

Art by Rachael Johnson

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## Baylor MS1s Publish First Trauma Research Group Paper in *Injury*

Three first-year medical students at BCM have published the first original research article from their student-led trauma research group in *Injury*, a leading international journal focused on trauma care and injury prevention.

First-year medical students Samer Salman, Rohan Phadke and Theodore “Teddy” Carlin collaborated with seven BCM attending physicians across the departments of Trauma Surgery, Orthopedic Surgery and Transplant Surgery, including Abbas Rana, John Dawson, Caitlin Fitzgerald, Catherine Seger, Martin Zielinski and Ryan Dumas throughout the project’s development, analysis and publication process.

The article, “[The Fracture Orthopedic Risk of Non-Home Discharge \(FORD\) Score](#),” introduces and validates a practical bedside tool designed to identify orthopedic trauma patients at increased risk of discharge to a rehabilitation facility, skilled nursing facility,



Teddy Carlin

Samer Salman

Rohan Phadke

long-term acute care hospital or another non-home setting following hospitalization.

The study analyzed 8,422 adult patients with fractures treated at Harris Health Ben Taub Hospital. Using only information available at emergency department arrival and presentation, the FORD Score outperformed several established trauma severity measures and identified a nearly 20-fold gradient in non-home discharge risk across patient groups.

By relying on early, routinely available clinical data, the tool may help trauma teams recognize discharge-planning needs earlier in a patient’s hospital course and improve coordination of post-hospital care.

The publication is especially meaningful because it reflects BCM’s collaborative research environment and highlights the role early medical students can play in high-impact scholarship and quality improvement research. The project also represents an important milestone for the students’ trauma research group, which is listed in the [SOAR database](#) and was founded to promote opportunities for student involvement in trauma and surgical outcomes research.

As the group’s first published study, their work highlights the importance of fostering early engagement in academic medicine, interdisciplinary collaboration and student-led clinical research.

Written by Samer Salman, Rohan Phadke and Theodore Carlin  
 Edited by Mawada Al Faisal

## Truth Clevenger Explores Aging, Mobility and Community Health Research

Medicine has added decades to the average American lifespan, yet for many seniors, these extra years come with diminished quality of life. In turn, first-year medical student Truth Clevenger aims to brighten that picture with his research.

“If you ask anyone approaching their 60s how they feel about these tacked-on senior years, it almost seems as if old age is merely an unfortunate side effect of our remarkable progress,” said Clevenger. “Medicine has created a light at the end of the tunnel for thousands of formerly deadly medical conditions but that light is dim.”

Clevenger is currently working with Maya Sela, a second-year medical student and Dr. Anjali Aggarwal on “Rhythm In Motion,” a 12-week seated aerobic exercise program for nursing home residents.

The project investigates whether biweekly structured exercise reduces fear of falling and improves overall health among long-term care facility residents. The team uses validated questionnaires, including the Falls Efficacy Scale-International, to assess for fear of falling and the PROMIS Global Health scale to measure overall well-being.

Clevenger learned about the opportunity through a GroupMe message from Sela and immediately reached out.

“I sent an email as quickly as I could, given my long-standing interest in the field, and we met on Zoom by the end of the week,” said Clevenger. “She was already connected with Dr. Aggarwal, who directs BCM’s [Care of the Underserved Pathway](#) and frequently works with medical students on research projects.”

The project is currently navigating Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. During the planning process, Clevenger helped refine the study's design, procedures, and objectives. Once approved, the team plans to begin implementing the exercise program in July or August 2026.

"At this point, my role will shift to being an in-person instructor at a local nursing home facility," said Clevenger. "I will teach an outlined structured curriculum of aerobic seated dance exercises to all residents who sign up for the class."

Once survey results are collected, the team will begin the formal writing process to analyze the results and summarize the study's findings and conclusions.

