



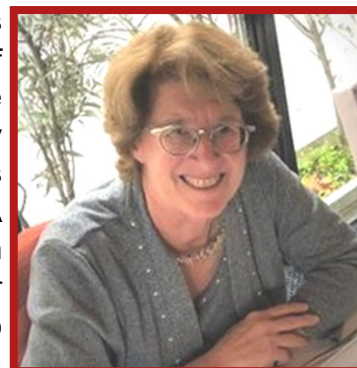
**Weill Cornell Medicine**  
Global Health Education

# Winter 2021 Newsletter



# Notes from the Director

This past year has had its highs and lows. Last year at this time we were dealing with a pandemic that forced a shutdown of “normal” way of life. Vaccine trials were in progress, but the uncertainty of knowing when we could be vaccinated was very stressful. Optimism and hope were in short supply, as were PPEs and masks for that matter. Then, in early 2021, the FDA authorized the emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19. This was great news but trying to schedule appointment to get vaccinated was anything but easy, which further added to the stress and fear of getting sick. Now, as 2021 is coming to an end, most of us have been triple vaccinated. We are dining out. We are traveling. And, most importantly, we are celebrating events in person with family and friends.



Sadly, the COVID situation caused us to cancel international summer electives for the Class of 2025. Students managed to work virtually on projects with host mentors abroad, but the experience of living and working in another country was sorely missed. Throughout 2021, the Office of Global Health Education (OGHE) pivoted swiftly to present seminars via zoom, which actually served to increase the number of people attending our sessions. Recordings of virtual events we hosted can be found on [Panopto](#) under Global Health Education.

As 2021 draws to a close, I want to share some personal information with you. Earlier this year, I decided to step down as Director of the Office of Global Health Education and my last day in this position is December 31st. Two faculty members have been named to succeed me and I am sure that they will continue to build upon the great global health program we have at Weill Cornell. I will serve as consultant/mentor to them through 2022, so my involvement in global activities will not end immediately!

I want to thank the fantastic staff of OGHE for all of their time and effort in making the global health education program first-rate. They are a special group of individuals with whom I enjoyed working. As always, I thank our donors who have supported our programs throughout the years. Their support is so important for our success.

Wishing you a happy, healthy holiday and best wishes for 2022.



**Madelon L. Finkel, Ph.D.**

Professor of Population Health Sciences  
Director, Office of Global Health Education  
Population Health Science Curriculum Leader



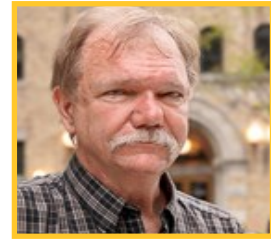
Dr. Roy Gulick



Dr. Cecilia Sorenson



Dr. Lawrence Palinkas



Dr. Lewis Ziska

The Global Health Seminar Series, formerly Global Health Grand Rounds, is a lecture series that serves as a platform for dialogue on contemporary global health issues. This Fall, OGHE continued to offer the Global Health Seminar Series virtually in effort to include our international partners in real-time.

The series first speaker, Dr. Roy Gulick, gave an update on COVID-19. Without a doubt, Dr. Gulick's talk was simply phenomenal, translating the complex science into language that the lay person could understand. Subsequent talks focused on climate change. Dr. Cecilia Sorenson, Associate Professor of Environmental Health Sciences at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, focused on climate change and the effect on health. Her talk was very comprehensive and was a marvelous segue for a talk by Dr. Lawrence Palinkas, the Albert G. & Frances Lomas Feldman Professor of Social Policy and Health Professor of Social Work, Anthropology and Preventative Medicine at the University of Southern California. Dr. Palinkas focused on the impact of global climate change on mental health. His talk was well detailed and provided insights into relationships between climate-induced events and their impact on mental health. The last speaker, Dr. Lewis Ziska, Associate Professor, Environmental Health Sciences at the Columbia University Irving Medical Center, spoke on climate change and food security. His talk was a sobering reminder of the huge disruptions in food harvesting and production due to changes in temperature, drought, and flooding.

Please join us in the Spring 2022, as we have exciting speakers lined up. All lectures in the Global Health Seminar Series are offered for 1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)<sup>TM</sup>.

For more information and to be added to the Global Health listserv, please email [globalhealthta@med.cornell.edu](mailto:globalhealthta@med.cornell.edu). For past recordings, [click here](#). Upcoming lectures are listed on the Global Health Education [website](#).

## Global Health Career Seminars



Dr. Jennifer Downs

The Global Health Career Seminar series offers 1st year students an opportunity to hear from Weill Cornell clinicians who incorporate global health into their practice. The Seminar is designed to enable students to engage in a conversation with speakers in an informal setting to hear their story. The Career Seminars were offered both in-person and virtual, depending on the speaker's availability.



