance

Amy Rosen, PhD
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Steven Katz, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Ponnandai Somasundar, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Ting Zhao, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Patrick B. O’Neal, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

James McPhee, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

N. Joseph Espat, MD, MS
Chairman, Department of Surgery,
Roger Williams Medical Center
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Vivian E. Sanchez, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Elizabeth Jackson, MD
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

William Brown, MD
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

Amitabh Gautam, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine

N. Joseph Espat, MD, MS
Chairman, Department of Surgery,
Roger Williams Medical Center
Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine
New Faculty

AARON REID, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery, Boston University School of Medicine
Acute Care and Trauma Surgery/Surgical Critical Care

A graduate of the BUS/BMC General Surgery Residency, Dr. Reid will join the Department of Surgery as a member of the faculty in October 2018. Dr. Reid graduated from the University of Colorado Boulder and received his medical degree from the University of California San Diego. After completing his general surgery residency in 2017, Dr. Reid did a fellowship in surgical critical care and trauma at the University of Colorado/Denver Health Medical Center. Dr. Reid’s main clinical interests are trauma and emergency general surgery. His primary research interests are surgical education, critical care ultrasound, and minimally invasive techniques in trauma.

ABDUL SAIED CALVINO, MD, Roger Williams Medical Center, was an invited speaker at the Rhode Island Department of Health 2018 Health Equity Summit last fall, where he addressed “Decreasing racial cancer care disparities through population-centered interventions.” In June, Dr. Calvino presented “Increasing cancer screenings: Closing the gap in health disparities” at a clinical forum organized by the American Cancer Society and the Rhode Island Department of Health. Dr. Calvino also gave oral presentations at the American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress and the Society of Surgical Oncology (SSO) annual meeting, as well as a poster presentation at the BU Health Equity Symposium (which received honorable mention) and the SSO.

TRACY DECHERT, MD, Acute Care and Trauma Surgery/Surgical Critical Care, was inducted into the Boston University Medical Group (BUMG) Clinical Excellence Society at the group’s first annual awards event. Dr. Dechert is chair of the BUMG Education Committee, which developed and implemented the awards program.

F. THURSTON DRAKE, MD, MPH, Surgical Endocrinology, had five peer-reviewed papers published or accepted for publication at one conference date. During the previous year, he and his research colleagues gave eight poster presentations and three podium presentations at major national meetings. These included a podium presentation at the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons (AAES) annual meeting with David McAlney, MD, and resident co-author Stephanie Talutis, MD, MS, which presented the first data from the Collaborative Endocrine Surgery Quality Improvement Project (CESQIP), a national quality improvement initiative of the AAES. Dr. Drake also had posters selected for presentation at meetings of the New England Surgical Society, the American College of Surgeons 2018 Congress, and the American Thyroid Association.

With Sabrina Sanchez, MD, MPH, Dr. Drake is co-principal investigator at BUS/BMC for the Comparing Outcomes of Drugs and Appendectomy (CODA) Trial (see page 28). Enrollment for this prospective, randomized trial with nearly 20 sites nationwide began at BMC in early 2018. In addition, Dr. Drake’s team was awarded a two-year, BMC Patient Safety Award to implement and evaluate a pilot project for preoperative communication and evaluation of incidental adrenal gland findings with the goal of improving the management of a broad spectrum of incidental findings. During the previous year, Dr. Drake was co-author (with Quan-Yang Duh, MD, of the University of California San Francisco) of a chapter on adrenal surgery in “Comprehensive General Surgical Oncology” (Decker). He was also accepted as a full member of the AANS, and was appointed to the Fellowship Committee, where he will spearhead a research project on the burdens of fellowship interviews for applicants, the findings of which are expected to be presented at the 2019 AANS annual meeting. In addition, Dr. Drake will be admitted as a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons this fall (2018).

CULLEN CARTER, MD, Minimally Invasive and Weight Loss Surgery and Surgery Clerkship Director, was a recipient of a 2018 Educator of the Year Award in Clinical Sciences at BMC, presented by the Surgical Committee on Faculty Affairs of BUM School of Medicine in May. The awards, which are presented annually, recognize BUM School of Medicine educators who provide excellence in teaching and mentoring in the areas of pre-clinical sciences, clinical sciences, and graduate medical sciences.

N. JOSEPH ESPAT, MD, MS, Chair of Surgery at the University of Tennessee, presented at Grand Rounds at the University of Tennessee, Boston University, and the University of Maryland during the previous year. He also was the keynote speaker at the Mexican chapter of the International Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association (IHPBA) annual meeting in Cancun.

ALIK FARBER, MD, Chief of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, had numerous papers published, including one in the Clinical Practice section of the New England Journal of Medicine on an “Chronic Limb-threatening ischemia” and another in the Journal of Vascular Surgery entitled “The BEST-Cli Trial Has Crossed the Halfway Mark — and Promises to be Worth the Wait.” Dr. Farber reports that since September 2017, faculty in the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery had 27 papers published, in press, or accepted for publication in the following journals: New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of Vascular Surgery, Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery, Aesculapian Surgery, American Journal of Surgery, Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, and Advances in Surgery. Also during the previous year, Dr. Farber was inducted as a faculty member into Alpha Omega Alpha, the national medical honor society.

STEVEN KATZ, MD, Roger Williams Medical Center, presented at the American Association of Immunology and the annual meeting of the Society of Surgical Oncology during the previous year. Dr. Katz had papers published or accepted for publication in the following journals: Annals of Oncology, Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology, Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology, and the Journal of Surgical Oncology. Dr. Katz serves on several committees of the American Board of Surgery and is Associate Editor of Oncogene. In addition, he is the principal investigator of two clinical trials of CAR-T therapy for patients with metastatic liver cancer and myeloma.

ANGELA KUHNEN, MD, Colon and Rectal Surgery, was invited to design and moderate a new symposium at the 2018 American Society for Colon and Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS) national meeting entitled “Pathognomonic Partner? The Role of the Gut Microbiome in the Colorectal Surgical Patient.” Dr. Kuhnén was also a panel speaker in a symposium moderated by Colon and Rectal Surgery Chief Jason Hall, MD, MPH, on the “Difficulties Surrounding the Management of Diverticulitis.”

