

Children's Specialized Hospital Research Center Newsletter



An RWJBarnabas Health facility

March 2023

Volume 3 Issue 1

Welcome!

The Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH) Research Center Newsletter provides an overview of research conducted at CSH. We regularly share information about CSH studies, lectures, and resources. Each issue also features CSH research news and upcoming events and activities. Please reach out with any suggestions or questions.

About the Research Center at CSH

The Research Center at Children's Specialized Hospital strives to advance pediatric rehabilitation by initiating and supporting evidence-based studies that explore innovative interventions, technologies and approaches to specialized care for children and adolescents.

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JOIN OUR STUDIES

Several research studies are actively recruiting participants. To see which studies you may be eligible to join, and to learn more about how to participate, see our [autism](#), [brain injury](#), [chronic health conditions](#), [cognition](#), and [mobility](#) studies.

Distinguished Lecture Series

Upcoming speaker:

Dr. Andrea Morrison (Children's Wisconsin) will present "A Journey to Become an Equitable Health Literate Healthcare Organization by Focusing on Quality and Safety" on April 20th from 12-1:30pm. **To register, please [click here](#).** For more information about the DLS as well as links for all past speakers, please visit [this website](#). Contact Tomiko Hackett (thackett@childrens-specialized.org) with any questions.



June 2023 speaker:

Be on the lookout for more information about this upcoming speaker, and please contact thackett@childrens-specialized.org with any suggestions for speakers/topics. It is appreciated!

CSH RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT



Save the Date

- Site visit schedule is as follows:
- March 6th from 12-1:30 pm: Clifton
 - March 9th from 12-1 pm: Union
 - March 14th from 11:30-1 pm: Monmouth
 - March 16th from 11:30-1 pm: New Brunswick
 - March 21st from 11:30-1 pm: Hamilton
 - March 23rd from 12-1:30 pm: West Orange

Research Center team members will be visiting the above CSH sites for "Research Month" in March 2023. We look forward to sharing ideas with you all about research, providing giveaways, food, games, and more!

Featured CSH Patient/Family

Meet the Lewis family!



Read why the Lewis family is involved in research:



Please describe your experience as a research participant at CSH:

I have been a part of the research program since receiving my son's diagnosis in June 2022. Since joining, I have met with amazing individuals who are consistently in communication and helping me through this process. Being a participant at CSH gives me additional resources and helps to make connections and new discoveries to better help my son.

Why did you decide to get involved in research at CSH?:

I decided to get involved in research at CSH because I want to help. The more research that is done, will better be able to help my son and other families going through the same things. I am hoping to contribute in furthering research so families like myself can know in advance and get the help they deserve from the beginning.

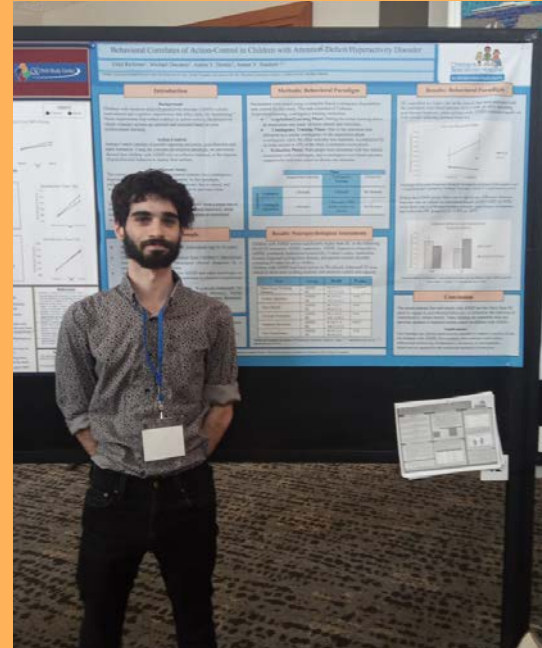
Is there anything else you would like to share?

While participating in this research, I was able to complete surveys that made me more aware of things that can help my son. I was also able to connect to very understanding and helpful professionals. Contributing to the research will help contribute to a better understanding in the future.



Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics Research Team Update

Uriel Richman, Research Assistant on the DBP team, presented a poster at the 2023 International Neuropsychological Society (INS) conference that was held in San Diego, CA between February 1st and 4th, 2023. The poster, “Behavioral Correlates of Action-Control in Children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder,” is part of an ongoing study investigating action-control patterns in children with autism and ADHD. This study aims to investigate action-control patterns in children with neurodevelopmental disorders, namely ADHD and autism. Action-control refers to the process by which voluntary actions are selected and executed through habitual or goal-directed behaviors. The presented research utilized the contingency degradation paradigm, a behavioral paradigm that is used to assess goal-directed behavior, in children with ADHD as well as in neurotypical children. Results support previous findings that compared to neurotypicals, children with ADHD tend to rely on habits at the expense of goal-directed actions. These findings could inform our understanding of the cognitive mechanisms underlying ADHD symptoms, and therefore, help advance behavioral interventions in children with this diagnosis.




