USSONAR

USSONAR NEWSLETTER Summer 2022

Message from the President

Hope everyone is having a great summer!

I got the chance to revisit to the Monterey Peninsula in Northern California. My son and I visited the Bixby Bridge in Big Sur. (See photo). The last time I was at this bridge was about 20 years ago.

I am big fan of bridges, literally and figuratively. I think bridges are a way to grow out and make connections. When I think of USSONAR, since taking on this position in September 2021, I think of the time Gene Kissin recruited me at the UMDMJ Cooper Course way back in 2008 – he sort of said something like "you are faculty at USC, right?" and "how would you feel about joining USSONAR?" Then he handed me this pin with the triangular USSONAR logo. Gene has handed me a few other pins over the years, again literally and figuratively - he has included me on faculty for the Fundamentals course, the midyear workshop and the final exam – a good decade of my life has been spent on USSONAR. I am forever grateful to Gene for bringing me on as a struggling junior faculty member (I was still at Univ of Southern California then) into this organization which I dearly love. Some of my absolute best acquaintances or friends (I am not sure if they call me a friend or acquaintance!) are from USSONAR.

USSONAR is growing. As you read through this newsletter, a lot of changes are happening – as in a lot! We have committee updates regarding the Fundamentals course, the Advanced Education committee offerings. The Membership committee did some analysis of our membership make up. The Advocacy committee also would like to encourage everyone to send a commentary to CMS. We are expanding our educational offerings, tapping people of various levels of experience to lead up our various courses, and all at the same time while living with COVID. We have a more diverse membership than ever before. If at all possible, I hope to build bridges with all of our members. This is the immense responsibility that the USSONAR board is tasked with, I believe.

It's the same with my son Andrew. I have only one child, that's it. Andrew turns 11 this year end of August. I absolutely see how his teenage years are going to be like over the next few years and I am trying to spend as much time with him while he is in this still innocent and very honest stage of his life, and will be there for him as he grows into adulthood. He has started asking me questions about when he can start sitting in the front seat of the car, or when he can get a cellphone, or when he can start drinking alcohol. The (I'm not looking forward to loud heavy metal being played in the house, but that's the kind of music he has been playing lately!) But same with myself... I'm growing too. I just turned 50 last June 12. I have a new dept chair at work who I am getting to know and trying to figure out how my division can grow with his vision. At a personal level, I didn't expect a second pregnancy — in early June I felt like I was going into my second labor and delivery — and gave birth to my pancreas! There goes the Filipino diet which is driven by meats and fatty food. Time to get on my Peloton bike and into my pool at home.

USSONAR for me are like all those bridges - even if you see a bridge for a second time, that's ok. Because you might be with someone new on your second visit.

Karina Torralba, MD, MACM, RhMSUS, CCD
President, USSONAR Board, Chief, Division of Rheumatology,
Loma Linda University Health, Loma Linda, CA



DONT MISS THIS YEARS
USSONAR Annual Business meeting
November 11
From 8-10pm
Location: TBA
More information to come; for any questions email
*Meet and Greet during ACR in Philadelphia USSONAR@SRAHEC.org

SAVE THE DATE US Guided Synovial Biopsy Working group (UGSB) COURSE

October 15, 2022, Northwell Health Bioskills Center, Great Neck, NY

Registration site opens in August

US-Guided Synovial Biopsy Working Group

Darren Tabechian, MD University of Rochester, Rochester, NY

Ami Ben-Artzi, MD, RhMSUS Beverly Hills Arthritis Associates, Los Angeles, CA

Arthur Mandelin, MD, PhD, RhMSUS Northwestern University, Chicago, IL

Diane Michelle Horowitz, MD Northwell Health, NY

Karina Torralba, MD, MACM, RhMSUS (Board Liaison)









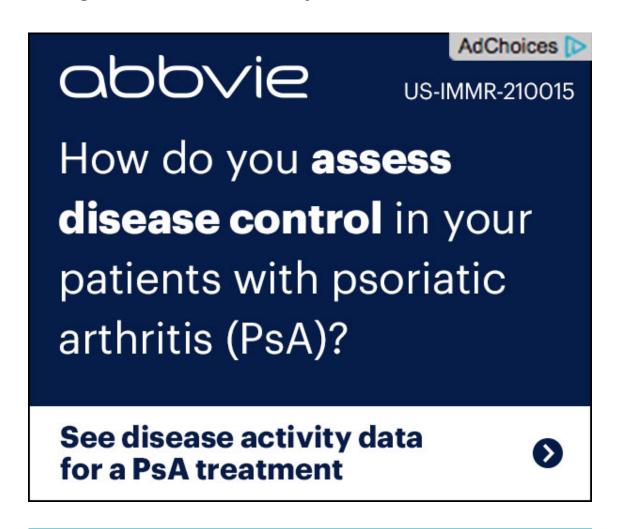
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Your Advocacy Committee

Ryan Jessee, MD , RhMSUS (Chair)
Durham VA Medical Center
SoundRheumDiagnostics
@rcjessee

