



## Center Without Walls Program PANELISTS

Center Without Walls Program | MS Forum Webinar and Virtual Expo

Saturday, June 5, 2021 | 10:00 am PST

### Doctors and Researchers:

#### ***Lilyana Amezcua, M.D. – USC***



Dr. Amezcua is an Associate Professor of Neurology. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from University of California Irvine in Irvine, California, her medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, followed by neurology residency and clinical fellowship in multiple sclerosis at the University of Southern California (USC) under the tutelage of Leslie Weiner, MD and a NMSS multiple sclerosis clinical fellowship award. She received her Master of Science degree in clinical, biomedical, and translational science from USC, Preventive Medicine, under a Clinical Translational Science Institute NIH KL2 award under tutelage of Annette Langer-Gould, MD, and PhD. She serves as principal investigator on multiple clinical projects and her research interests includes defining racial/ethnic disparities and modifiable (environmental and sociocultural) from non-modifiable genetic factors involved in disease severity and progression. She also serves as council to several boards such as the NMSS multicultural advisory board, MS Minority Research Engagement Partnership Network, and the Multiple Sclerosis Association of America. She is active within her community and lectures both in English and Spanish and was recognized for her dedication in 2015 with an induction into the NMSS Health Professionals Hall of Fame.

#### ***David Hafler, M.D - Yale***



David A. Hafler, M.D. is the William S. and Lois Stiles Edgerly Professor and Chairman Department of Neurology and Professor of Immunobiology, Yale School of Medicine, and is the Neurologist-in-Chief of the Yale-New Haven Hospital. He graduated magna cum laude in 1974 from Emory University with combined B.S. and M.Sc. degrees in biochemistry, and the University of Miami School of Medicine in 1978. He then completed his internship in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins followed by a neurology residency at Cornell Medical Center-New York Hospital in New York. Dr. Hafler was trained in immunology at the Rockefeller University and then at Harvard where he joined the faculty in 1984 and later became the Breakstone Professorship of Neurology at Harvard and was a founding Associated Member of the Broad Institute at MIT. In 2009 he moved to Yale as the Chair of the Department of Neurology. Dr. Hafler is a clinical scientist with a research interest in the mechanism of multiple sclerosis with over 400 publications in the field of MS, autoimmunity and immunology. He is a co-founder of the International MS Genetic Consortium a group that identified the genes causing MS. He has served as a member of the editorial boards for *Journal of Clinical Investigation* and the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*, and is co-founder of the Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies and leads the NIH Autoimmunity Prevention Center Grant at Yale. He was a Jacob Javits Merit Award Recipient from the NIH and has won many awards including Dystel Prize for MS research from the American Academy of Neurology, the University of Miami Annual Distinguished Alumni Award, the Raymond Adams Prize from the American Neurologic Association, and was the 2016 Frontier Lecturer at the AAN. Dr. Hafler has been elected to membership in the Alpha Omega Society, the American Society of Clinical Investigation, and the National Academy of Medicine.

***Adam Kaplin, M.D, Ph.D.***



Dr. Adam Kaplin completed his undergraduate training at Yale University and his MD and PhD training at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. His research training experience includes having trained in the labs of two Nobel Laureates, and completed his PhD and postdoctoral training in the Lab of Solomon Snyder, MD, who was the 2005 recipient of the National Medal of Science (the highest science honor in the United States). Dr. Kaplin was the Chief Psychiatric Consultant to the Johns Hopkins Multiple Sclerosis and Transverse Myelitis Centers. Dr. Kaplin investigated the biological basis of the effects of the immune system on mood regulation and cognition, and he provided neuropsychiatric care to patients afflicted with such comorbidities. His research is focused on understanding the biological basis of depression and dementia and discovering new ways to diagnose prognosticate and treat these diseases. Recently Dr. Kaplin has transitioned to working in the pharmaceutical industry as the Chief Scientific Officer of MyMD Pharmaceuticals, which is developing first in class therapeutics for a range of autoimmune diseases and immune mediated neuropsychiatric illnesses. A novel therapeutic has also shown promise in treating age-related illnesses such as frailty and sarcopenia and in preclinical models slows the aging process while maintaining cognitive and physical function.