Throughout the IRB process, Clevenger learned valuable lessons about the difference between implementation and ideation. "It's one thing to have a pie-in-the-sky vision of better health for your community, but it's another matter entirely to answer question after question about how your research will actually do this," he said.

Clevenger explained that research has also changed the way he approaches medical literature and evaluates evidence.

"It's one thing to say, 'This intervention improved overall health'; it's another to say, 'This intervention improved questionnaire results after 12 weeks,'" he said.

"Understanding the specifics behind conclusions in a research article is essential to applying study results to future patients."

He also emphasized the importance of forming a solid PICOt question (patient population, intervention, comparison, outcome and time frame) and developing focused aims early in the process.

"Doing so will guide the rest of your research, from initial brainstorming sessions to a final paper," said Clevenger.

His advice for aspiring student researchers? Start focused, not frantic.

"Many students apply to projects for research's sake, but I would caution against this approach," said Clevenger. "Wait until a project comes up that fits your interests and passions."

He recommends bookmarking areas of interest in the [SOAR database](#) and regularly checking GroupMe chats for opportunities.

While balancing research with coursework can be difficult, Clevenger noted the importance of prioritizing clinical knowledge, starting early on deadlines and using mentors as guides rather than crutches throughout the research process.

Looking ahead, he is excited to continue exploring projects focused on aging, mobility and community health with Dr. Aggarwal.

"Working with [a] proactive mindset," Clevenger said, "could open the door for additional future projects."

Written by Geoffrey Zhang  
Edited by Matthew Darmadi



**Submit your own original written pieces and share your work for a chance to be featured!**

## DIG Highlights Service, Research and Mentorship in the Spring 2026 Semester

The Dermatology Interest Group (DIG) at BCM, a student-led organization, continued to expand opportunities for mentorship, education, research, advocacy and community outreach throughout the spring 2026 semester, creating spaces for medical students to explore the field of dermatology while building community with peers, residents and faculty.

This semester, DIG hosted a variety of events designed to expose students to the many dimensions of dermatology. Mentorship remained a central focus, with opportunities such as the March 23 Post-Match Panel, during which fourth-year medical students shared their experiences navigating the dermatology application process and offered guidance to younger students.

Students later gained hands-on procedure exposure during an April 14 biopsy workshop led by residents, where participants practiced common dermatologic procedures while learning directly from trainees in the field. DIG also fostered community-building outside the classroom through a coffee social at Café Siphon, allowing students to connect informally with upperclassmen and peers interested in dermatology.



DIG additionally promoted research and academic medicine through several collaborative educational initiatives. On April 29, the organization hosted an Ethics Writing Workshop focused on developing ideas for the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology ethics pieces and learning the fundamentals of academic writing, with mentorship from experienced upperclassmen.



Students also represented BCM at the Texas Dermatological Society Conference on April 25, where several students presented abstracts and posters and networked with medical students, residents and faculty from across the state.

In addition, several DIG members presented at the Medical Student Research Presentation session in dermatology, sharing findings that are relevant to both the scientific and patient communities.



A major pillar of DIG's mission this semester centered on advocacy and community engagement. The organization opened the semester with a Skin of Color Trivia Game Night on Jan. 28, involving over 30 medical students in learning how cutaneous conditions present differently across multiple skin tones.

Furthermore, DIG later hosted a presentation on dermatologic conditions prevalent among hijabi patients and how to care for this population. Students also participated in a discussion on occupational and environmental dermatology in marginalized workers, highlighting disparities in dermatologic care and workplace exposures among vulnerable populations.



Looking ahead, DIG plans to continue expanding opportunities for mentorship, advocacy and service. On May 23, students participated in the Spring 2026 Refugee Health Fair to help increase access to dermatologic health education for underserved refugee communities in Houston.

Through these initiatives, DIG hopes to further cultivate and foster curiosity, compassion, scholarship and service within the BCM community.

