Happy Holidays from the Office of International Medical Student Education (IMSE)!

As the year comes to a close, we are grateful to reflect on the amazing work of our Weill Cornell faculty and students in creating an engaged Global Health community. Over the past few months we have seen the damaging impact of climate change, natural disasters and humanitarian crises around the world that emphasize our interconnectedness as global citizens and underscore the need to train the next generation of globally minded physician leaders to tackle these issues. Through offering a strong foundational curriculum and international clinical and research experiences, our Office hopes to provide the tools and resources needed for our students to succeed. We hope that our robust program of bidirectional student exchanges will continue to promote cross-cultural exchange and cultural humility and agility in all our students. This year we continue to grow our programs with international partnerships in Ecuador and Indonesia and note that student exchange volumes that have returned to pre-COVID levels!

In October, IMSE hosted the Fall International Fellows Reception to celebrate and share the work of the ten Weill Cornell Medical students who participated in mentored international summer projects in India, Mexico, Tanzania and Thailand. Dr. Mickey Stewart, the Senior Dean of the Office of International Affairs and Affiliations and Dr. Jyoti Mathad, Associate Professor of Medicine & Assistant Professor of Medicine in OB/GYN, provided opening remarks at the reception. They reflected on IMSE’s proven record and ongoing commitment to providing students with high quality international education, experiential learning, and faculty mentorship. Our Fellows Reception continues to demonstrate the strength and breadth of Weill Cornell Medicine’s Global Health community.

Our pre-departure workshop for the fourth-year medical students who will be participating in an international clinical elective in Spring 2024 was held in late November. Nineteen students will travel abroad to participate in a clinical elective in early 2024 with rotations in Australia, Austria, Costa Rica, South Korea, London, Paris, Peru, Singapore, Scotland, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, and Turkey. We are also thrilled that three of our fourth-year medical students will be participating in clinical electives at Weill Cornell Medicine Qatar campus. Stay tuned for our Spring International Fellows Reception in May 2024, where returning students will report back on their experiences!

Special and continued thanks to our donors for their generosity whether in the form of fellowships, endowments, or stipends. Your support allows our Weill Cornell Students to participate in these world class global health opportunities.

The first half of the academic year has been wonderful thanks to our institutional and international partners, our amazing staff, and students. Wishing you all a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season! We are looking forward to connecting in 2024!

Laura & Radhika

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We continue to offer our Global Health Grand Rounds virtually as part of our initiative to engage partners around the world. These lectures are very well attended by our WCM students and faculty as well as our partners, especially our partners in Brazil.

The first Grand Rounds for the 2023-2024 Academic Year was led by Dr. Joseph Shin, Assistant Professor of Medicine, who presented on migration and health. His talk highlighted various causes for migration and how these causes may affect health. Pre-migration conditions affect post-migration health and may even increase health risks and have negative health outcomes. He also advised us that we must caution ourselves, more specifically, understand the intent when we use certain words to describe immigrants. Perception plays a role especially since a lot of words we currently use to describe immigrant holds a lot of biases.

The second session was led by Dr. Oladele Ogunseitan, Distinguished Professor of Population Health & Disease Prevention at University of California, Irvine. Dr. Ogunseitan spoke about the concept of One Health and the environment. He discussed why One health is important and necessary, and by having a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach it can enable us to predict disease outbreaks.

We look forward to future Grand Rounds talk by speakers from several of our partner institutions. Scheduled lectures and the link to recorded lectures can be found on IMSE’s website under the Events Page.
Ten students from the class of 2026 participated in an international mentored research project during summer of 2023. These projects took place in India, Mexico, Tanzania and Thailand under the mentorship of Drs. Betania Allen-Leigh, Puja Chebrolu, Jennifer Downs, Thanakorn Jirasevijinda, Apicahi Khongphattyothin, Dominic Konadu-Yeboah, Jyoti Mathad, Robert Peck, Khanh Pham, Radhika Sundararajan, Niharika Thakkar, and Timothy Wilkin.

In October 2023, these students presented their findings at IMSE’s Fall International Summer Fellows Reception. Many thanks to our international faculty mentors for helping to facilitate the placement of these students and for providing supervision of their projects. Students from this past summer were funded by the Barbara Slifka International Fellows and the Dr. Robert C. and Veronica Atkins Foundation Curriculum. Thank you to our donors for their continued support!

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Mwanza, Tanzania
Mentor(s):
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Associate Professor of Medicine
Associate Professor of Medicine in Microbiology and Immunology, WCM
Khanh Pham, MD
Instructor in Medicine, WCM
Funding: Barbara Slifka International Fellows

Elizabeth Bundschuh
Bangkok, Thailand
Mentor(s):
Apicahi Khongphattyothin, MD
Professor of Pediatrics, Chulalongkorn University
Thanakorn Jirasevijinda, MD
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Mackenna Mejdell
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Ghana, Africa  
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Mark Brouillette, MD  
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Andrew Grose, MD, MSc  
Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, HSS  
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Nicole Palmer  
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Jyoti Mathad, MD, MS,  
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Juliet Ryan  
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Adam Tucker  
Puebla, Mexico  
Mentor(s):  
Timothy Wilkin, MD, MPH  
Assistant Dean for Clinical Compliance  
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Betania Allen-Leigh, MA, PhD  
Professor – Researcher, INPH - Mexico  

Funding: Dr. Robert C. and Veronica Atkins Foundation Curriculum  

Sarah Wozniak  
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Mentor(s):  
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Funding: Barbara Slifka International Fellows  

Helen Xu  
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Thanakorn Jirasevijinda, MD  
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Funding: Barbara Slifka International Fellows
The Class of 2027 has shown great interest and participation in the Fall 2023 iteration of IMSE’s Introduction to Global Health Seminar Series. Forty percent of the MS1 class attended at least one session.

