

JUNE 2024 | ISSUE 6

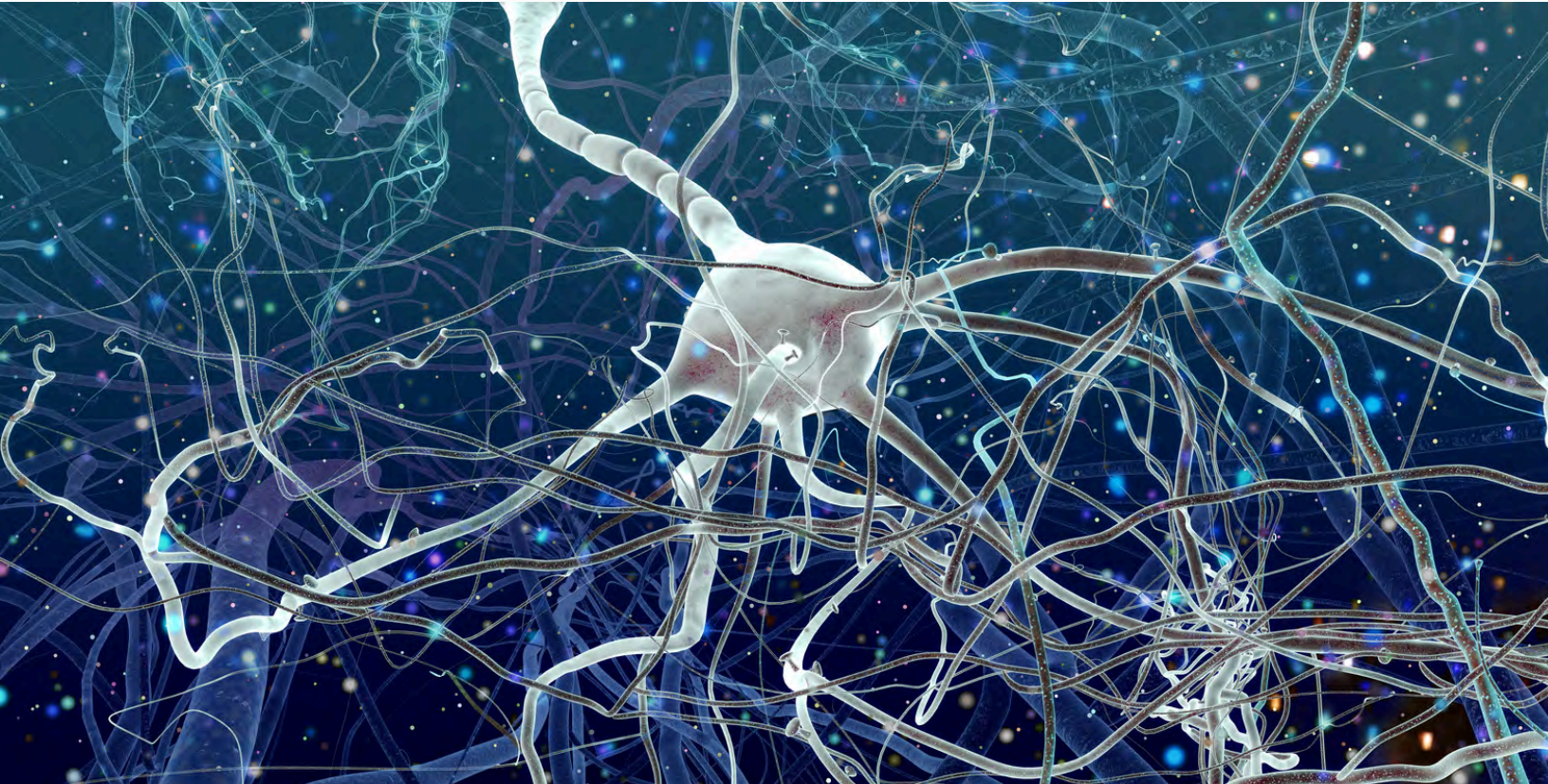
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# THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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WASHINGTON, DC

The Neurology & Rehabilitation Medicine Newsletter



The GW Medical Faculty Associates  
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## A WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to share some exciting updates with you in this month's newsletter. Over the next three months, we will be welcoming three new specialists to our team at GW: a headache specialist, a neuroimmunologist, and a movement disorder specialist. These additions will significantly enhance our capabilities and expand our expertise in these critical areas.