Dr. Radhika Sundararajan

This Fall Dr. Jennifer Downs, Associate Professor of Medicine, met with the students in-person and spoke of her global health work in Tanzania. Dr. Radhika Sundararajan, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine, met with students over zoom and discussed her background in anthropology and medicine and how that influenced her global health research. She spoke of her work in India, Uganda and Tanzania.



# *The Global Health Curriculum at WCM*

Ten members of the Class of 2024 participated in an international elective during the past summer. Students worked with WCM faculty mentors who have projects in Brazil, Haiti, Tanzania, and Taiwan. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the projects were completed remotely. OGHE hosted the Fall International Student Poster event where students shared their research project findings with those in the Class of 2025 who are thinking about taking an international elective in Summer 2022. Congratulations to Sheridan Bowers and Richie Hong who will be presenting their findings at the annual Consortium of Universities for Global Health conference. Many thanks to the mentors who helped to facilitate the placement of students in research studies being conducted at the host institution.

## SUMMER 2021 RESEARCH FELLOWS



**Sheridan Bowers**

**Mentor:** Jennifer Downs, MD, MSc, PhD

**Country:** Mwanza, Tanzania

**Research Title:** Perspectives on Family Planning in Tanzania



**Luiza Perez**

**Mentor:** Nimmi Ramanugam, PhD

**Country:** Sao Paulo, Brazil

**Research Title:** Cervical Cancer-Related Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices and Self-Screening Acceptance Among Patients, Employees and Social Media Followers



**Taylor Brashear**

**Mentor:** Daniel Fitzgerald, MD

**Country:** GHESKIO, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

**Research Title:** Comparison of Th1/Th2 Cytokine Profiles Among HIV-Infected Individuals with Recurrent vs. Single Episode vs. Never Active TB.



**Nicholas Roberts**

**Mentor:** Margaret McNair, MD

**Country:** GHESKIO, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

**Research Title:** The Haiti Cardiovascular Disease Cohort, a Prospective Longitudinal Cohort Based in GHESKIO.



**Emily Cohen**

**Mentor:** Jennifer Downs, MD, MSc, PhD

**Country:** Mwanza, Tanzania

**Research Title:** Using Qualitative Data to Determine Intervention Curriculum



**Natalia Roszkowska**

**Mentor:** Robert Peck, MD, MS

**Country:** Mwanza, Tanzania

**Research Title:** Influence of Waist Circumference Measurements on BP by HIV Status & Patient Sex



**Richie Hong**

**Mentor:** Radhika Sundararajan, MD, PhD

**Country:** Mwanza, Tanzania

**Research Title:** A Novel Approach to Community-Based HIV Testing with Traditional Healers in Mwanza, Tanzania



**Eric Takoushian**

**Mentors:** Robert Peck, MD, MS and Justin Kingery, MD, PhD

**Country:** Mwanza, Tanzania

**Research Title:** The Evaluation of Left Ventricular Hypertrophy by ECG in HIV-Infected and HIV-Uninfected Adults in Tanzania



**Jordan Leith**

**Mentor:** Robert Peck, MD, MS

**Country:** Mwanza, Tanzania

**Research Title:** Angina and Major Adverse Cardiac Events in People with HIV in Tanzania



**Crystal Wang**

**Mentor:** Madelon Finkel, PhD

**Country:** Taipei, Taiwan

**Research Title:** Maternal and Fetal Microbiome: Effects on Conception, Pregnancy and Postpartum Health



# Intro to Global Health Seminars Series

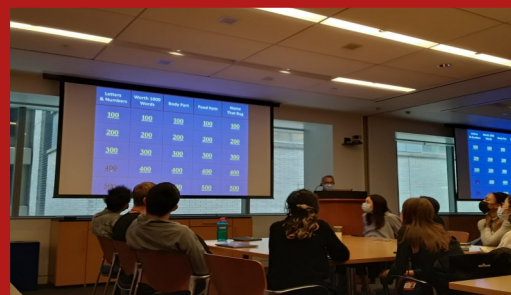


The Office of Global Health Education safely resumed in-person its Intro to Global Health Seminar Series offered to first-year students who are interested in learning more about global health. This series was held in the Griffis Faculty Club this Fall semester. This 11-week series included talks by faculty focusing on how to measure burden of disease, ethics in global health, pediatric diseases in low- and middle-income countries, population-based disease screening, global blindness, why nutrition matters, and how to organize an epidemic surveillance program. Each case-based session was interactive in that students, working in small groups of 6, were asked to answer a specific question pertinent to the topic and then present their answers to the larger group. Using a case-based approach to learning proved to be an excellent way to have the students be engaged rather than passively listening to yet another power point lecture. One lecturer was especially creative, having the students play “Jeopardy” – the students answered questions and played for candy. Overall, one-third of the students from the Class of 2025 attended this series on a regular basis, while approximately fifty-five percent of the Class of 2025 attended at least one session.