LUISE PERNAR, MD, Chief of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery and Weight Loss Surgery, was appointed Director of Surgical Education. In this new role, Dr. Pernar collaborates with department leadership, the Surgery Education Office, the Director of Surgical Simulation, BMC, BUSM, and the Boston University Medical Group to design and implement useful, innovative, and effective educational programs for faculty and trainees.

JOSEPH DR. KATZ, MD, Roger Williams Medical Center, presented at the American Association of Immunology and the annual meeting of the Society of Surgical Oncology during the previous year. Dr. Katz had papers published or accepted for publication in the following journals: Annals of Oncology, Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology, Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology, and the Journal of Surgical Oncology. Dr. Katz serves on several committees of the American Board of Surgery and is Associate Editor of Oncogene. In addition, he is the principal investigator of two clinical trials of CAR-T therapy for patients with metastatic liver cancer and myeloma.

DONALD HESS, MD, Chief of Minimally Invasive and Weight Loss Surgery, was named Associate Chair for Education in this role. Dr. Hess, who is also Program Director for the General Surgery Residency Program, is responsible for the administration of the residency program as well as other educational initiatives in the department and BMC.

Tejal Brahmbhatt, MD. Acute Care and Trauma Surgery/Surgical Critical Care, was inducted as a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons (FACS) in October 2017. During the previous year, Dr. Brahmbhatt gave or participated in more than 10 oral presentations at conferences throughout the U.S. and Europe, including at the American College of Surgeons, the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma, the Surgical Infection Society, the Radiological Society of North America, and the World Congress of Surgery. Dr. Brahmbhatt co-authored a chapter in the gold standard textbook for adult fractures, “Rockwood and Wilkins’ Fractures in Adults” 9th edition (Wolters Kluwer Health; in press), and had papers published or accepted for publication in the following peer-reviewed journals: Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery, American Journal of Emergency Medicine, and insights of Biomedical Research.

In addition, Dr. Brahmbhatt was named local arrangements chair for the 2019 annual national conference of the Society of Asian Academic Surgeons, and became a member of the Graduate Surgical Education Committee of the Association for Surgical Education and the Emergency General Surgery Committee of the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma. Dr. Brahmbhatt also is the site principal investigator of the multi-center studies: Prospective Observational Study of Temporary Vascular Shunts in Trauma, and Reticul Angiointegration: A Prospective Multi-institutional Study.

Boston University School of Medicine Promotions
JEFFREY SIRACUSE, MD, RPVI
Vascular and Endovascular Surgery Associate Professor of Surgery and Radiology

Dr. Pernar and resident Rumbidzai Nzara, MD, gave a poster presentation at the 2018 Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) annual meeting on complications after open ventral hernia repair stratified by BMI. Research conducted by Dr. Pernar and resident Alaina Geary, MD, resulted in two oral presentations at this year’s Association for Surgical Education (ASE) annual meeting, both on Resident-as-Teacher programs in general surgery training. In collaboration with Donald Hess, MD, Chief of Minimally Invasive and Weight Loss Surgery, Dr. Pernar also led a workshop at the ASE annual meeting on how to set up a Resident-as-Teacher program within a surgical residency. In addition, Dr. Pernar had a chapter published in “Shockf for the Sulphur of the Alimentary Tract,” 8th edition (Saunders Elsevier) and a chapter published in “Scientific American Medicine.”

MARINA MALIKOVA, PhD, MSc, MA, CCRA, RAC, Surgical Research, was appointed chair of the Clinical Trial Forecasting and Budgeting Symposium at the 9th Annual Clinical Operations Executives (OCPE) Summit in Florida, where she also gave two invited presentations. During the previous year, Dr. Malikova had eight papers published in seven peer-reviewed journals: Future Science OA, Clinics in Surgery, Journal of Clinical Trials and Regulatory Affairs, Surgical Cases, World Journal of Surgery and Surgical Research, and Pharmaceutical Outsourcing Magazine. Dr. Malikova also serves on the editorial board of Surgical Case Reports and Reviews, and is a panel reviewer for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID): NIAID Clinical Site Monitoring and Vaccine Research Center General Clinical Research Support Services.

TEVIAH SACHS, MD, MPH, Surgical Oncology, was named an Associate Program Director of the Surgery Residency Program.

JEFFREY SIRACUSE, MD, RPVI, Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, was among 10 BUSM faculty inducted into the Boston University Medical Group (BUMG) Clinical Excellence Society at the group’s first annual awards event. During the previous year, Dr. Siracuse received an Early Career Faculty Research Award from the Vascular and Endovascular Surgery Society, where he serves on the Executive Council and chairs the Membership Development Committee. Dr. Siracuse was also selected as chair of the Appropriateness Committee of the Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS), and is a member of the SVS Guidelines on Popliteal Aneurysms Writing Committee. During the previous year, Dr. Siracuse also became a reviewer for JAMA Surgery and was appointed to the editorial board of the Journal Vascular and Endovascular Surgery. Dr. Siracuse gave 12 regional and national presentations, including at the SVS annual meeting plenary session; and had 25 papers published or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals, including the Journal of Vascular Surgery, Annals of Vascular Surgery, and the Journal of the American Heart Association.

PONNANDAI SOMASUNDAR, MD, MPH, Roger Williams Medical Center, gave two invited lectures in India during the previous year, and will be an abstract reviewer for the upcoming International Society of Geriatric Oncology conference in the Netherlands. He also presented at conferences in the U.S., including the Rhode Island Cancer Summit and the Synergy Interventional Oncology Conference, and at Grand Rounds at the University of Kansas. Dr. Somasundar had articles published in the following journals: European Journal of Surgical Oncology, Hepatobiliary Surgery Nutrition, Tumor Journal, and the Journal of Leukocyte Biology. Dr. Somasundar was recognized by peers in Rhode Island Magazine as a “Top Doctor.”

