A major objective of the newly strengthened Einstein-Montefiore partnership is the establishment of funding and support mechanisms for clinical and translational junior investigators. The Career Development Awards, supported by the National Center for Research Resources’ Clinical and Translational Science Award, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and the Einstein Men’s Division, are helping to build the research teams of the future and reengineer the clinical research enterprise. Physician-investigators who have received Career Development Awards and completed the Clinical Research Training Program (CRTP) are in a key position to translate scientific advances into improvements in human health.

The Einstein Men’s Division, an invaluable source of support for research, launched a $3 million fund-raising initiative in May to support the training of clinician-researchers. Allen M. Spiegel, M.D., the Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean, noted at the kickoff event at Yankee Stadium, “We can do all the stem-cell research in the world, but you need physician-scientists who can bridge the gap between basic scientists and the clinicians who take care of all of us.”

The ICTR is fortunate to have accomplished students, committed mentors and teachers, and strong support from all the institutions involved. We would like to present the current group of eight talented faculty scholars.
Matthew Abramowitz, M.D., is an assistant professor of medicine. His research focuses on the association of metabolic acidosis with the progression of and complications related to chronic kidney disease. Dr. Abramowitz’s mentors are Michal Melamed, M.D., M.H.S. (assistant professor, medicine and epidemiology & population health) and Thomas Hostetter, M.D. (professor, medicine). During his fellowship in nephrology, Dr. Abramowitz performed an epidemiological study examining the association of metabolic acidosis with the progression of kidney disease. He is currently studying the association of acidosis with loss of muscle strength, bone disease, and insulin resistance, all causes of significant morbidity in individuals with chronic kidney disease. Future studies will examine the efficacy of alkali therapy in ameliorating these conditions and slowing the progression of kidney disease.

Gabriele de Vos, M.D., M.S., is an assistant professor in the Division of Allergy and Immunology and attending for pediatric and adult allergy and immunology at Jacobi Medical Center and North Central Bronx Hospital. Her research focuses on the pathogenesis of allergic diseases and the induction of immune tolerance through allergen vaccination (immunotherapy). She received the 2008 Young Investigator Award from the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. Dr. de Vos’ mentors are David Rosenstreich, M.D. (professor, medicine), and Andrew Wiznia, M.D. (professor, pediatrics). Dr. de Vos received formal education in clinical research skills through the Clinical Research Training Program, during which she initiated a clinical trial on the efficacy of allergen immunotherapy in young allergic children to prevent long-term asthma morbidity. In addition to its clinical outcomes, this study will allow the exploration of immune regulatory mechanisms involved in asthma pathogenesis in early childhood.

Rebecca Madan, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics, is a recipient of the 2008 Infectious Disease Society of America/Astellas Young Investigator Award. Dr. Madan’s mentors are Betsy Herold, M.D. (professor, pediatrics, microbiology & immunology, and obstetrics & gynecology and women’s health) and Marla Keller, M.D. (associate professor, medicine and obstetrics & gynecology and women’s health). During her fellowship in pediatric infectious diseases, Dr. Madan joined a multidisciplinary translational research team investigating the role of genital mucosal immunity, as well as the preclinical and clinical development of microbicides to prevent HIV acquisition and transmission. Elucidating the components of the genital tract that contribute to endogenous protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections could lead to the development of novel prevention strategies for women in both the developed and the developing worlds. Her research focuses on factors that influence genital mucosal immunity in HIV-infected and uninfected adolescent women.