Based on evaluations collected, seventy-nine percent of surveyors believed that the quality of the speakers was excellent, and twenty-one percent thought the speakers were very good. Fifty-eight percent of respondents believed that the overall quality of the sessions was excellent and forty-two thought the sessions were very good. Seventy-nine percent of surveyors rated the seminar series as a new learning experience as excellent while twenty-one rated it as very good. Finally, sixty-seven percent of surveyors thought that this seminar series was a valuable educational experience that increased their interest in activism and research in global health.

Overall, the students felt that “the series was enjoyable and engaging.” They “loved the interactive discussions” and believed that “it helped to make things more concrete.” The students not only “appreciated the diversity in topics,” but also had the “opportunity to meet global health faculty and hear about their ongoing research/work”.

Thank you to Drs. Madelon Finkel, Duncan Hau, TJ Jirasevijinda, Jyoti Mathad, Inmaculada de Melo-Martin, Saurabh Mehta, Robert Peck, David Scales, Grace Sun, and Jay Varma for your willingness and support in delivering your relevant and timely global health talks.



# WCM Students' Testimonials

"...This experience was great and has really emphasized the way I would like to make global health research a staple of my career...it made me a lot more cognizant of the ways global health should be conducted so that it does no harm." (Summer 2021)

"The best aspects of the project were getting to collaborate and hear from partners in Mwanza. They were incredibly enthusiastic, and gave constructive feedback that greatly improved the presentation." (Summer 2021)

"...My research experience was very positive ... and I learned a lot about conducting epidemiological global health research. I was able to spearhead a project with oversight from researchers at the Center for Global Health. I learned a huge amount about the field of global health cardiology. It has set the groundwork for future studies with my mentor ... and for my AOC. Using survival analysis was a new skill I gained." (Summer 2021)

## SUMMER RESEARCH

## INTRO TO GLOBAL HEALTH SEMINAR SERIES

"It was really fun to get hands-on experience!" (Fall 2021)

"I really enjoyed the discussion-based setting!" (Fall 2021)

"It was nice to see the trajectory as an example of where a global health career could go." (Fall 2021)

"It was interesting to think about a global health problem that is at the forefront of society's minds, and to compare our ideas with those that were actually implemented while being led by one of the people who played a big role in NYS' Covid response" (Fall 2021)

**Glasgow:** "This experience definitely opened my eyes to unique workings of the NHS. It is incredible that everyone in Scotland automatically gets healthcare throughout his or her entire life. The best aspects of the experience were taking care of such a wide-ranging and unique population in a huge, tertiary care children's hospital that serves the entire pediatric population of Scotland. I really enjoyed working in A&E, where I had the experience of seeing patient cases through from start to finish, and acting as one of their primary care providers." (Spring 2018)

**Costa Rica:** "This rotation successfully increased my understanding of various issues relating to healthcare delivery, which was my most important objective. I also practiced my Spanish daily, whether I was working at clinic or running errands such as buying groceries or bus tickets for myself, and I hope to continue learning more medical Spanish terminology so that I can communicate with Spanish-speaking patients more effectively. One final thing that I appreciate from this rotation is that it has provided me with a better and broader perspective for working with patients in the future, especially immigrants." (Spring 2018)

## 4TH YEAR ELECTIVE ABROAD

## Visiting International Student Program

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of Global Health Education has been receiving numerous queries from international students seeking to take a clinical elective at WCM. Unfortunately, we are still in a holding pattern given the continued global spread of the virus and recently the Omicron variant. Needless to say, OGHE is enthusiastically looking forward to resuming electives with international students. We are hopeful that the COVID situation in 2022 will be much better and that our wonderful Visiting International Student Program can reopen so that we can continue to offer foreign medical students exposure to the world-class medical care provided at Weill Cornell/NY Presbyterian Hospital and its affiliates.

### VISITING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



"It was beyond incredible to learn from globally acclaimed hematologists at NYPH and obtain exposure to world-class cancer care through the clinical electives at WCM. This experience was an invaluable learning curve. Receiving hands-on experience and getting the opportunity to present cases during rounds, discussions on the hot-off-the-press articles with the clinical fellows, lunch conferences that discussed challenging cases and afternoons in the clinics, all bolstered my love for oncology. May your excellent program continue to inspire many more medical students."