Written by DIG leadership (Sandra Moon and Jenna Zamil)  
Edited by Maheen Kara



The student organization's commitment to community outreach extended beyond campus through participation in the BCM Biotech Academy Health Fair at Rusk Middle School on April 25. Volunteers staffed a dermatology education booth, distributed kid-friendly skin health materials and introduced children to dermatoscopes through interactive demonstrations.

DIG also explored the intersection of medicine and the humanities through a collaborative event with the Narrative Medicine Interest Group on May 10, where students shared and discussed poetry centered on dermatologic themes and patient experiences.



## Medical Students Shine at Baylor Scott & White Health Scholars Day 2026

TEMPLE, TX — Scholars Day 2026 brought together faculty, physicians, residents, fellows and students at the Baylor Scott & White’s Medical Education Center on May 8 to celebrate and showcase scholarly work across the Central Texas region.

The event featured in-person and virtual poster presentations, Excellence Award presentations and an awards ceremony, highlighting the breadth and impact of academic activity throughout Baylor Scott & White.

A total of 130 abstracts were submitted, with medical students playing a particularly prominent role. Fifty-seven students contributed to 47 presentations spanning both required Inquiry Projects and independent scholarly work.

### Among the medical student award recipients:

Celeste Wang, a second-year medical student, received the first-place Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Poster Award and the third-place Overall Poster Award for her presentation, *“Two-Year Outcomes of Stent-Based MIGS Versus Combination Stent-Canaloplasty MIGS in Patients Undergoing Phacoemulsification: A Retrospective Review.”*

Anthony Shanar, a first-year medical student, received the second-place UME Poster Award for his project, *“Window Reinforcement as a Minimally Invasive Alternative to Canal Plugging in Pediatric Superior Semicircular Canal Dehiscence.”*

Manu Nair, a third-year medical student, received the third-place UME Poster Award for presentation of his project, *“Cutibacterium Acnes Colonization at the Time of Salvage Reverse Shoulder Arthroplasty Following Superior Capsular Reconstruction.”*



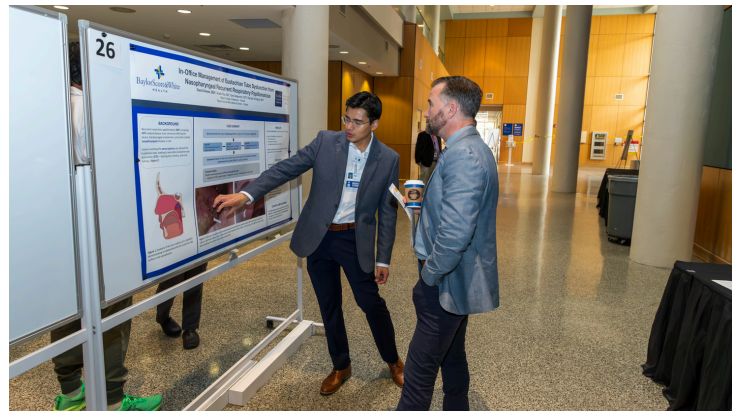
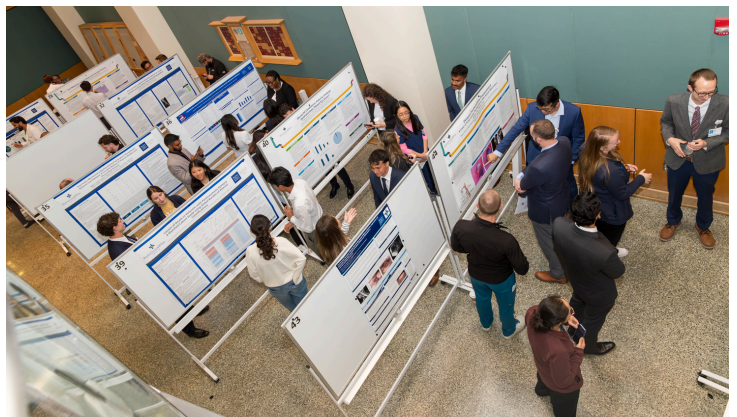
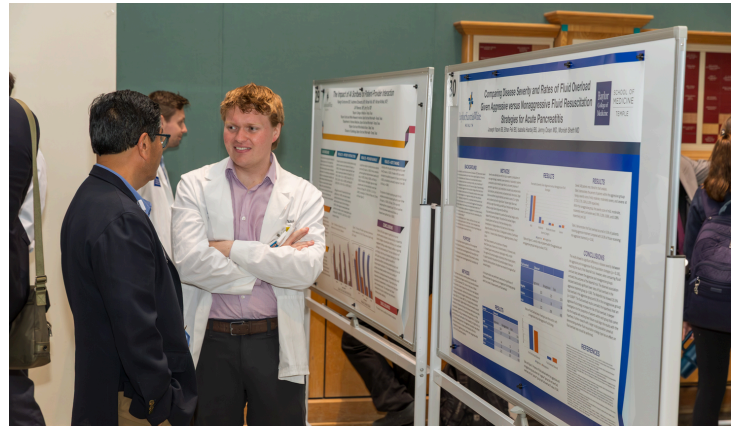
Celeste Wang