Our brand and patient volumes continue to grow throughout the region, reflecting the exceptional care and dedication of our team. We are also thrilled to announce the arrival of cutting-edge neurosurgical technology to our hospital, which will further elevate the quality of care we provide to our patients.



Additionally, we are proud to celebrate the graduation of a remarkable neurology resident class this month. These talented individuals will be joining top fellowship programs across the nation, continuing to build on their impressive achievements.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and hard work. Together, we are driving forward the mission of GW Neurology and making a significant impact on our community.

M. Z. Koubeissi, MD  
Professor and Interim Chair  
GW Department of Neurology & Rehabilitation Medicine



# OUR NEWS



Dr. Kaminski served as a discussant for a Reagan-Udall Foundation for the FDA conference dedicated to Natural History Studies and Registries in the Development of Rare Disease Treatments on May 13, 2024.



Dr. Kaminski provided a webinar focused on patients entitled, Autoimmune Neurological Diseases Associated with Thymic Epithelial Tumors. The Webinar was hosted by International Thymic Malignancy Interest Group. May 14, 2024.



Dr. Koubeissi participated in the First Egyptian Mega Epilepsy Event in Cairo on May 23, 2024 lecturing on Novel Targets for DBS in Epilepsy.



Dr. Rothstein is invited to give a lecture titled "Status of Neuropathology as consequence of long COVID" at the 9th Annual World Conference on Infectious Disease 2024, taking place in Budapest, Hungary in mid-June.



Photos from Dr. Koubeissi's dinner with the residents



Researchers at the George Washington University are looking for interested volunteers for a healthy control study to better understand an autoimmune, neuromuscular (disease affecting nerves and muscles) known as Myasthenia Gravis.

Faculty and staff are welcome to participate.

**PARTICIPATION INVOLVES:**  
One-time blood draw (You will have either 4 teaspoons (20 milliliters) or 10 teaspoons (50 milliliters) from an arm vein.



**YOU MAY QUALIFY IF YOU:**

- Don't have any autoimmune diseases
- No prednisone or corticosteroid use
- No vaccinations within a month

For more information, contact goztosun@mfa.gwu.edu



# WHAT'S NEW IN NEUROLOGY

## WHAT'S NEW

**A new medication helps reduce migraine headache days.**

## WHY IT MATTERS

The **ELEVATE** trial evaluated the efficacy and safety of **atogepant**, a calcitonin gene-related peptide receptor antagonist, for preventing episodic migraine in patients who had not responded to two to four classes of conventional oral treatments. In this randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study, participants received either atogepant 60 mg or a placebo once daily. The results showed that atogepant significantly reduced the mean number of monthly migraine days compared to the placebo, with a mean difference of -2.4 days. The most common side effect was constipation, and the treatment was generally well tolerated. This suggests that atogepant could be a viable preventive treatment for patients with difficult-to-treat episodic migraines.

Reference: Tassorelli C, Nagy K, Pozo-Rosich P, Lanteri-Minet M, Sacco S, Nežádal T, Guo H, De Abreu Ferreira R, Forero C, Trugman JM. Safety and efficacy of atogepant for the preventive treatment of episodic migraine in adults for whom conventional oral preventive treatments have failed (ELEVATE): a randomised, placebo-controlled, phase 3b trial. *Lancet Neurol.* 2024 Apr;23(4):382-392.