Shadi Nahvi, M.D., M.S., is an assistant professor in the departments of medicine and psychiatry and behavioral sciences. Dr. Nahvi joined the faculty in the Division of Substance Abuse at Einstein as the medical director of a substance-abuse treatment clinic. In that role, she collaborated with colleagues to develop a multidisciplinary, comprehensive tobacco-cessation program. Her work has been recognized with a National Institutes of Health Disparities Research Loan Repayment Award (2007-9), an American Legacy Foundation Travel Scholarship to Increase Diversity in Nicotine and Tobacco Research (2008), and a faculty fellowship supported by the Bronx Center to Reduce and Eliminate Ethnic and Racial Health Disparities, an NIH-funded health disparities Center of Excellence (2006-8). Dr. Nahvi’s research mentors include Julia Arinstein, M.D., M.P.H. (professor, medicine). Her research and educational interests are in health disparities, substance abuse, and tobacco control.
Mooyeon Oh-Park, M.D., M.S., associate professor of clinical physical medicine and rehabilitation, has been working on research projects to reduce and prevent disability in high-risk populations. She received three consecutive grants from the Jacob and Valeria Langeloeth Foundation for the development of exercise programs for dialysis patients and for a prevention program for diabetic foot complications. She also has investigated the biomechanical effect of various orthoses to improve locomotion in elderly patients with foot disorders or peripheral arterial disease. Her current research focuses on the locomotor and cognitive predictors of transient and permanent fear of falling and its impact on disability among the community-dwelling elderly population. Dr. Oh-Park’s principal mentor is Joe Verghese, M.D., M.B.,B.S. (associate professor, neurology), and her co-mentors are Xiaonan Xue, Ph.D. (associate professor, epidemiology & population health), Roee Holtzer, Ph.D. (assistant professor, psychology), and Preeti Raghavan, M.D. (assistant professor, rehabilitation medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine).

Amy E. Sanders, M.D., is an assistant professor of neurology. Her research focuses on successful cognitive aging and on genetic factors that may protect against age-related cognitive decline and dementia. Dr. Sanders was a 2008 Fellow in the National Institute on Aging’s Summer Institute and in the National Institute of Mental Health’s Summer Research Institute in Geriatric Psychiatry and is currently a participant in the NIH Loan Repayment Program for Clinical Researchers. Dr. Sanders’ fellowship in geriatric neurology, supported by Einstein’s NIA-funded T32 Training Grant in Aging Research, allowed her to join the multidisciplinary Einstein Aging Study, investigating cognitive, neurobiological, and neuropathological markers that distinguish normal aging from dementia. Dr. Sanders’ mentors are Richard Lipton, M.D. (professor, neurology and epidemiology & population health) and Nir Barzilai, M.D. (professor, departments of medicine and genetics).

William Southern, M.D., M.S., associate professor of clinical medicine, joined the faculty in 2002 as the physician leader of the newly formed Teaching Hospitalist Program. Dr. Southern has spearheaded a variety of scholarly activities, including publications and presentations focused on hospital-based care and teaching. In conjunction with the Division of General Medicine, Dr. Southern will be working with Julia Arnsten, M.D., M.P.H. (professor, medicine) to create academic development programs for the Teaching Hospitalist group on the Einstein and Montefiore campuses. After obtaining a Career Development Award, Dr. Southern decided to enroll in the Clinical Research Training Program. “I thought I was pretty savvy as a researcher, but I soon realized that the CRTP could give me other skills I needed in epidemiology, biostatistics, study design, and decision analysis.” Upon graduation from the CRTP, he was appointed director of hospitalist services and associate medical director at Weiler Hospital of Montefiore Medical Center.

Tao Wang, M.D., Ph.D., is an assistant professor of biostatistics. His research focuses on two related areas: developing statistical methodologies to address important quantitative questions in translational genetics studies and applying these tools to the understanding of genetic and environmental factors that may lead to more-accurate prediction of risk, prevention, and early detection of complex diseases. Dr. Wang’s mentors are Tomas Rohan, M.D., Ph.D. (professor, epidemiology & population health), Bernice Morrow, Ph.D. (professor, genetics), and Mimi Kim, Sc.D. (professor, epidemiology & population health). Dr. Wang has developed an active research program in the study of the statistical methodology of translational genetics since joining the faculty of the department of epidemiology & population health and collaborates with many outstanding investigators to apply these new statistical approaches. These collaborative studies motivated him to create his own independent research, focusing on the use of functional genomic and proteomic approaches in addition to statistical modeling to explore the networks among genes and/or proteins governing complex diseases.
October 28, 2009

CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM
Sponsored by the Einstein-Montefiore Institute for Clinical and Translational Research

The symposium is aimed at the promises and challenges of translational research in the context of our Clinical and Translational Science Award. The keynote speakers are:

William Gahl, M.D., Ph.D.  Clinical Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, and Head of the Human Biochemical Genetics Section, NIH

Lesa Mitchell  Vice President of the Kauffman Foundation

Joann Casado, J.D.  Executive Director of the Bronx Health Link

Dan Roden, M.D.  Director of the Institute of Experimental Therapeutics, Vanderbilt University

To view presentations from last year’s symposium, “Bridging the Translational Divides,” visit: http://www.einstein.yu.edu/home/mu_itunes.asp