Anthony Shanar



Manu Nair



Written by Dr. Wendy Hegefeld  
 Edited by Dr. Mabel Perez-Oquendo and Mawada Al Faisal

# SOAR to Host Inaugural Clinical Investigator Panel and Networking Session

Medical students are invited to attend the inaugural SOAR Clinical Investigator Panel and Networking Session on June 1, 2026, at 5 p.m., followed by a networking reception. The session will take place in the Cullen Auditorium in Houston with a Teams option available for Temple students.

This session is designed for trainees who are exploring how to engage in research during medical school and how it can shape long-term career development. Faculty physician-scientists will share their experiences integrating research with clinical practice, discuss how their interests evolved over time and highlight what opportunities helped shape their professional development.

Panelists include:

- Dr. Rolando Rumbaut – Professor, Department of Internal Medicine
- Dr. Maya Balakrishnan – Associate Professor, Department of Internal Medicine
- Dr. Ashok Balasubramanyam – Professor, Department of Medicine and Molecular & Cellular Biology
- Dr. Jason K. Bowman – Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
- Dr. Jonathon McNeil – Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics

The discussion will focus on various aspects of the clinical investigator career development, including what that looks like in practice, practical steps students can take to build research experiences and how mentorship, strategic decision making and research habits can influence long-term opportunities in academic medicine.

Written by Dr. Mabel Perez-Oquendo  
 Edited by Mawada Al Faisal

This panel will ensure that students walk away with a clear understanding of how to navigate their own paths with confidence, whether they are just starting, exploring options or even concerned about being “late” to research.

In addition to the panel discussion, the networking session will provide an opportunity to ask questions, build connections and explore potential mentorship opportunities.

As part of the event, attendees will also be invited to share their perspectives through a [brief registration form](#), which will help tailor the discussion to topics most relevant to their interests.

**Date:** June 1, 2026

**Time:** 5:00 PM

**Location:** Cullen Auditorium (Teams option available for Temple students)

**Register here:**

<https://form.jotform.com/261126082693053>

**SOAR Inaugural...**

## Clinical Investigator Panel

Join us to learn how to integrate clinical research into your career, balance research and clinical responsibilities, and build a successful career in academic medicine.