KEI SUZUKI, MD, Thoracic Surgery, received a research award from the Thoracic Surgery Foundation for his project “Utilization of nasal biomarkers as screening tools for lung cancer.” See article on page 14.

MAUREEN TESDECO, MD, of Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara Medical Center (California), an Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery at BUSM, was named an Assistant Director of the BUSM/BMC Surgery Clerkship in May.

In addition, the Society of Surgical Oncology (SSO) nominated Dr. Tseng to the SSO’s Executive Council, which serves as the governing body of the organization. SSO leaders are selected from among those whose careers have shown a devotion to advancing and promoting the science and treatment of cancer. If approved, Dr. Tseng will serve on the Executive Council from 2019 to 2022.

ALUMNI AND OTHER FRIENDS: PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH!

Please send us your current/preferred contact information (e-mail and mailing address, please) so we can keep you informed about your fellow alumni and other news, and invite you to special alumni events. We will use this information only for items of interest, such as newsletters and invitations, and will not share it. In addition, please send us news and contact information about your current or former colleagues with a BU/BMC surgery connection, whether from medical school, residency, fellowship, or faculty years.
Alumni Profile: Richard J. Shemin, MD, Class of 1974

Richard J. Shemin, MD, is a 1974 graduate of the BU School of Medicine and former Chair of Cardiothoracic Surgery at BUSM/BMC. Dr. Shemin is now Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery at UCLA Medical Center, and Executive Vice Chairman of the Department of Surgery.

Dr. Shemin's love of medicine began at an early age. While growing up in Arkansas, he had a natural curiosity and was always eager to assist his father, a veterinarian. His inspiration was his father, Saul, a veterinarian and cattle rancher who sometimes let his eager and curious son help out under his watchful eye: once letting him set a dog’s leg and another time assist in an operation on a cat. When his father told him, “You’ve got good hands,” Richard, whose great uncle was also a doctor, knew he had found his calling in life.

Indeed, decades later, Dr. Shemin, one of the nation’s top academic cardiac surgeons, Robert and Kelly Day Professor and Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery at UCLA Medical Center, Executive Vice Chairman of the Department of Surgery, and Co-Director of the Cardiovascular Center, says, “I still wake up every day excited to go to work.”

Highly selective program

After graduating from high school, Dr. Shemin was thrilled to be accepted to Boston University’s six-year BA/MD program, from which he graduated, cum laude, in 1974. “This highly selective program enabled me to earn a liberal arts degree [he majored in philosophy and religion, graduating magna cum laude] and be with classmates who were also academically strong and focused on a career in medicine,” says Dr. Shemin. He was elected into the Phi Beta Kappa Society and, as a junior medical student, elected to Alpha Omega Alpha.

Dr. Shemin matched with his first choice of surgical residencies: the Harvard-affiliated Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston. (In 1980, Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, Robert Breck Brigham Hospital, and Boston Hospital for Women merged to form Brigham and Women’s Hospital.) He was the first BU School of Medicine graduate to be accepted into the elite surgical training program.

Prepared for success

“The education that BU School of Medicine provided — and still provides — was as good as or better than any other medical school in the country,” says Dr. Shemin, who is also Program Director of the UCLA Cardiothoracic Surgery Residency Program at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. “BU School of Medicine’s core values of humanism, compassion, and professionalism, as well as its emphasis on teamwork and communication skills, prepared its graduates then, as now, for success in today’s complex healthcare environment.”

During his residency, Dr. Shemin decided to specialize in cardiac surgery, which at the time was undergoing many exciting advances. He spent two years during his residency as a clinical associate in cardiac surgery at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, and following his graduation in 1980 from the Brigham, completed a fellowship in cardiothoracic surgery at New York University Medical Center. Acceptance into both programs was highly competitive.

Bringing heart transplantation to New England

In 1982, Dr. Shemin joined the faculty at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, taking a year in 1983 to complete a heart transplantation fellowship at Stanford University. Dr. Shemin, who was Medical Director of the Cardiac Surgical ICU, convinced the leadership that Brigham and Women’s should develop a program in heart transplantation. At the time, heart transplants were being done at only three hospitals nationwide, none of which was in New England. Dr. Shemin succeeded and, in 1984, he was part of the team that performed the first successful heart transplant in New England.

Another highlight of Dr. Shemin’s career was a case in 1983, which at the time received national media attention, involving a woman who was 30 weeks pregnant with a ruptured aorta who went into cardiac arrest. Neither she nor the baby were expected to survive. Dr. Shemin, who fortunately had chosen to assist with a number of cesarean sections during his surgical training, delivered the infant safely and then saved the mother.

“I support the BU School of Medicine because I am very grateful for the education I received there, which was second to none.” — Richard J. Shemin, MD

Dr. Shemin also serves on numerous editorial boards, including the prestigious Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery and Circulation. He has authored more than 370 articles and abstracts as well as 25 book chapters, and is frequently invited to lecture worldwide. Among his many honors, Dr. Shemin has received the BU School of Medicine and the BU College of Liberal Arts Alumni Achievement Award. A longtime generous supporter of the BU School of Medicine, he is a lifetime member of the Chester S. Keefe, MD Society.

World-class cardiothoracic surgery service

In 1987, Dr. Shemin, then only 36, was recruited to BU School of Medicine as Professor and Chair of Cardiothoracic Surgery. During his 20-year career at BU, Dr. Shemin served in many senior leadership roles, including Vice Chair of Surgery and Co-Director of the Cardiovascular Center at Boston Medical Center, a center he was instrumental in creating. During his tenure, he built a world-class cardiothoracic surgery service that performed more than 1,000 operations a year with outcomes as good as or better than other top academic hospitals in the region. “We were a coveted training program internationally and a highly productive basic science and clinical research center,” he says.

Although Dr. Shemin enjoyed his position at BU School of Medicine and considered Boston home, when he was recruited to lead the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at UCLA Medical Center, one of the top academic hospitals in the nation, he could not resist. In 2007, Dr. Shemin and his wife, Susan — their three children now grown — moved to California to start a new chapter. Among many other accomplishments, Dr. Shemin brought minimally invasive and robotic cardiac surgery to UCLA and grew its heart transplantation program, now one of the busiest and most respected in the nation.