Topics for this 9-week series included: the global burden of disease, non-communicable diseases in low- and middle-income countries, settler colonialism as a social determinant of health, health care systems and medical pluralism, colonization / decolonization in Global Health, burn injury and care in a low-resource setting, the right to sight, women’s health issues in LMICs, global health infectious diseases, and global health issues facing children.

We continue to present this lecture series in an interactive format where students were asked to work in groups on specific case-based questions related to the topic presented. The case-based learning approach gives students an opportunity to see theory in practice while keeping them engaged to develop analytic and collaborative skills. It is a chance to connect students with real-life data allowing them to articulate issues while acquiring deep knowledge in the process.

Dr. Thanakorn Jirasevijinda, Professor of Pediatrics, used the “Jeopardy” format to get the students even more engaged. For the past 3 years since surveys for individual lectures were collected, this session was one of the highest rated among the students.

Students enjoyed discussing real-world cases which presented an opportunity to think about how global health interventions and programs can be done differently. It was a joy to see the impressive level of in-person engagement as students worked together in small groups to discuss interactive cases introduced by a diverse selection of renowned global health faculty educators.

Many thanks to our lecturers this year: Drs. Hau, Gallagher, Jirasevijinda, Mathad, Peck, Scales, Sun, & Sundararajan, and Ms. Sadigh. We appreciate them for taking the time out of their busy schedules to once again making this year’s Introduction to Global Health Seminar Series a success.
The Visiting International Student Program is a way for international medical students to obtain exposure to world-class medical care practice provided at Weill Cornell-NY Presbyterian Hospital. We are delighted to host students each month from around the globe – both from our long-standing partner schools as well as from international independent students. During the Fall 2023 semester 34 visiting international students completed electives in Anesthesia, Cardio Thoracic Surgery, Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine at NYPH, NYP Queens and Brooklyn Methodist Hospital in Obstetrics, Ophthalmology, Psychiatry, and Urology.

We are so grateful for the support of clinical departments, coordinators and the Registrar’s Office who assist from placement to processing and registering these international students. Students have provided outstanding feedback on these clinical electives: “attending and residents...were instrumental in my learning experience. They provided invaluable guidance in interpreting complex cases.” Another stated that they “loved working on collaborative teams of attendings, fellows, and residents.”

We continue to work closely with the Office of International Affairs and Affiliations in building new international partnerships, in efforts to expand WCMC’s tradition of sustainable and equitable bilateral student exchange.
My name is Samarth Rabadiya, a final-year medical student at MP Shah Government Medical College in India. My academic journey has been a tapestry of challenges and growth, ultimately steering me towards a transformative elective at Weill Cornell Medical College. The solid foundation laid by my medical school in India fueled my ambition to explore international perspectives and cutting-edge practices in Pediatrics.

Opting for a Pediatric ICU elective at Weill Cornell was a deliberate choice driven by the allure of delving into the intricate world of critical care for children, hoping to elevate my clinical skills by working alongside worldwide leaders in the field at Weill Cornell.

During my elective, I immersed myself in a dynamic healthcare environment, navigating complex cases and collaborating with seasoned professionals. Beyond refining my clinical skills, the experience broadened my understanding of patient-centered care and the importance of interdisciplinary teamwork.

The welcoming nature of the PICU team and IMSE staff made me feel valued and allowed me to perform at my best. Engaging with diverse medical professionals and patient populations underscored the significance of tailoring healthcare to individual needs. This elective not only deepened my appreciation for pediatric critical care but also equipped me with a broader, more nuanced approach to medicine that I am eager to integrate into my future Pediatric practice.

My name is Sabrina Abed, a final-year medical student at Universidade de Santa Cruz do Sul, Brazil and I am passionate about Ophthalmology. I chose Weill Cornell for its outstanding education, advanced technology, and exceptional patient care.

To no surprise, the ophthalmology department's broad spectrum of ophthalmology cases and patient demographics were extremely impressive. This resulted in me having an enriching experience which offered insights into the vision's complex nature. The daily eye exams refined my skills, and observing innovative surgeries by world-class surgeons expanded my knowledge. A key takeaway was the importance of ophthalmic care for underserved communities, a principle I'm committed to in my future practice.

I feel privileged to have rotated at WCM. Thank you to IMSE for making this possible.
From the Office of International Medical Student Education, have the most joyous holiday season and a happy, healthy and prosperous new year!