**Panelists:**



**Rolando Rumbaut, MD, PhD**  
 Professor, Medical Resident  
 Investigator Track Program Director



**Maya Balakrishnan, MD, MPH**  
 Associate Professor,  
 Medicine-Gastroenterology



**Ashok Balasubramanyam, MD**  
 Professor, Clinical Scientist Training  
 Program Director



**Jason K Bowman, MD**  
 Assistant Professor,  
 Emergency Medicine



**Chase J McNeil, MD**  
 Associate Professor,  
 Pediatrics-Infectious Disease

**June 1, 2026**  
**Panel: 5:00pm, followed  
 by networking/reception**  
**Cullen Auditorium**

**Organizers:**



**Mabel Perez-Oquendo, PhD**  
 Assistant Professor, Student  
 Opportunities for Advancement in  
 Research (SOAR) Director



**Jordana Faruqi, MD, MPH**  
 Assistant Professor, Ketosis-Prone  
 Diabetes Program Director

Scan to register



## Upcoming Events

### Specialty-specific Medical Student Research Series (MSRS)

**Surgery - June 4, 5:30 PM**  
**Room N311 and Teams Link**

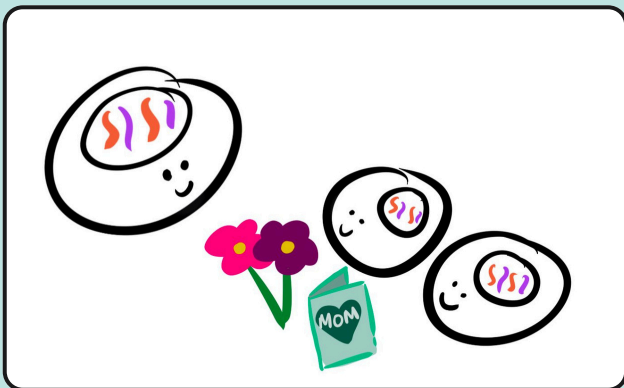
A 1-hour session for BCM medical students in Houston to present their research and pitch new ideas. Houston and Temple students will connect with peers, residents, and faculty in their specialty of interest. Organized by SOAR, MSRA, and Specialty Interest Group. [Sign up here](#)

### Enhancing Research Communication with Visual Tools

**June 26, 12:00 PM**  
**Zoom Link**

Understand the role of visual communication in medical research. Distinguish between data visualizations, infographics, and visual abstracts. Identify best practices and some resources and tools for creating effective visuals. [Register here.](#)

## The Funny Bone



*Happy mother's day*

*Art by Megan Benavides*

### Mawada Al Faisal

Editor-in-Chief, BCM SOAR Newsletter  
[mawada.alfaisal@bcm.edu](mailto:mawada.alfaisal@bcm.edu)

### Mabel Perez-Oquendo, Ph.D.

Director, Student Opportunities for Advancement in Research (SOAR) Office  
[mabel.perez-oquendo@bcm.edu](mailto:mabel.perez-oquendo@bcm.edu)

### Application-Based Statistics Workshop Series for BCM Medical Students in Research

**June 3, 12:00 PM**  
**Room N302 and Teams Link**

Register for the SOAR's second Statistics Workshop: Unadjusted Categorical Inference. Learn how to apply Chi-Square Tests, Fisher's Exact Tests, One- and Two-Proportion Z-Tests, and other key statistical methods through a practical, application-based session designed for clinical research and medical student projects. [Register here](#)

## Local Conferences:

### Breast Cancer Symposium

- [Registration](#)
- **Symposium Date:** June 12, 2026
- **Location:** BCM Main Baylor Campus, Kleberg Auditorium
- One Baylor Plaza, Houston TX 77030

### AI in Health Conference

- [Registration](#)
- Conference Date: Sept. 15-17, 2026
- Abstract Submission Deadline: June 10
- Location: BioScience Research Collaborative at Rice University

## Funding Opportunities

### ASTRO Medical Student Fellowship Award

Purpose: 8-week mentored research in radiation oncology  
Stipend: Up to \$6,000 (stipend + travel support)  
Application Open: December 2026

### SOAR Travel Award

Purpose: Supports BCM medical students presenting research at conferences  
Amount: \$500  
Application: Monthly review cycles  
Important: NICER or Inquiry approval must be obtained before project initiation and abstract submission

Designed by: Ayisat Adegbindin, Hafsah Khwaja, and Zuena Karim

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## SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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STUDENT  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
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