In addition to his busy schedule at UCLA, which includes patient care, research, teaching, and administrative responsibilities, Dr. Shemin holds leadership positions in many professional societies. He served as former Chair of the American Board of Thoracic Surgery and is currently a governor of the American College of Surgeons, representing cardiothoracic surgery.

Alumni awards among many honors

Dr. Shemin also serves on numerous editorial boards, including the prestigious Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery and Circulation. He has authored more than 370 articles and abstracts as well as 25 book chapters, and is frequently invited to lecture worldwide. Among his many honors, Dr. Shemin has received the BU School of Medicine and the BU College of Liberal Arts Alumni Achievement Award. A longtime generous supporter of the BU School of Medicine, he is a lifetime member of the Chester S. Keefe, MD Society.

On Match Day 2018, Richard J. Shemin, MD (center), presented the inaugural Richard J. Shemin, MD, and Saul Shemin, DVM, Academic-Surgical Award to graduating medical students Kevin Amirat and Matthew Peacock.
Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in both women and men in the United States, responsible for killing nearly 156,000 Americans in 2017 alone. The vast majority of lung cancers are caused by cigarette smoking, and the more and longer one smokes the greater the odds of developing the disease.

Unfortunately, at the time of diagnosis, almost seven in 10 patients have locally advanced or metastatic disease, when treatment is far less likely to be effective and the outlook is often bleak. Early diagnosis and treatment is therefore essential for improving patients’ odds of beating lung cancer.

In 2011, the National Lung Screening Trial recommended that heavy smokers (30-plus pack years*) between the ages of 55 and 74 (later expanded to 80) undergo screening for lung cancer with low-dose computed tomography (CT). This recommendation was based on evidence that CT screening in this population reduced lung cancer deaths. In 2013, the United States Preventive Services Task Force also recommended these screening guidelines.

Arbitrary screening criteria
But CT screening is imperfect and not without risks. The lung cancer detection rate (yield) is very low — in the range of 0.6 to 3.7 percent — largely because the screening criteria are somewhat arbitrary. Moreover, it is estimated that approximately one cancer death is caused by radiation from imaging for every 2,500 patients screened.

Thoracic surgeon Kei Suzuki, MD, has long focused his research on lung cancer, first as a resident and later during his fellowship at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. When he joined the BUSM/BMC Surgery faculty in 2016, he was eager to continue his research in this domain.

Sparing lower-risk patients
"We need a way to biologically identify individuals at high risk of developing lung cancer so that we screen them with CT while sparing people at lower risk from unnecessary and potentially harmful scans," says Dr. Suzuki, who treats many patients with lung cancer.

Such a biomarker would also be able to identify people who do not fit the current criteria, but nonetheless have a high risk of lung cancer and should also undergo screening.

As it turns out, BUSM/BMC is the ideal place for Dr. Suzuki to pursue this goal. Shortly after he arrived, he connected with pulmonologist and BUSM-BMC Cancer Center Director Avrum Spira, MD, chief of Computational Medicine in the Department of Medicine. Dr. Spira’s research focuses on genomic changes associated with smoking-related lung disease, and is based on the paradigm that smoking creates a “field of molecular injury” in epithelial cells that line the airway. These changes, Dr. Spira established, are also seen in the nasal lining.

Dr. Spira’s work has led to a biomarker, now in clinical use, that distinguishes which patients who have had a suspicious lung nodule detected by CT are at high risk of lung cancer and should undergo further intervention, such as a biopsy. The biomarker cells are acquired via a bronchoscope from the patient’s airway.

Research takes a new direction
With recent funding from the Thoracic Surgery Foundation, Dr. Suzuki is taking this research in a new direction. He is investigating whether genetic changes in the cells of the nasal lining, which could be easily acquired with a swab in a primary care office setting, could be developed into a biomarker that will provide a simple way to determine which patients should undergo CT screening for lung cancer.

Initially Dr. Suzuki will evaluate the nasal genetic changes in patients who fit the current age and smoking history criteria. If this approach proves successful, it would later be evaluated in other individuals, including those who are younger and/or have a smoking history of fewer pack years, and developed into a biomarker.

“In the ongoing battle against lung cancer we need a simple, non-radiation tool to help us identify patients at high risk so we are screening those most likely to benefit. We are hopeful that this research will bring us closer toward that goal.” — Kei Suzuki, MD

* Pack years are the number of packs of cigarettes smoked per day multiplied by the number of years the person has smoked.
Our team is deeply committed to providing each and every patient with excellent care. There is nothing we find more rewarding than having a positive impact on our patients’ lives.” — Jason Hall, MD, MPH

This commitment to providing the best possible treatment extends to all patients who receive care from the Colon and Rectal Surgery team (see sidebar). Patients include people from nearby communities, many of whom rely on BMC as their safety-net hospital. Others travel long distances for access to the excellent medical and surgical care for inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) offered at BMC’s Dempsey Center for Digestive Disorders, which is co-led by Dr. Hall and BMC gastroenterologist Francis Farraye, MD.

Cutting-edge treatments
Colon and Rectal Surgery provides the entire breadth of the most effective, cutting-edge surgical treatments, including minimally invasive and robotic surgery, for common and complex disorders of the colon and rectum. The types of conditions treated include colon and rectal cancer; IBD (Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis); familial adenomatous polyposis; diverticulitis; and hemorrhoids, fissures and fistulas. The division also excels at complex re-operations and offers screening colonoscopies.

BMC is one of only a few hospitals in the region to offer transanal endoscopic microsurgery (TEMS) for selected patients with early-stage rectal cancer (with or without chemotherapy or radiation), and certain rectal polyps. This minimally invasive technique, which enables surgeons to visualize and remove tumors using a proctoscope inserted through the anus, avoids the need for an incision and its potential complications. Importantly, it also preserves the function of the rectum, thus avoiding the need for a permanent colostomy.