*~Tara Rajendran, MBBS, MFA. Dr. Rajendran is a graduate of Kasturba Medical College, Manipal University, India. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate focusing on the intersection between music and medicine.*



"My final rotation as a medical student was spent in Nephrology. It was a life-changing experience as it was the beginning of a passion for Nephrology and more specifically Onco-Nephrology. The unique setting and the superb mentoring that I received led me to pursue an academic career. My elective selection solidified my decision of pursuing my medical training in the United States. I later underwent a year of clinical research at Johns Hopkins University followed by residency in Internal Medicine at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and fellowship in Nephrology at George Washington University. I returned to Lebanon to practice medicine and am

Chief of Nephrology at St. Georges Hospital. Most recently, I made the decision to relocate to the USA where I will be soon joining the division of Nephrology and Hypertension at the University of Minnesota."

*~ Sabine Karam, MD. Dr. Karam received her medical degree from St Joseph's University Medical School, Beirut, Lebanon and did her Residency in Internal Medicine at Montefiore Medical Center, Bronx, New York.*



# PASSING THE TORCH

Dr. Madelon Finkel, Director of the Office of Global Health Education (OGHE), has decided to step down as Director at the end of December 2021. She loved every minute of building the global health education program at Weill Cornell but felt that it was time to pass the torch. Drs. Laura Greisman and Radhika Sundararajan have been named Co-Directors of the renamed global health education office, the Office of International Medical Student Education, which will be under the oversight of Weill Cornell Medicine's Office of Medical Education. Drs. Greisman and Sundararajan have a rich global health background and a desire to bring new ideas to our robust program. Dr. Finkel will be staying on as Advisor/Mentor through 2022. Under Drs. Greisman and Sundararajan's leadership Dr. Finkel has no doubt that Weill Cornell will continue to be viewed as a leader in global health education.

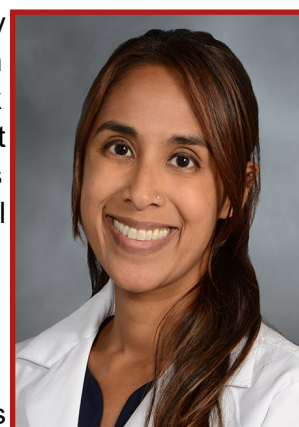
**CHANGES  
AHEAD**

Dr. Greisman, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine, previously served as an Associate Clerkship Director for Medicine Clerkship. Prior to medical school, Dr. Greisman was awarded a Fullbright Scholarship to study in Australia where her interest in global health began. She then graduated with a distinction in Global Health Research from Albert Einstein College of Medicine after dedicating an extra year working in a rural community in Guatemala researching the epidemiology of common GI pathogens. Dr. Greisman completed her residency at Stanford in the Internal Medicine/Global Health Track during which time she collaborated with a team in Ethiopia to implement the country's first integrated audiology screening program for MDR-TB patients at St. Peter's Hospital in Addis Ababa. In 2018, she attended the Gorgas Course in Peru where she earned a diploma in tropical medicine and hygiene (DTM&H) and received the ASTMH Certificate in Knowledge in Clinical Tropical Medicine and Traveler's Health.



Dr. Laura Greisman

Dr. Radhika Sundararajan, Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine, previously served as Director of the UC-San Diego School of Medicine Global Health Academic Concentration. She received her medical degree from New York University School of Medicine and completed her residency training at Massachusetts General/Brigham and Women's Hospitals. Dr. Sundararajan is very passionate about improving engagement with healthcare services in global low-resource settings. She currently has various global health projects in India, Uganda and Tanzania.



Dr. Radhiika Sundararajan

The OGHE team congratulates and welcomes Drs. Greisman and Sundararajan and look forward to working with both of them. Words cannot express the team's heartfelt gratitude and best wishes to Dr. Finkel for building a first-rate global health education program and for being such a supportive supervisor and mentor to the staff and to students.



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The Office of Global Health Education (OGHE) was established by the Dean of the Medical College to facilitate student participation in global health. OGHE oversees the international educational programs at Weill Cornell. OGHE also provides visiting international students opportunities to take clinical electives at Weill Cornell and its affiliates.

[Click here to visit us on the web!](#)

*From the Office of Global Health Education,  
stay safe, stay healthy and enjoy the holidays!*



## DONATIONS

To make a donation online please [click here](#).  
Under the "About Your Gift, Designation,"  
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If you have questions about making a donation, please  
contact Dr. Madelon Finkel at  
[maf2011@med.cornell.edu](mailto:maf2011@med.cornell.edu)  
or call 646-962-8038



Newsletter designed by Savita Birbal