Shereen N. Mahmood , MD, RhMSUS Montefiore Medical Center Albert Einstein College of Medicine **Amanda Schnell**, MD, RhMSUS University of Alabama

Howard Yang, MD, RhMSUS UCLA

Christina Downey, MD, RhMSUS

- our newest member!
- Loma Linda University

Paul DeMarco, MD, RhMSUS (Board Liaison)

Budget Cuts to Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Reimbursements

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services recently released their proposed Physician Fee Schedule for calendar year 2023. Due to budgetary neutrality rules and the expiration of previous temporary increases, there is an across-the-board cut of nearly 4%. With regards to musculoskeletal ultrasound reimbursement, the American Medical Association's RUC (RVS update committee) appropriately recognized the changes in 76881 coding to reflect rheumatology as the primary provider of this service. Therefore, RUC recommended an increase in work RVUs for both 76881/76882 due to the total time

requirements reflected in last year's physician survey as well as increasing complexity over time. Specifically, RUC recommended a work RVU increase for 76881 from 0.63 to 0.90 and 76882 from 0.49 to 0.69. However, the Practice Expense Committee recommended a decrease in reimbursement for the technical component, despite the fact that practice expenses have never been surveyed. CMS has released their proposed Physician Fee Schedule for 2023 and unfortunately recommended an overall decrease in reimbursement for musculoskeletal ultrasound, with the greatest proposed cut being in the TC portion of 76881/76882.

We encourage you to contact CMS to try to help stop further cuts to musculoskeletal ultrasound reimbursement- Click on Link below. CMS is soliciting feedback through the provided link below along with a sample comment that can be edited as needed.

regulations.gov - Deadline

Here is suggested commentary for you to use

"I am very disappointed to see that CMS has chosen to further cut ultrasound reimbursement, specifically CPT code 76881 and 76882. Musculoskeletal ultrasound is a low-cost imaging alternative to magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computed tomography (CT) studies, with equivalent or superior diagnostic utility across multiple studies. However, the continued cuts in reimbursement for musculoskeletal ultrasound will result in many rheumatologists being unable to continue to offer this service, resulting in increased utilization of the aforementioned more expensive imaging methods with a total increase in healthcare costs. The CMS comments regarding the RUC recommendations demonstrate a fundamental misunderstanding of the equipment, facilities, actions, and expertise required for performing musculoskeletal ultrasound in a clinic setting. I would like to strongly encourage CMS to reconsider their recommendations on CPT code 76881/76882 and learn more about this issue prior to any reimbursement changes going forward. While I advocate for CMS to raise the work RVU, per RUC recommendations, and restore 76881-TC funding to CY 2017 levels, CMS should, at a minimum, pause all proposed reductions to the 76881 and 76882 CPT codes in order to allow for stakeholder comment on how rheumatologists currently utilize or plan to utilize MSK ultrasound as the rheumatology community has never been surveyed by the RUC on their typical practice expense investments in their ultrasound program."

Fundamentals Education Committee



Eugene Kissin







Mitchelene Homes



Norm Madsen



Narandra Bethina

Your Fundamentals Committee

Norm Madsen, MD, MSc, BMBS, RhMSUS University of Rochester, Rochester, NY

Michelene Hearth Holmes, MD, RhMSUS

Newest member!
 University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE)

Eugene Kissin, MD, RhMSUS Boston University Medical Center **Dan Malone**, MD, RMSK Innovative and Interventional Rheumatology, Madison, WI

Narandra Bethina, MD, RhMSUS University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

Karina Torralba, MD , RhMSUS (Board Liaison)

Updates for the Fundamentals Course

The Fundamentals Course led by Gene Kissin has been the foremost educational offering of USSONAR since inception. The course has been the basis for the existence of USSONAR. Course registration opening soon - more information to come.

- Gene was awarded a Rheumatology Research Foundation Clinician Scholar Educator Award for his work on this course.
- The American College of Rheumatology has one of the fellows' pathway to certification that allows for participation in the USSONAR Fundamentals Course.

The course is offered to Rheumatology fellows and rheumatology professionals (physicians, advanced practice practitioners).

It is a 9-10 month long course consisting of online mentorship of scans, a mid year
workshop that features basic-intermediate level teaching including a cadaver based
joint injection session, and an end of year Objective Structured Clinical Examination
(OSCE) where participants demonstrate their skills in scanning normal/patient
models and joint injection technique.

Since the start of COVID – we have reverted to successfully using the Butterfly Teleguidance technology for our mid year workshop and end of year OSCE. For 2023, we hope to to revert back to doing our workshop in-person.

Starting this academic year 2022-2023, Gene Kissin will be stepping down as chair of the Fundamentals Course.

Norm Madsen will be taking over as the main chair for this course, to be supported by Michelene Hearth Holmes as the assistant chair. Norm is the lead musculoskeletal ultrasound faculty at University of Rochester. Michelene has been one of the lead faculty at University of Nebraska, and has a Masters in Education. Dan Malone will be heading up the chairship for the midyear course to be held at the University of North Texas skills laboratory facility in Fort Worth, TX.