Dr. Hall notes that in complex cases, at Boston Medical Center it is common for two attending colorectal surgeons to participate in an operation to ensure the best possible outcome. Indeed, outcomes achieved by the section reflect a consistently high quality of care. The latest quarterly data (as of press time) from the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP), a voluntary program of the American College of Surgeons that provides data on a range of post-operative outcomes, indicates that the section’s outcomes were outstanding.

Research on enhanced recovery
Faculty in the section are also engaged in research, with a particular focus on enhanced recovery following colorectal surgery. One project is looking at the role of certain adjuvant medications to encourage return to bowel function after surgery. Another is evaluating the use of transversus abdominis plane (TAP) blocks to improve pain control following surgery, based on the knowledge that better pain control on the first post-operative day results in faster recovery and shorter length of stay. Several other projects are investigating some of the social determinants of outcomes, including the effect of patients’ primary languages on readmissions. The section is also the first to participate in a department-wide project to create standardized discharge instructions in several languages (Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole) for non-English-speaking surgical patients, with the goal of reducing preventable readmissions or Emergency Department visits and improving patient satisfaction (see article, page 20).

“Our team is deeply committed to providing each and every patient with excellent care,” says Dr. Hall. “There is nothing we find more rewarding than having a positive impact on our patients’ lives.”

FOR APPOINTMENTS OR REFERRALS, CALL: 617-414-8054
Investigations Seek to Understand and Reduce Inequities in Surgical Care

Surgical skill obviously plays an important role in the outcomes of patients being treated for a serious disease like cancer. But long before many patients are on the operating table, the cards may already be stacked against them by virtue of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, insurance coverage, country of origin, primary language, and the distance they must travel for tertiary-level treatment.

Understanding the root causes of inequities in surgical care with the goal of reducing or eliminating them has long been a major priority of the Department of Surgery. As part of an urban safety-net hospital serving a racially/ethnically diverse and largely economically disadvantaged patient population, the Department of Surgery is especially well-positioned to conduct research aimed at understanding disparities in surgical care and implementing and evaluating measures to address them.

This important work is enhanced by the existence of SOAR (Surgical Outcomes Analysis & Research), a research initiative founded years ago by Surgery Chair Jennifer Tseng, MD, MPH, with a mandate to investigate and promulgate best practices and eradicate disparities in all aspects of surgery.

In collaboration with Dr. Tseng and other faculty at Boston Medical Center and Johns Hopkins Medical Center, surgical oncologist Teviah Sachs, MD, MPH, is engaged in numerous research projects looking at disparities in the surgical care of patients with gastric (stomach) cancer and cancers of the pancreas and liver.

Need for early diagnosis of gastric cancer

While the incidence of and mortality from gastric cancer has decreased in the U.S. and other developed nations during the past century, the disease remains a major cause of death around the world. For U.S. hospitals that treat large immigrant populations, born outside the U.S. or Canada (predominantly the Caribbean, Africa, and Central America/Mexico), lived in poorer neighborhoods, and were insured through federal programs.

Among the many other findings of this research, which will be published in the Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery, was that the patient’s stage of cancer at presentation was the strongest predictor of survival. Unfortunately, the research found that patients of Hispanic ethnicity, individuals born in regions such as Central America, and those living in the most impoverished communities frequently present with later stage disease — often too late for surgical intervention or a chance at cure. Other authors of the paper were Dr. Tseng, Ryan Morgan, BS, Michael Cassidy, MD, Susanna de Geus, MD, PhD, and David McNeney, MD.

“The goal of our research is to identify where we can make improvements to ensure that all patients, regardless of their race or ethnicity, birthplace, or circumstances, have equal access to the best surgical care resulting in the best possible outcomes.” — Teviah Sachs, MD, MPH

Collaboration with Johns Hopkins

Another area of investigation Dr. Sachs is pursuing involves disparities in hepato-pancreato-biliary (HPB) cancer surgery. He recently teamed up with faculty of the Department of Surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he did his fellowship, to conduct a study on disparities in HPB surgery.

This retrospective observational study, which is currently under IRB review, will investigate how racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and insurance status impact the treatment and outcomes of patients with benign or malignant tumors originating from the pancreas or liver. The co-principal investigator is Christopher Wolfgang, MD, PhD, Director of Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery at Johns Hopkins; other members of the research team are research fellows Heidi Overton, MD, at Johns Hopkins, and Dr. de Geus at BUSM/BMC, along with Dr. Tseng and biostatistician and SOAR Administrative Director Sing Chau Ng, MS.

“"The goal of this and other research we are engaged in is to identify where we can make improvements to ensure that all patients, regardless of their race or ethnicity, birthplace, or economic circumstances, have equal access to the best surgical care resulting in the best possible outcomes," says Dr. Sachs.
Resident’s Research Focuses on Quality and Safety

“The Department of Surgery treats about 1,300 non-English-speaking patients a year, so it is important that we evaluate whether we are addressing their needs to ensure the best possible outcomes.” — Stephanie Talutis, MD, MPH

Effect of primary language
One research project instigated by Dr. Talutis evaluated the effect of primary language on readmission after colorectal surgery at BMC. “We hypothesized that patients whose primary language was not English were readmitted more frequently,” says Dr. Talutis.

In fact, her research, a retrospective review that compared the outcomes of nearly 600 patients, 25 percent of whom were non-English speakers, found that this was not the case. However, among patients who were readmitted to the hospital, non-English speakers were readmitted sooner than their English-speaking counterparts.

This work led to a poster presentation at the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons national scientific meeting in May, and a podium presentation at the New England Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons in June.

Standardized multilingual instructions
Another of Dr. Talutis’s projects, which is still ongoing, aims to improve quality and safety through the creation of standardized multilingual discharge instructions for surgical patients. Supported by a two-year BMC Patient Safety grant, this work is being conducted in collaboration with co-principal investigators Pamela Rosenkranz, RN, BSN, MED, and Dr. McAneny.

This project was borne out of a recognition that written discharge instructions in the Department of Surgery were not standardized—even within a division—and were also not available in the languages most commonly spoken by BMC’s non-English speaking patient populations. Dr. Talutis notes that not having standardized instructions leads to confusion among care providers, and the lack of multilingual discharge instructions can potentially harm patients.