CSH Research Resource Spotlight: the Clinical Research Intranet Page!



Are you interested in potentially conducting your own research at CSH but feel you need more information? We have great resources for you!

Go to the CSH intranet home page, and on the left-hand side, click on Resources, then Clinical Research. Or you can simply [click here](#).

On that site, you will find information about:

- Steps for creating a research project
- Our Research Manual, which provides guidance for conducting research at CSH or when research involves CSH patients, families and/or staff
- Our Clinical Research Toolbox, with many excellent pointers/descriptions about literature reviews, consent forms, IRBs, grant writing tips, and other important topics

Featured Researcher: Lauren Galifi and the CIMP Team

Lauren is a registered dietitian and a certified diabetes care and education specialist. She is the Clinical Lead for the Chronic Illness Management Program (CIMP) at Children's Specialized Hospital in New Brunswick. She develops diabetes education for program participants and staff, and leads program research and development. She takes special interest in helping program participants and team members to safely and confidently utilize diabetes technology.

For a recent publication from Lauren and others at CSH (both on the CIMP team and not), please see "[Evaluating a Multidisciplinary Inpatient Program for Youth with Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus.](#)"

More information about that study: Among youth with type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1D), older adolescents demonstrate more dysglycemia and less adherence to disease management. Poor disease management during this time of development can continue into adulthood, perpetuating the economic and health burden to the individual, health care system and society. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of an inpatient multidisciplinary approach to treating youth with T1D. The inpatient setting provides an intensive treatment model for diabetes management that promotes sustainable behavior change 3 months after discharge. While additional community supports are needed for long-term improvement, this program model may benefit patients who have been unable to manage their diabetes with outpatient treatment and therapy alone.



Lauren hopes to focus future research on connecting program outcomes like medical biomarkers and healthcare utilization with the use of technology, access to health care, and social determinants of health. She is eager to work closely with colleagues in the psychology department to also look at psychosocial factors which may be contributing to challenges or successes with medical treatment of diabetes and other chronic illnesses. The Chronic Illness Management Program aims to leverage future research to spread awareness of this unique program on a national level, improve the clinical quality of our services, and demonstrate the need for continued support of this program by insurance payers and other funding sources.

Deeper Dive

This month's focus is on the study "Early Occupational Therapy to Improve Functional Outcomes for Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Early OT-SI)."

This study is a collaborative effort between the occupational therapy department at CSH and Thomas Jefferson University (TJU) with funding from the New Jersey Governor's Council. Autistic individuals frequently demonstrate differences in sensory features that influence functional skills and participation. Sensory features such as hyper and hypo-reactivity, sensation seeking and atypical sensory integration are now a part of the diagnostic criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Families report that sensory features impact their quality of life by limiting participation in the home, school, work and the community. A previous collaborative study between the CSH OT department and TJU resulted in a manualized and tested occupational therapy intervention for autistic children ages 6 to 12 years who exhibited sensory differences. The study showed significant improvements in functional skills and socialization following the occupational therapy intervention. The goal of the Early OT-SI study is to test this intervention in younger children with autism and sensory features. This project has three goals: The first is to adapt the existing OT-SI protocol for autistic children ages 3 to 5 years, who have sensory features that impact functional skills. The second is to conduct a feasibility trial to evaluate the acceptability and implementation feasibility of the Early OT-SI protocol. The third is to explore the impact of intervention on daily living skills and autism behaviors. The study team has completed the first goal of adapting the OT-SI protocol for the younger age group, and we are recruiting participants for the feasibility trial, which is taking place at the CSH Toms River and Monmouth locations and is expected to be completed by June 2023.

Kudos to Joanne Hunt, OTD, OTR/L and Clinical Lead for Occupational Therapy. Please email her at jhunt@childrens-specialized.org if you'd like more information about the study, or if you're interested in possibly participating or referring someone to participate.



Meet Our Spring Interns!



Asher Hong

Asher is a senior at Rutgers University majoring in Public Health.

She is working with the Chronic Illness Management Program research team. Her other research interests include adolescent development and mental health. In her free time, she enjoys playing with her dog, painting, and listening to music.



Paige Kruse

Paige is a senior at Rutgers University majoring in Health Administration.

She is working with the Chronic Illness Management Program research team. Her other research interests include effects of pediatric chronic illness on development. In her free time, she enjoys exercising, listening to music, and seeing family and friends.