***Ellen Mowry, Ph.D. – Johns Hopkins***



Dr. Mowry became interested in multiple sclerosis (MS) prior to beginning college and first performed research in multiple sclerosis as an undergraduate biology major at Georgetown University. As a neurology resident at the University of Pennsylvania, she began her multiple sclerosis clinical research activities in conducting a study of visual dysfunction and quality of life in multiple sclerosis. As a fellow at UCSF, Dr. Mowry evaluated prognostic factors in multiple sclerosis and examined health-related quality of life in multiple sclerosis, particularly as a marker of disease burden. Dr. Mowry continued as a member of the faculty. She explored the association of vitamin D status with the risk of relapses among children with MS and was subsequently awarded a grant from the NIH to study the role of vitamin D in the course of MS. Dr. Mowry joined the Johns Hopkins Department of Neurology as an Assistant Professor in July, 2011. In addition to ongoing studies, she has launched a multicenter randomized controlled trial of vitamin D supplementation in MS.

***Nancy L. Sicotte, M.D. – Cedars-Sinai***



Nancy L. Sicotte, MD is professor and vice chair for education in the department of Neurology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. She is the Director of the Multiple Sclerosis Program and founding Director of the Neurology Residency Training Program. She is also the site director for the third-year UCLA medical student neurology clerkship rotation. Dr. Sicotte graduated with honors from Brown University with a BS in Psychology. She earned her medical degree from University of California Irvine School of Medicine and completed an internship in internal medicine, residency in neurology and fellowship in neuroimaging at UCLA Medical Center and has been a member of the faculty since 1999. Since joining the department of neurology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in 2010, Dr. Sicotte has developed an integrated multiple sclerosis program that includes patient care, education and research. Her research focuses on the use of advanced structural and functional imaging to study MS disease progression including cognitive impairment and depression. She is a founding member of the North American Imaging in MS (NAIMS) Cooperative, which utilizes state of the art imaging approaches across multiple centers in the US and Canada to develop reliable imaging markers of disease progression in MS. She has received numerous awards including Best Doctors in America. She has been a member of the volunteer faculty at the Venice Family Clinic since 1998.

***Rhonda Voskuhl, M.D. - UCLA***



Rhonda Voskuhl, M.D. received her medical degree from Vanderbilt University. She did neurology residency at the University of Texas Southwestern and an MS fellowship at the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Voskuhl is currently the Director of the MS Program, the Jack H. Skirball Chair in MS Research, and Professor in the Dept. of Neurology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Dr. Voskuhl was a recipient of the Harry Weaver Neuroscience Scholar Award from the National MS Society and lead two separate five-year MS Collaborative Center Awards from the NMSS. She is an internationally recognized expert in MS, focusing on translational work moving from the bedside (clinical observations) to the bench (research) to the bedside (novel clinical trials). Dr. Voskuhl has led four novel clinical trials in MS testing new treatments based on results from research in her laboratory. She received the Berlin Institute of Health Excellence Award for Sex and Gender Aspects in Health Research for 2018, a global award recognizing excellence in all areas of health research (not limited to MS). Dr. Voskuhl is also President of the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences, an international organization dedicated to understanding sex differences in diseases to advance health in both women and men. Dr. Voskuhl's patient care focuses on the diagnosis of MS as well as on changes in MS treatment management. She trains the next generation of MS researchers, including junior faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and undergraduates. Her laboratory is currently funded by two grants from the National Institutes of Health to find new remyelinating and neural repair strategies for MS and by another from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation which translates basic research in neuroprotective strategies to MS patients.

***Emmanuelle L. Waubant, M.D., Ph.D. - UCSF***



Emmanuelle L. Waubant, MD, PhD, received her medical degree at the University of Lille, France. She then trained in France as well as at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) in adult neurology, neuroimmunology and MS clinical research. She is currently Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics at UCSF. She has served as the Race to Erase MS medical director since 2001. She also directs the Regional Pediatric MS Center at UCSF and is the secretary for the American Committee on Treatment and Research in MS. Dr. Waubant serves or has served on the clinical care, fellowship and research grant review committees of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and on the advisory board of the Society's Northern California Chapter. She is the Chair of the Clinical Trial Task Force of the International Pediatric MS Study Group. She is a member of the International Pediatric MS Study Group Steering Committee. She serves on the Nomination Committee of the American Neurological Association. She is a section editor for *Annals of Clinical Translational Neurology* and co-chief editor of *MS and Related Disorders*. She also directs several translational research projects and mentors medical students, fellows and junior faculty on various clinical, research and career development aspects in the field of MS and related diseases. In 2018, Dr. Waubant started an international consortium (international Women in MS) to foster a community of clinicians and scientists, and contribute to mentoring and blossoming of junior women in the field of MS. Dr. Waubant's specific interests include the translation of promising agents from the bench to bedside to advance patients' care, and risk factors for MS susceptibility and disease modification in pediatric and adult MS.