In 2014, for example, a Spanish-speaking BMC surgical patient delayed contacting his doctor about symptoms he was experiencing after leaving the hospital because he did not understand his discharge instructions, and suffered complications as a result. “Fortunately, he was not permanently harmed, but this was entirely preventable,” says Dr. Talutis, noting that this is likely just one of many incidents in which patients whose primary language is not English may have been put at risk.

Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole
This multi-faceted project involves developing standardized discharge instructions for the most commonly performed operations for seven surgical divisions, starting with Colon and Rectal Surgery. A multidisciplinary team was formed to provide input. Once approved by the division chief, the discharge instructions, which will be written at a fifth-grade reading level and accompanied by images, will be translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole, the languages most commonly spoken by BMC’s non-English speaking patient population.

A plan is in place for educating faculty, residents, and other providers about the new instructions and the materials will be put in the electronic medical record and shared drive for easy access. Dr. Talutis says the anticipated outcomes of this initiative are to reduce preventable Emergency Department visits and hospital readmissions and improve patients’ experiences, all of which will be evaluated over time.

“Everyone in the department appreciates the need for these steps to improve patient safety and quality, and is very excited to see them coming to fruition,” says Dr. Talutis, who will continue her involvement in the project during her clinical training. Dr. Talutis hopes that in the future additional funding will become available to translate the discharge instructions into additional languages, and that this initiative will be adopted by other BMC departments and perhaps other medical centers nationwide.
The department offers a highly competitive, five-year Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited Surgery Residency Program. Led by Donald Hess, MD, the program provides residents with the range and depth of experience and academic exposure to develop superior surgical skills and to make mature, informed, independent judgments. Graduates of the program are well-prepared to become outstanding general surgeons or surgical specialists. The majority of residents pursue additional fellowship training after graduation, and many have gone on to assume leadership positions in academic surgery.

The Surgery Residency Program is based at Boston University Medical Center, a modern, vibrant medical complex located in the heart of Boston’s South End. The medical center includes Boston University School of Medicine, the Boston University School of Public Health, and the Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine, as well as Boston Medical Center.

Our program leads to American Board of Surgery Certification within an environment designed to encourage clinical and basic scientific research experience. Residents interested in careers in academic surgery are encouraged to develop the necessary skills in research, education, and administration through a broad range of research fellowship opportunities. Clinical research is also encouraged among residents during their clinical years of training. In fact, most residents have contributed to at least one paper being published in a peer-reviewed journal by graduation, and many have given award-winning presentations (see Resident News, page 26).

The principal goal of our program is clinical excellence. We believe that exposure to a large, diverse patient population and broad experience in complex open and minimally invasive surgery are essential elements in the training of outstanding surgeons. The department also has a unique program that links Boston University School of Medicine students who are interested in surgical research with resident mentors, who connect the students with faculty members conducting research in the students’ areas of interest. This program provides residents with mentoring experience and has led to numerous award-winning presentations by medical students.

SURGERY RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Donald Hess, MD, Associate Chair for Education, Program Director
Tracey Dechert, MD, Associate Program Director
Tevah Sachs, MD, MPH, Associate Program Director
Lana Kettiere, Residency Program Coordinator

SURGERY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS

Stockbridge Surgical Critical Care Fellowship
Robert Schultze, MD, MBA, Program Director
Vascular and Endovascular Surgery Fellowship
Alak Farber, MD, Program Director

SURGICAL EDUCATION

Luise I. Pernar, MD, Director

PODIATRY RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Geoffrey Hubahernes, DPM, Program Director
David Neelon, DPM, MBA, Associate Program Director

SURGERY CLERKSHIP

Cullen Carter, MD, Director
Tajpal Brahmbhatt, MD, Associate Director
Abdul Saeed Calvino, MD, Assistant Director
Roger Williams Medical Center
Patrick B. O’Neal, MD, Assistant Director
Veterans Affairs (VA) Boston Healthcare System

2018 Surgery Residency Graduates

Ryan Macht, MD, MS
Barabatic and Minimally Invasive Surgery Fellowship, University of California San Francisco
Ferze Sidhwa, MD
Surgical Critical Care Fellowship, Cooper University Hospital
Kathryn Van Orden, MD
Surgical Critical Care Fellowship, Brigham and Women’s Hospital
Kimberly Zamor, MD, MS
Vascular Surgery Fellowship, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center

2018 Surgery Residency graduates (from left): Drs. Macht, Zamor, Van Orden, and Sidhwa, with Surgery Residency Program Director Donald Hess, MD (far left), and Surgery Chair Jennifer Tseng, MD, MPH (far right).
Residents on Research

Residents have the option to spend two years conducting laboratory or translational research, typically after their second year, to pursue their academic development. Often this research is done in collaboration with other departments at Boston Medical Center and other schools at Boston University, as well as other institutions, providing residents with a wealth of opportunities to pursue their interests, develop as academic surgeons, and make significant contributions.

Nikrula Arinze, MD
Vanderbilt University School of Medicine
Research Mentors: Alik Farber, MD; Vipul Chitalia, MD, PhD (Department of Medicine)
Area of Research: Determining the role of newly defined mediators of uric acid toxicity in patients with chronic kidney disease and peripheral artery disease (Site: Boston University School of Medicine).

Alaina Geary, MD
Tufts University School of Medicine
Research Mentor: Luise Pernar, MD
Area of Research: Socially Responsible Surgery Group (SRS) Group under the leadership of trauma surgeon Luise Pernar, MD (Tufts University School of Medicine).

Nkiruka Arinze, MD
Vanderbilt University School of Medicine
Research Mentors: Alik Farber, MD; Vipul Chitalia, MD, PhD (Department of Medicine)
Area of Research: Building a Resident as-Teacher program specific to general surgery residents and suitable for publication and national dissemination. (Site: Boston University School of Medicine).

Megan Janeway, MD
Boston University School of Medicine
Research Mentor: Tracey DeChert, MD
Area of Research: Surgical outcomes and quality improvement as they relate to socioeconomic disparities and social determinants of health of the Boston Medical Center patient population. (Site: Boston University School of Medicine).