## WHAT'S NEW

**Chimeric antigen receptor T cells targeting B cells as a novel treatment in neuroimmunological disorders**

## WHY IT MATTERS

Neuroimmunology research has seen significant advancements, especially in the treatment of diseases like multiple sclerosis (MS), myasthenia gravis, neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorders (NMOSD), and myelin oligodendrocyte glycoprotein antibody disease. Over 20 drugs are now approved for MS, enabling personalized treatment. Recent approvals of B-cell-targeting monoclonal antibodies (e.g., ocrelizumab, ofatumumab, and inebilizumab) have improved disease management, yet challenges persist for patients unresponsive to conventional therapies. Innovative approaches, such as chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T cell therapy, show promise for overcoming these limitations. CAR T cells, successful in treating B cell malignancies, offer a new therapeutic mechanism by directly targeting and eliminating B cells, potentially providing long-lasting remissions. Despite their potential, CAR T cell therapy faces logistical challenges and therapy-associated toxicities. Ongoing and future clinical trials are crucial for assessing their safety, efficacy, and broader applicability, potentially transforming the treatment landscape for neuroimmunological diseases.

Reference: Haghikia A, Schett C, Mougliakakos D. B cell-targeting chimeric antigen receptor T cells as an emerging therapy in neuroimmunological diseases. *Lancet Neurol.* 2024 Jun;23(6):615-624.



# Interview with The Graduating Class of 2024



# Interview with

# Dr. Abdulrahman Bukhari

## 1- Why did you choose Neurology?

During my time as a medical student, I was amazed and fascinated by how the nervous system works. It works in such an organized and highly complicated and smooth fashion to control the function of other different body systems including the vascular, cardiac, and muscular systems. Neurology in my opinion greatly stimulates the human brain to think, explore, and imagine. It satisfies the curiosity one can have to understand how this body system works. From stroke to epilepsy to neuromuscular disorders, you can observe how a small alteration can result in a significant deficit that can be seen in form of loss of muscle strength, sensation, or a person's ability to think or speak. I found myself interested in reading more about the nervous system and I found myself enjoying studying the nervous system when preparing for medical school examinations.

## 2- How has your experience been as a resident at GW?

After I matched with GW, I was excited to start seeing patients and learning more about the nervous system. My residency has offered a plethora of opportunities to learn and gain much knowledge and experience to become more competent in the field. It has been a great journey working with great minds and kind souls here at GW from the faculty to my co-residents to our APPs and our EEG team. I have learnt a lot from my time as a resident at both the academic and personal levels.

## 3- What did you like the most about GW ?

The good patient volumes and the variety of the neurological cases we encounter at GW have helped me grow and feel more comfortable in managing these conditions. Working with such a great team indeed made this learning journey smooth and productive.

## 4- What are you going to miss the most about GW residency ?

Working with my co-residents and the daily rounding with our amazing attendings. The people I have met are what I am going to miss the most.

## 5-What is your favorite memory ?

I can't think of any specific memory, but as a whole I will never forget the days I spent at GW and the people I worked with.

## 6- What are your future plans ?

I am starting fellowship training in Clinical Neurophysiology and Epilepsy this summer. Like at the beginning of my residency, I am excited to start exploring a subspecialty in more detail and improving my knowledge and clinical skills in this field of neurology to apply this knowledge in delivering a world-class care for patient with different epileptic disorders. I also like to spend time teaching and sharing the knowledge I gained with other trainees and students. Working in an academic setting is what I aspire to pursuing after my fellowship.

## 7-A message to everyone

I would like to thank everyone who was part of my journey to become a neurologist. I have learnt a lot from each one. Everyone in this department is a star! I have been delighted to see my fellow residents' growth throughout residency. I am confident that this program has what it takes to train the most highly competitive neurologists. Keep doing what you are all doing. It could be challenging. It could be tough. But remember to enjoy it every moment. Diamonds are formed under pressure, but never forget as they are not formed overnight.



