

USSONAR Fall Newsletter



October 2025

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President's Message



Minna Kohler MD, RhMSUS

Dear Ultrasound Friends,

October is medical ultrasound awareness month and we are off to a running start with the USSONAR 2025-2026 Fundamentals of Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Program using our new educational platform Canvas. Our program director Phil Chu MD, RhMSUS, assistant program director Erin Chew MD, RhMSUS, along with the education committee Samar Aboulenain MBBCh, RhMSUS and Jane Nishio MD, RhMSUS have worked tirelessly to implement an updated curriculum with the help of our USSONAR faculty mentors Jen Medlin, Michelene Hearth Holmes, Janeth Yinh, Fawad Aslam, Ed Oberle, and Patty Vega-Fernandes, and oversight from our vice president Jonathan Samuels. Thanks also to Dan Malone for creating extra procedural educational content for our Fundamentals class; and a shout out to Eva Rottmann and Seth VanDerVeer for their excellent Ultrasound Pitfalls webinar created for our new class, as well as the broader rheumatology online community. This 2025-2026 year

was another record year of applications and we wish we could have taken everyone; this year we expanded our class and accepted a total of 91 overall participants, including **70 total fellows** (60 adult and 10 pediatric participants) to the full program, which started this month.

To date, 2092 scans have been read! A special thank you to our **Top 10 Scan Reviewers**, whose robust efforts keep our program going.

1. Lily Kao- 411
2. Amy Canella- 216
3. Arash Mollaeanian- 165
4. Prashant Kaushik- 163
5. Mario Garcia Pompermayer- 163
6. Jen Medlin- 99
7. Pankaj Bansal- 84
8. Phillip Chu- 71
9. Veronika Sharp- 66
10. Gene Kissin- 60

In July 2025, we held our 3rd annual USSONAR Multi-Track Ultrasound Conference with the Intermediate MSKUS track and Cadaver-based Ultrasound Injection Lab led by Drs. Lily Kao (Santa Clara Valley Medical) and Zineb Aouhab (Loyola). USSONAR also held its first dedicated vasculitis ultrasound track with special invited lecturers Dr. Wolfgang Schmidt from Germany and Dr. Tanaz Kermani from UCLA, along with North American faculty Minna Kohler, Mark Matza, Roger Yang, and Jane Nishio.





Special recognition for our course and rheumatologists who perform ultrasound was reported recently by The Rheumatologist editor and USSONAR member Bharat Kumar MD, MME, FACP, FAAI, RhMSUS

<https://www.the-rheumatologist.org/article/rheuminations-why-deliberate-practice-relentless-curiosity-matter/>

Other USSONAR educational activities this year included a rheumatologic ultrasound workshop for Kaiser Permanente led by our USSONAR faculty



And

USSONAR was represented at AWIR (Association of Women in Rheumatology) at their annual meeting in July 2025, with full capacity ultrasound workshops.

As the ACR Convergence in Chicago approaches, we hope to see many of you at the RhMSUS networking sessions and our annual USSONAR business meeting and reception. Let us know how you want to get involved!

See you soon,

Minna Kohler MD, RhMSUS
USSONAR President 2024-2026



RhMSUS Is at Risk—Your Voice Matters

The **Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Certification in Rheumatology™ (RhMSUS)** certification is at risk of losing funding if we do not actively advocate for its fundamental importance to the growth and sustainability of rheumatology ultrasound. RhMSUS represents the gold standard in demonstrating expertise, enhancing patient care, and advancing professional development in rheumatology. As champions of this credential, we urge you to maintain your RhMSUS certification and join us in vocally advocating for its critical role in our field.

Please consider attending one (or both) of the below sessions on RhMSUS Certification to show the importance and necessity of certification for the rheumatology community.

How to Attain RhMSUS Certification

Sunday, October 26, 2025 from 1 to 2 PM Central Time

Monday, October 27, 2025 from 1 to 2 PM Central Time

Join us at **ACR Convergence 2025 in Chicago at the Business of Rheumatology Lounge.**

Lead Facilitator: Housam Aldeen Sarakbi, MD, RhMSUS, University of Louisville

This event is a **vital opportunity** to network with fellow prospective and certified professionals, thought leaders, advocates, and policymakers.



USSONAR Annual Business & Networking Meeting

October 25th, 2025 | Reception from 7:30 - 9:00 PM

Heavy hors d'oeuvres and cash bar with 1 drink ticket per person. Members and non-members are welcome.

Location: The Allegro Royal Sonesta Hotel Chicago West Loop
171 West Randolph Street, Chicago, IL 60601



USSONAR Annual Business and Networking Meeting

Saturday, October 25, 2025 | 7:30 - 9:00 PM

The Allegro Royal Sonesta Hotel Chicago West Loop
171 West Randolph Street, Chicago, IL 60601

Meeting Room: Palladium on the Palladium Meeting Room Main Level

Join us for an evening of insights and networking! USSONAR will present updates from the board and committees, with heavy hors d'oeuvres and a complimentary drink ticket.