Na Eun Kim, MD
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
Research Mentors: Sabrina Sanchez, MD, MPH; Andrew Leather, MD (King’s College London)
Area of Research: Factors for delayed emergency surgical care in Puebla, Mexico. (Sites: Boston University School of Medicine, King’s College London, Centro de Salud, Puebla México)

Scott Levin, MD
The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University
Research Mentor: Luise Pernar, MD
Area of Research: Building a Resident as-Teacher program specific to general surgery residents and suitable for publication and national dissemination. (Site: Boston University School of Medicine).

Massachusetts General Hospital Institute for Technology Assessment

Current Fellows

Surgical Critical Care Fellowship
Tara Dinitto, MD
Jeannette Zhang, MD

Vascular and Endovascular Surgery Fellowship
Scott Hardoun, MD
Brad Oriel, MD

Current Podiatry Residents

PGY1
Ankit Desai, DPM
Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine at the Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science

PGY2
Maris Bolla, DPM
New York College of Podiatric Medicine

PGY3
Amy Wong, DPM
Western University School of Podiatric Medicine

SRS members participated in the 2018 “March for Our Lives” against gun violence.

Socially Responsible Surgery Group Has a Productive Year

Recognizing social responsibility as a core value of surgical practice and an essential component of health, in 2014 the Department of Surgery launched its Socially Responsible Surgery (SRS) group under the leadership of trauma surgeon Tracey DeChert, MD. Through its innovative work in the areas of education, research, advocacy, and service, SRS has expanded in size and scope to become an influential national leader in the domain of socially responsible surgery. In addition to DeChert, the group’s other faculty advisors are Sabrina Sanchez, MD, MPH; Angela Kuhnen, MD; and Lisa Allie, MSW, LICSW.

According to SRS residents Megan Janeway, MD, a founding member of SRS, last year was an especially busy and productive year for the group, which now includes some 60 residents and medical students, including residents from other institutions.

Many successes

“We have had many successes in the past year, with lots of momentum and interest from many other surgery programs around the country, who have approached us and want to learn from us,” says Dr. Janeway, who is now in the first year of her research fellowship, focusing on the impact of socioeconomic factors on surgical outcomes.

During the previous year, six SRS members attended the national meeting of the Association for Surgical Education in Austin, Texas, giving five presentations that sparked a great deal of interest. The presenters were residents Ryan Macht, MD, MS (“Improving Nutrition in Perioperative Patients”), Michael Poulson, MD (“Advocacy and Policy Training Program for Residents and Medical Students”), Megan Janeway, MD (“Socially Responsible Surgery: A Model Organization for Implementing Socially Responsible Practice in Training Programs”) and (“The Service Learning Project: A Unique Model for Patient Education and Advocacy Training in Early Medical Education”) and Praveen Srindal, MD (“Holidays are for Patients, Too: Using a Pulpectomy to Save Patients and Engage Medical Students”).

Advocacy Program

Last year also marked the development of the SRS Advocacy Program, led by Dr. Poulson, which hosts monthly advocacy roundtables to educate residents and medical students about advocacy and political policy work. Advocacy activities organized by SRS included participation in events such as the anti-gun violence “March for Our Lives” in 2018 and the annual Mother’s Day Walk for Peace, and co-organizing the first annual Health Equity Symposium at Boston Medical Center.

As members of the Advocacy Program, Drs. Janeway and Poulson both received grants to attend the American College of Surgeons Leadership and Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC in May. There, they met with Senators Edward Markey and Elizabeth Warren and Representatives William Keating, Catherine Clark, Seth Moulton, and Mike Capuano to discuss issues of importance such as gun violence research, the opioid crisis, and trauma system preparedness.

Service projects and research

Two of SRS’s service projects also made significant headway in the previous year. Now in its third year, the SRS Service Learning Project provides first-year medical students on the Acute Care/Trauma Surgery service with the opportunity to attend inpallants’ unmet needs by helping them understand their procedures and screening them for social determinants of health. Another project integrates food insecurity screening on surgical services, leading to improved patient access to nutrition resources during the perioperative period.

In the previous year, SRS also expanded its research program, which now includes five residents and 20 medical students working on more than 15 unique projects. One, for example, is focused on assessing whether there are disparities in post-hospitalization care placement based on injury type and social determinants of health. Others are evaluating patients’ experiences within the referral system for elective surgery and how to improve access to early surgical intervention for gallbladder disease.

SRS also secured several grants from multiple sources for pilot projects and the development of existing projects. In addition, members of SRS gave 14 regional and national podium and poster presentations at meetings throughout the nation.

“Socially responsible surgery is becoming an increasingly important part of the national conversation about reducing disparities in care, and we are proud to be at the forefront of this movement.”

— Megan Janeway, MD

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SRS IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE.
OLGA BERESNEVA, MD, gave a poster presentation on the “Utility of Flexible Upper Endoscopy in Early Postoperative Period after RYGB” during Obesity Week 2018. At the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons annual meeting in 2018, Dr. Beresneva gave a poster presentation on “Histone Deacetylase 7 and Lung Inflammation in Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome,” with George Kasotakis, MD, serving as principal investigator and resident mentor. This research also received first prize at the regional (New England) and state (Massachusetts) ACS-COT Resident Research competitions.

Alaina Geary, MD, presented two abstracts at the Association for Surgical Education annual meeting in May: “Teaching Attitudes and Resident-as-Teacher Programs in General Surgery Residency Programs” and “The Surgical Resident as Teacher: A Review of Published Curricula.” Dr. Geary’s research mentor is Luise Pernar, MD.

Scott Levin, MD, received a two-year BU Medical Center Primary Care Academic Fellowship funded by a Health Resources and Services Administration National Research Service Award T32 training grant. As the inaugural surgery fellow in the program, Dr. Levin will pursue a Masters of Health Services and Systems Research at the BU School of Public Health and conduct research in health disparities in vascular surgery with mentors Alik Farber, MD, and Jeffrey Siracusse, MD. Dr. Levin gave a poster presentation at the Society for Vascular Surgery 2018 annual meeting, and had a manuscript accepted for publication in the Journal of Learning through the Arts.