### **Howard Weiner, M.D. - Harvard**



Howard L. Weiner is a neurologist, neuroscientist and immunologist who is also a writer and filmmaker. He performs clinical and basic research focused on Multiple Sclerosis and other neurologic diseases such as Alzheimer's Disease and Lou Gehrig's Disease. His work also focuses on autoimmune diseases such as diabetes. Weiner is the Robert L. Kroc Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, Director of the Partners MS Center at the Brigham and Women's Hospital and Co-Director of the Ann Romney Center for Neurologic Diseases<sup>[5]</sup> at the BWH in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Weiner has pioneered the use of immunotherapy and the drug cyclophosphamide for the treatment of multiple sclerosis and has investigated immune abnormalities in the disease including the role of the innate immune system and regulatory T cells. He has also pioneered the use of the mucosal immune system for the treatment of autoimmune and other diseases. Based on his work vaccines are being tested in multiple sclerosis, diabetes, and most recently in Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Weiner is the author of "Curing MS: How Science is Solving the Mystery of Multiple Sclerosis" that chronicles the history of MS, his 30+ years in the research and clinical treatment of MS, and details his "21 point hypothesis" on the etiology and treatment of multiple sclerosis. He has also published *The Children's Ward*, a novel, and *Neurology for the House Officer*, a medical text.

### **Vijayshree Yadav, M.D. – Oregon Health Sciences**



Dr. Yadav is a board-certified neurologist who is fellowship trained in Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and Neuro-immunology and honored with a Masters degree in Clinical Research. She serves as the Clinical Director of the MS Center of Oregon and is an Assistant Professor of Neurology at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, Oregon. As a clinician-scientist, she is very interested in improving health using complementary therapies such as dietary modification. She is the Principal Investigator of a clinical research investigating effects of low-fat diet intervention in MS. Her research has been funded by National Institute of Health and National MS Society and has been involved in clinical trials investigating role of oral lipoic acid in MS for the last several years. Dr. Yadav has published several articles and book chapters and is a regular presenter at the local and national meetings. MS Center of Oregon at OHSU has been involved in conducting clinical trials in MS more than two decades and is supported by clinicians, nurses and research assistants who take pride in providing the finest care for MS and being the leaders in the innovative research in MS. Dr. Yadav's research interests include complementary and alternative treatment options for multiple sclerosis including dietary and life style changes as well as supplements such as lipoic acid. She has published several peer reviewed journal articles and presented her research at national and international meetings.

## **Panelists with MS:**

### ***Nancy Davis (Founder of Race to Erase MS)***



Nancy Davis, one of five children, was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. In 1987 she moved to California and now resides in Los Angeles with her husband and five children. Nancy is an active individual with an incredible zest for life. She skis, plays tennis, has a black belt in karate, exercises, and travels – living her life to the fullest. She is an extremely dedicated philanthropist, jewelry and now clothing designer and author. Most importantly, she is a full-time mother who is devoted to her five children. Nancy was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at the age of 33 in 1991. After being told by her doctors that she would be “lucky” to operate a remote control on her TV, she realized she was too young and too busy to let the disease stop her life in its tracks.

She was determined to devote her time, relationships and resources to finding a cure. Nancy’s hope, courage and strength continue to inspire her to maintain a vibrant quality of life despite this chronic disease, but most of all, she remains positive, continues to live her life to the fullest, and is tireless in her efforts to finding the cure for MS.

### ***Claudia Curry Hill (Moderator)***



Claudia Curry Hill was diagnosed with Primary Progressive MS over 30 years ago. An activist for women’s health and the disabled, she is very active in founding and serving on Non-Profit and Community Boards and Committees, including the Race to Erase MS and the Colorado, Wyoming MS Society Government Relations Committee and is a spokesperson for Multiple Sclerosis. Claudia is married, the mother of three and the owner of CCH Connections, a non-profit and event consulting group in Colorado. She believes that exercise, a positive attitude and empowering yourself with all the information you can find will improve your quality of life

until a cure is found.