This complementary event is open to all USSONAR members, guests, and prospective members. Don't miss this opportunity to connect and engage with our community!

Link to register: <https://uss.memberclicks.net/bizmeeting102525#/>

**While at ACR, please be sure to visit the poster
abstracts from fellow USSONAR members.**

**USSONAR
Abstracts at ACR**

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**The 2026 USSONAR Corporate Sponsor Prospectus is available,
including information about our 2026 events. [Learn more here.](#)**



Webinar Series

Monday, November 17 | 8:30 PM EST

Uncontrolled Gout and Ultrasound for Crystalline Diseases

Ralf Thiele, MD

University of Rochester



James Hawthorne, PharmD
Associate Medical
Director, Rheumatology,
Sobi representative



This session is sponsored by Sobi. CME credit is not available.

[REGISTER HERE!](#)



- **USSONAR Webinar Series** - Post-ACR Ultrasound Abstract
Review Part 1 on Jan. 12

USSONAR would like to recognize AstraZeneca for the medical education grant for this webinar series.

- **USSONAR Webinar Series** - Post-ACR Ultrasound Abstract
REGISTER HERE!
Review Part 1 on Jan. 26

REGISTER HERE!

Fundamentals Hands-On Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Course – Jan. 30 to Feb. 1, 2026 in Tampa, FL. Open only to participants of the USSONAR Fundamentals in Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Program



**SAVE
T H E
DATE**

**4th Annual
Multi-Track Ultrasound
in Rheumatology Conference**

May 16th -17th, 2026



Real Patients. Real Skills. Real Expertise.

The USSONAR Experience.



Join us next year in Tampa, Florida!
Scan the QR code to stay notified.



STAY NOTIFIED!

Committee Updates

Membership committee

We welcome a new committee member, Dr. Zeinab Saleh. We are excited to see many USSONAR members involved in ACR this year! Please reach out to us if you plan to present, moderate or other representation at ACR this year so that we may include you in our highlights. For those attending, please be on the look out for our member highlights so that you may attend and show support.

Advocacy committee

Dr. Mark Matza is our new committee chair. We are calling all support for RhMSUS certification! We will continue to work with ACR to show our support. You can advocate by 1) renewing your certification 2) registering for the Business of Rheumatology Lounge as above 3) spreading the word on social media posts on RhMSUS certification.

Research committee

The USSONAR Research Committee is here to support your rheumatology ultrasound research. Our team's experience spans translational science, observational studies, clinical trials, deep learning, and more. We're happy to help you brainstorm ideas, assess feasibility, and optimize study design. We also have several active projects and new initiatives for possible collaboration. If you'd like to discuss a project, seek mentorship, or learn more about rheumatology ultrasound research, please contact our committee chair, **Robert Fairchild** at rfairchi@stanford.edu

Media and Communications committee

We welcome new committee members Dr. Mario Garcia Pompermayer and Dr. Nehal Shah! Follow our platforms [X](#), [Linkedin](#), and [Facebook](#) for updates

Lupus SIG

It has been a busy year with our excellent Lupus series showcasing both musculoskeletal and non-musculoskeletal US uses. [All prior webinars are recorded and can be reviewed free for members](#). We thank our speakers for contributing to this series.

Ultrasound-Guided Synovial Biopsy (USGB) SIG

We have received an unrestricted grant from AbbVie which will make the course **free of charge** to all attendees, but **we do require a firm commitment to attend** so that this generous resource is not wasted on no-shows. **Space is strictly limited!**

We strongly recommend but do not strictly require ultrasound certification and/or significant experience with performing ultrasound-guided injections, as inexperienced operators are unlikely to be successful in this procedure. We are willing to consider any "edge cases" on a one-by-one basis, simply connect with me directly via this email address. NPs, PAs, and MD/DO trainees are welcome so long as they have the required prior experience.

The course will be on Friday,

Oct 24 2025, 7 AM - 4 PM at:

Northwestern Simulation

240 E. Huron St.

McGaw Pavilion

[Click here to view Agenda](#)

If you would like to attend, please register at:

<https://forms.office.com/r/uKC7kAavFk> at

We are always looking for new faces in our committees including Membership, Bylaws, Communications/ Media, Education and our Special Interest Groups!

Ready to Get Involved?

Email: ussonar@srahec.org with the subject line being which committee you are interested in joining. We will direct your message to the correct Committee Chair.

Bylaws Committee.

Committee Chair - Natalie Faith, MD, RhMSUS, RMSK

Responsible for the review of the organizational bylaws including amendments, adoptions, and repeals

Membership Committee.

Committee Chair: Zineb Aouhab, MD

Maintaining membership database and recruitment of new members

Education Committee

Committee Co-Chairs: Lily Kao, MD, RhMSUS & Zineb Aouhab, MD

Develop educational resources such as literature, image atlases, case studies, and discussion forums.

Consists of a Fundamentals MSKUS Education subcommittee and Advanced Education subcommittee, which includes CME course planning, webinar program development

Research Committee

Committee Chair: Robert Fairdchild, MD

Oversee the research activities of the organization. Help create opportunities for interested rheumatologists to collaborate on research projects in rheumatology ultrasound.