# Interview with

# Dr. Prarthana Hareesh



### 1- Why did you choose Neurology ?

It goes back to when I was a child. I remember reading books like Tell-Tale Brain and Phantom in the Brain and that made me see of neurology in a different light. My cousin had epilepsy and that made me appreciate neurology even more. Neurology is the math of medicine! I love math and physics, so the science of the brain was a “no-brainer” for me as the choice of my specialty.

### 2-How has your experience been as a resident at GW?

It has been a mixture of experiences. We have rotated at a number of hospitals, which made my experience fantastic. I was lucky to work with such a diverse faculty and meet a lot of different residents at these hospitals. That part of residency I really appreciated much. The cultural diversity that I got to be a part of was my best experience as a resident at GW.

### 3- What did you like the most about GW ?

The teaching itself. There are some phenomenal professors.

### 4- What are you going to miss the most about GW residency ?

I will miss being a resident, and the breadth of knowledge that we have been exposed to as residents. I am also going to miss working with the APPs, not to forget the residents. It will be very difficult to be apart since we grew together as residents. I think my people are what I will miss the most.

### 5-What is your favorite memory ?

My favorite memories go back to my PGY-2 year when I worked with my mentor, Dr. Chris Leon-Guerrero and with the exceptional chief residents at that time. Every moment of that year was most enjoyable.

### 6- What are your future plans ?

I am glad to stay at GW for my epilepsy fellowship. I want to contribute to epilepsy and my patients. Eventually, I see myself in an academic setting. In my personal life, I am working to become a yoga instructor. I have been working with autistic adults since 2018 and at some point, I would like to get more involved. Seeing life from different people’s perspective makes you feel very fortunate.

### 7-A message to everyone

Life is beautiful. Every minute of every day, we to learn from people around us. Making this experience more meaningful by knowing and helping one another would be one of the best ways to keep those memories of residency alive.



# Interview with

# Dr. Harrison Sun

## 1- Why did you choose Neurology ?

I have always been interested in the brain and its mysteries.

## 2- How has your experience been as a resident at GW?

My experience has been phenomenal. I learned a lot throughout these 4 years. You get what you put into it, and I feel like I have put a lot into residency. The best thing has been the great mentorship from a lot of physicians in their respective fields.

## 3- What did you like the most about GW ?

People make or break your experience. At GW, people have been amazing. You can ask any question without feeling bad about it.

## 4- What are you going to miss the most about GW residency ?

I am going to miss the people the most. I have formed strong bonds with the residents.



## 5-What is your favorite memory ?

Teaching residents and students has been a terrific experience, especially when I attended stroke codes. The combination of those two created my favorite memories.

## 6- What are your future plans ?

I am going to do vascular neurology fellowship. Afterwards, we'll see where the wind takes me

## 7-A message to everyone

I want to thank all the people in the program. They have made my experience unique. I look forward to graduating with a great sense of pride and accomplishment.



# Congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2024!



January 9, 2024  
**Adam Ostendorf, MD**  
Nationwide Children's National, Ohio,  
United States  
Title: The Future of The Epilepsy  
Monitoring Unit

February 13, 2024  
**Emilio Perruca, MD, PhD, FRCP**  
University of Melbourne, Australia  
Title: Recent Advances and Future  
Perspectives in The Pharmacological  
Treatment of Epilepsy

March 12, 2024  
**Fred Lado, MD, PhD**  
Northwell Health, New York, United  
States  
Title: TBA