Third-year medical students selected Feroze Sidhwa, MD, for the annual Lester Williams teaching award, which is given to a graduating chief resident. The students also voted to have Dr. Sidhwa receive the Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism and Excellence in Teaching Award, and induction into the BUSM Gold Humanism Honor Society. Said one student about Dr. Sidhwa, “He was not only knowledgeable, but also generous with his time. He made the OR a comfortable place to learn, and made you feel like you matter.”

Theresa Talutis, MD, MPH, was chosen as a finalist in the national American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma (ACS-COT) Resident Research Competition in basic science research for “Histone Deacetylase 7 and Lung Inflammation in Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome,” with George Kasotakis, MD, serving as principal investigator and resident mentor. This research also received first prize at the regional (New England) and state (Massachusetts) ACS-COT Resident Research competitions.

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Andrew McChesney, MD, matched to the fellowship program in vascular surgery at Eastern Virginia Medical College.

Rumbidzai Nzara, MD, gave a poster presentation at the 2018 Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) annual meeting on complications after open ventral hernia repair stratified by BMI. Following her graduation in 2019, Dr. Nzara will be doing a fellowship in minimally invasive and bariatric surgery at the University of Maryland.

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Selected Grants

Early and Adequate Protein Feeding Post-Traumatic Injury
Principal Investigator: Peter Burke, MD
Sponsor: National Institutes of Health
Grant amount: $748,500

Bone Metabolism in Adolescents Undergoing Bariatic Surgery
Site Principal Investigator: Brian Carmine, MD
Sponsor: National Institutes of Health
Grant amount: $671,513

The Comparison of Outcomes of Antibiotic Drugs and Appendectomy (CODA) Trial
Principal Investigators: F. Thurston Drake, MD, MPH; Sabrina Sanchez, MD, MPH
Sponsor: Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (subcontract through the University of Washington, Seattle, PI: David R. Flum, MD, MPH)
Grant amount: $236,500 (est.)

Development of Diagnostic and Prognostic Tests for Esophageal Adenocarcinoma
Principal Investigator: Tony Godfrey, PhD
Co-Investigators: Virginia R. Little, MD; Lincoln Stein, MD, PhD; James Luketich, MD; Anju Pernaathur, MD; Zhongmin Zhao, MD, PhD
Sponsor: National Institutes of Health
Grant amount: $2,456,723

Creation of Standardized Multimedia Discharge Instructions for Surgical Patients
Principal Investigator: Pamela Rosenkranz, RN, BSN, Med
Sponsor: Boston Medical Center Patient Safety Grant
Grant amount: $50,000

Propagoc Immune Score for Stage I Lung adenocarcinoma
Principal Investigator: Kei Suzuki, MD
Co-Investigator (per CHEST Foundation study): Tony Godfrey, PhD (Mentor)
Sponsors: CHEST Foundation; Boston University Clinical and Translational Science Institute
Grant amounts: $80,000 (CHEST Foundation: $60,000; Boston University Clinical and Translational Science Institute: $20,000)

Utilization of Nasal Biomarkers as Screening Tools for Lung Cancer
Principal Investigator: Kei Suzuki, MD
Sponsor: The Thoracic Surgery Foundation
Grant amount: $80,000

Office of Surgical Translational Research

The Office of Surgical Translational Research: Operations and Compliance in the Department of Surgery, led by Marina Malikova, PhD, MSc, MA, CCR, RAC, is responsible for clinical trials and basic biomedical research operations, macro-management of research programs, and providing guidance and oversight to project managers, research coordinators, and laboratory staff. The office also provides assistance to investigators with protocol and informed consent writing, regulatory submissions, clinical trial agreements, budget development, and post-award financial management. In addition, the office develops and implements systems and procedures to ensure research quality control and compliance as well as efficient day-to-day research operations.

Clinical Research Projects

As of press time, there are 162 active clinical research projects in the Department of Surgery. The chart at right indicates the wide range of research conducted in the department.

Clinical Trials

Currently Open for Enrollment

Early and Adequate Protein Feeding Post-Traumatic Injury
Principal Investigator: Peter Burke, MD
Sponsor: National Institutes of Health
Grant amount: $748,500

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Sponsor: National Institutes of Health
Grant amount: $671,513

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Sponsor: The Thoracic Surgery Foundation
Grant amount: $80,000

A Randomized, Multicenter, Controlled Trial to Compare Best Endovascular Versus Best Surgical Therapy in Patients with Critical Limb Ischemia
BMC Site Principal Investigator: Jeffrey Kalish, MD
Sponsor: National Institutes of Health
Grant amount: $50,000

Perioperative Nutritional Optimization in Patients with Critical Limb Ischemia
Principal Investigator: Jeffrey Siracuse, MD
Sponsor: National Institutes of Health
Grant amount: $50,000

A Randomized Phase III Study of Sublobar Resection Versus Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy in High-Risk Patients with Stage I Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer
Principal Investigator: Kei Suzuki, MD
Sponsor: National Institutes of Health
Grant amount: $50,000

Prognostic Immune Markers in Lung Adenocarcinoma
Principal Investigator: Kei Suzuki, MD
Sponsor: National Institutes of Health
Grant amount: $50,000

For more information about our Research activities, please visit our website: bums.bu.edu/surgery (SURGICAL RESEARCH)
Selected Publications


Help Us Build a Healthier Future for All

Philanthropic gifts can make a significant difference in the lives of those we serve through patient care, research, and education. Our goal is to build a healthier future for all.

We need your support to help fund:
• clinical services that meet the needs of all our patients, including those who are underserved
• pioneering basic and clinical research that will improve outcomes and save lives
• innovative educational initiatives to prepare surgeons for a rapidly changing world
• research and initiatives to understand and reduce disparities in surgical care

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For more information about supporting the Department of Surgery, contact the Boston University School of Medicine Development Office at 617.358.9535 or busmed@bu.edu.