Media and Communications Committee

Committee Chair: Eva Rottmann, DO, MD, FACP, CCD, RhMSUS

Engage community through organization's social media sites, organizational announcements, and our newsletter.

Pediatric Committee

Committee Chair: Ed Oberle, MD, RhMSUS

Promote training and education programs specific to the practice of pediatric rheumatic ultrasound.

Committee members will be pediatric rheumatologists or USSONAR members with a specific interest in pediatric rheumatic ultrasound.

Are you interested in joining a special interest group?

Lupus US Special Interest Group- contact Hulya Bukulmez hxb38@case.edu

Sjogrens/ Salivary Gland US Special Interest Group- Howard Yang HYYang@mednet.ucla.edu

Vasculitis US Special Interest Group- Minna Kohler mkohler@mgh.harvard.edu

We would also like to hear from you!

If you have any updates, honors, or publications that you'd like to share with the USSONAR community, please send your information to ussonar@srahec.org. We'd love to review your submissions for inclusion in our upcoming newsletters!

USSONAR VIDEO ARCHIVE



Did you miss the latest Webinar Series session, *The Business of Ultrasound: Acquiring an Ultrasound Machine?*

[Catch up with the recording here.](#)

[View other previous webinars here.](#) Additional webinar topics and dates are forthcoming.



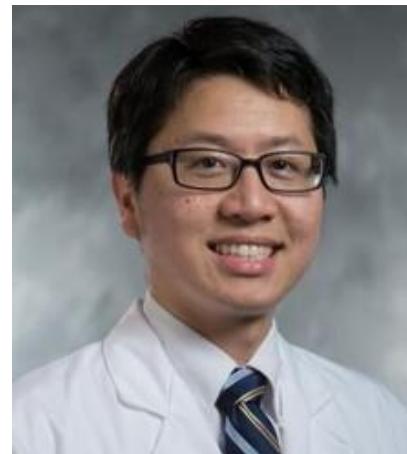
Membership Spotlight | By Dr. Zineb Aouhab

This newsletter we are putting the spotlight on the new upcoming Fundamentals Program Director Dr. Philip Chu

Dr. Zineb Aouhab

How did MSK US impact your career as an rheumatologist?

USSONAR was the highlight of my 2nd year of fellowship! The pathology scavenger hunt led to me to seek out multiple attendings to scan their patients, which really publicized my interest and growing expertise in MSK US. Fast forward to present. In our rheumatology ultrasound clinics, we receive referrals from our colleagues. The opportunity to interact with multiple rheumatologists and trying to help with solving interesting cases has been very enjoyable. My colleagues are very appreciative, and I get to see high-yield interesting cases.



Dr. Philip Chu

MSK US is also a very useful tool for education. US has also provided many opportunities for teaching fellows and residents, and has made education a major part of my career.

How did ultrasound training prepare you to practice rheumatology?

MSKUS has been very helpful in learning anatomy and better correlating the physical exam with disease manifestations. The ability for immediate imaging feedback allowed me to better hone my physical exam skills paired with MSKUS in the same visit. Instead of just palpating “joints,” I am able to palpate for synovitis, osteophytes, or enthesitis.

What are some of the challenges you may have faced implementing ultrasound in your practice? How did you overcome them?

There was the initial hope that MSK US as an imaging modality could easily serve as the gold standard final answer, but I have found (as a common theme in medicine and rheumatology) that there still remains many gray areas.

As several examples: even with seemingly crystalline deposits, this does not guarantee gout vs CPPD; even if there are classic findings and locations for CPPD, this does not guarantee that it is responsible for the entire picture of inflammatory arthritis; even if there is enthesopathy, this does not separate between mechanical and inflammatory spondyloarthropathy etiologies. Thus I often find that while hoping for further MSK US clarification, there are more follow up questions being asked.

The radiology report phrase “clinically correlate” remains relevant. Thus I often find myself going back full circle to the details of the history and bigger picture again to arrive at the differential conclusions.

Having a network of colleagues to discuss these cases is very helpful. Many questions, such as “have you seen X finding in Y scenario?” or “The textbook says X, this but can Y be possible?” are fun to ask and get an idea for the range of possibilities and make this a group learning experience!

How do you imagine the future of MSK US?

At our institution, we have been piloting AI scribes, which has amazingly transformed my workflow. It allows me to start scanning the patient early on in the clinic visit without worrying about writing additional important history that come up when discovering synovitis on scanning and tenderness on sonopalpation. I do not have to worry about running behind when deciding to roll out the MSK US machine. I think with more universal adoption of AI scribes, we can become more efficient in diagnostic US in the near future.

As MSK US training and clinical use becomes more widely available, I hope to see more adoption of MSK US as a biomarker in clinical trials. In my clinical experience, I find that the physical examination can sometimes be equivocal, and patients with subtle synovitis, patients on active immunosuppression and prednisone, patients with fibromyalgia or higher BMI's can limit the accuracy of the physical exam, which can dilute the outcomes in current clinical trials.



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