Elyse Quiñones

Elyse is a junior at Rutgers University majoring in Biotechnology.

She is working with the Developmental and Behavioral Pediatric research team. Her other research interests include neurological disorders and sexual/reproductive health. In her free time, she enjoys time with friends and reading.



Samantha Rozario

Samantha is a senior at Rutgers University double majoring in Biological Sciences and Economics.

She is working with the Developmental and Behavioral Pediatric research team. Her other research interest is oncology. In her free time, she enjoys listening to music and spending time with friends and family.





CSH Recent Publications

Dr. Brian Greer, Dr. Wayne Fisher, Dr. Ashley Fuhrman, and Dr. Daniel Mitteer, all with CSH's partner the Rutgers University Center for Autism Research, Education, and Services (CSH RUCARES), recently published their article "Conducting Translational Research in the Context of Patient Care" in *Perspectives on Behavior Science*.

From the abstract: "Although much has been written on the importance of translational research for bridging the continuum of basic science to clinical practice, few authors have described how such work can be carried out practically when working with patient populations in the context of ongoing clinical service delivery, where the priorities for patient care can sometimes conflict with the methods and goals of translational research. In this article, they explore some of the considerations for conducting this type of work while balancing clinical responsibilities that ensure high-quality patient care. They also discuss strategies they have found to jointly facilitate translational research and improve routine, clinical service delivery. A primary goal of this article is to encourage others working in applied settings to contribute to the increasingly important role that translational research plays in our science and practice by helping to better characterize and potentially lessen or remove barriers that may have impeded such investigations in the past."

Read the study [here](#). See the full list of CSH research publications [here](#).

DID YOU
KNOW?

Upcoming Events/Conferences/Grants

Sample of Conferences/Events:

- [Children's Hospital Association](#)
March 20-22, 2023. Tampa, FL
- [Children's Specialized Hospital Quality Fair](#)
March 27, 2023. New Brunswick, NJ
- [American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing](#)
April 11-15, 2023. Orlando, FL
- [Society of Pediatric Nurses](#)
April 26-28, 2023. Pittsburgh, PA
- [Society of Biological Psychiatry](#)
April 27-29, 2023. San Diego, CA
- [International Society for Autism Research](#)
May 3-6, 2023. Stockholm, Sweden
- [Organization for Human Brain Mapping](#)
July 22-26, 2023. Montreal, Canada



Grant announcement:

- The Organization for Autism Research's [Community Grant Competition](#) (up to \$10,000).
Deadline: April 24, 2023

Meet the CSH Research Center Team

Michael Dribbon, Ph.D.



Vice President of Business Development and Chief Innovation & Research Officer

Research Focus: Intervention outcomes, Social Determinants of Health

Michael likes music, travel, and time with family.

Jill Harris, Ph.D.



Associate Vice President, The Research Center, Coordinator of The Autism Program, Spark Site Coordinator

Research Focus: ASD screening for under-resourced young children, transition to adulthood for youth with disabilities

Jill likes going for walks, listening to books on tape, and vacationing in Maine.

Claire Marchetta, MPH
Research Liaison & Education Director



Research Focus: Epidemiological factors for developmental disabilities and birth defects

Claire enjoys outdoor recreation in all forms – especially hiking, camping, skiing and running.

Joman Y. Natsheh, M.D., Ph.D.
Research Lead, Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics



Research Focus: Neural and behavioral correlates of action-control in children with neuro-developmental disorders

Joman enjoys reading; especially Arabic literature. She loves to travel and explore, and she can spend hours immersed in graphic design.

Mayank Seth, Ph.D.
Research Lead, Psychiatry



Research focus: identification of factors underlying poor clinical outcomes, with an eye towards developing more efficacious rehab interventions

Mayank enjoys spending time with family & friends, reading, and listening to music. He also enjoys going on hikes and biking.

Amira Herstic, MS
Research Coordinator, Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics



Research Focus: Neuroscience of language and motor development in children with ASD and ADHD

Amira enjoys reading, crocheting, traveling, and playing with her baby.

Uriel Richman, MA
Research Assistant, Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics



Research Focus: Cognition and child development

Uriel enjoys hiking, camping, visual arts and playing tabletop games.

Tomiko Hackett, MPH
Research Engagement Coordinator





Research Focus: Mental health/substance use disorders as well as other chronic illnesses


Tomiko enjoys traveling, being in nature, reading, and spending time with friends.





To learn more about our research, if you are interested in discussing potential collaborations, or if you have questions or comments, please contact us at:

-  **Jill Harris, PhD** Associate Vice President, The Research Center and Coordinator of The Autism Program
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