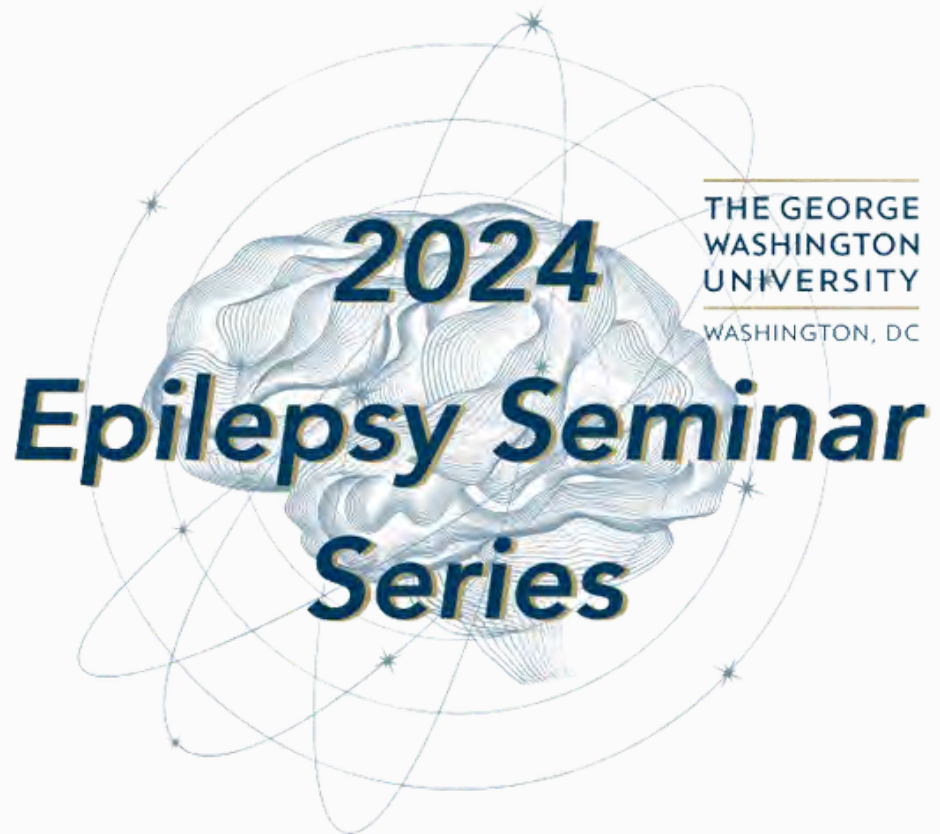
April 9, 2024  
**William Stacey, MD, PhD**  
University of Michigan,  
United States  
Title: Predicting Surgical Outcome With  
Network Properties of HFOs

May 14, 2024  
**Judy Liu, MD, PhD**  
Brown University, Rhode Island, United  
States  
Title: Metabolic Pathways in Epilepsy

**June 11, 2024**  
**Samir Sheth, MD, PhD**  
Columbia University, New York,  
United States  
Title: Network-Minded Epilepsy Surgery

**July 9, 2024**  
**Brian Lundstrom, MD, PhD**  
Mayo Clinic, Minnesota  
United States  
Title: Low Frequency Brain Stimulation

**August 13, 2024**  
**Michael Fox, MD, PhD**  
Brigham and Women's Hospital,  
Massachusetts, United States  
Title: Causal Mapping of Epilepsy and Other  
Symptoms Onto Human Brain Circuits



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**September 17, 2024**  
**Carrie McDonald, PhD**  
University of California San Diego,  
United States  
Title: Imaging of Cognitive Networks in  
Epilepsy

**October 15, 2024**  
**Lori Isom, PhD**  
University of Michigan,  
United States  
Title: Discovering Mechanisms of  
Developmental and Epileptic Encephalopathy  
With SUDEP

**November 11, 2024**  
**Jeff Noebels, MD, PhD**  
Baylor College Of Medicine, Texas,  
United States  
Title: Glioblastoma Epilepsy: A  
Hypersynaptic Ring of Fire

**December 17, 2024**  
**Joseph Tracy, PhD, ABPP/CN**  
Thomas Jefferson University, Pennsylvania,  
United States  
Title: TBA



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Connect with us



*Thank you*

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