Fundamentals Course Outcomes 2022

- At the conclusion of this 14th year of the USSONAR Fundamentals Course program:
 - Together USSONAR mentors reviewed 4,100 studies this year!
 - We had 55 participants take the final exam, of whom 52 passed.

To date, the USSONAR Fundamentals Course has had 470 fellow graduates and 148 post-fellow graduates, for a grand total of 618 graduates.



Your Advanced Education Committee

Lily Kao, MD, RhMSUS Evergreen Medical Group San Jose, CA

Edward Oberle, MD, RhMSUS Nationwide Children's Hospital Columbus, Ohio **Paul DeMarco**, MD, RhMSUS Wheaton MD

Jemima Albayda, MD, RhMSUS Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, MD

Minna Kohler, MD, RhMSUS Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School; Boston MA

Advanced Education – What is this?

Everything but basic.

Image Bank

Journal Club

Advanced MSK Course

Extrasynovial Rheum US Course

All in the making.



Journal Club

Are you interested in helping launch **USSONAR's Journal Club**? We have the platform and the ideas, now we need you! As a member of this Advanced Education sub-Committee, you will work with your colleagues, our software developer and administrative support to bring journal club on-line. This is a terrific educational and career building opportunity and will allow you to network with a growing community of rheumatology sonographers. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Amy Cannella at acannella@unmc.edu.

- •Forming a Team!
- •More folks have joined us for our venture to start up an online interactive Journal Club platform on our new website come September 2022.
- •Welcome to Karla Criner, Erin Chew, Reem alkilany!



Meet the Image Bank members Reem Alkilany

Long Island, NY

Janeth Yinh

Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA

- Newest member!

Jay Higgs

San Antonio, TX

Lee Day, MD, RMSK

Columbus, SC

Julie Yu, MD

Syracuse, NY

Reem Alkilany and Jay Higgs are spearheading the effort to develop our Image Bank. Janeth Yinh has joined this group this year.

With our pending September 2022 website revamp, the website will house the Image Bank. We hope these images will help learners develop their anatomy and pathology recognition skills. We are calling on members who are interested to sign up to be part of the development of the image bank, and to be part of the image review committee.

Wanna join?

Please email us at <u>ussonar@srahec.org</u>, with "Image Bank Committee" on the subject line.



Talk about reawakening!

A course on the advanced application of rheumatologic ultrasound was held at the Hilton Universal Studios **July 29-30**. This course was in-person to thank and reconnect our mentors and new committee members. With 84 people attending the course, including our partners in industry, various sessions



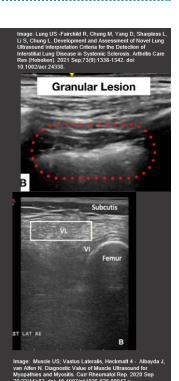
addressing the latest in extrasynovial and inflammatory arthritis sonography were done.

Veena Ranganathan and Gurjit Kaeley in their session talked about the LAJAX RA scoring system. It was a very lively session with special thanks to all who provided feedback on the scans particularly in regards to the parapatellar recesses of the knee and the distal radioulnar joint. Thanks to the initial 29 people who were game to engage in the inter and intra rater reliability exercise pre-course. Mark Matza gave a session on GCA Vasculitis image acquisition and diagnosis. Veronika Sharp and Akaluck (Ben) Thatayatikom talked about Sjogren's syndrome parotid and submandibular gland image acquisition and scoring in both pediatric and adult populations. Myma Albayda introduced everyone to the concept of myositis ultrasound imaging. Robert Fairchild gave all a bird's eye view of ILD evaluation in rheumatic disease patients. We thank our partners from GE, Philips, Biosound Esaote, Konica Minolta for providing machine systems support. We thank **Howard Yang**, **Kristal Choi and Karla Criner** for providing us patient model from their UCLA clinics and providing post course updates on the patients. Thanks to Marven Cabling for providing logistical support for our course supplies. We thank fellows from the UCLA and Loma Linda University programs for being our 'normal' models. We thank Minna Kohler, Myma Albayda who were the emcees and scientific chairs; and Karina Torralba and Jane Nishio as the finance and logistics chairs. A special shout out to Philip Chu and Jonathan Dau for taking charge of our social media – tweeting throughout the course with updates. And an absolute thank you to our **SRAHEC** friends especially Laura Moore and Amaris Spina for being there from day one, and being our on-site support staff; and to **Sarah Catalanotto** for overseeing our administrative affairs, and to Nandi Romero for his technical expertise. We thank all our sponsors Abbvie, Pfizer, exhibitors: Horizon Therapeutics, Janssen/JnJ, Novartis, Astra Zeneca, Alexion Pharma, Chemocentryx, Aurinia Pharma. We thank Novartis, Aurinia **Pharma, and Astra Zeneca** for providing us product theaters.



Call for Members to Join our Special Interest Groups!

- If you have an interest in learning more about advanced ultrasound, engaging in scholarly work, and learning new skill sets, please consider joining any of the following SIGs:
 - Inflammatory arthritis
 - Sjogren's Syndrome
 - Myositis
 - Vasculitis
 - ILD/Scleroderma
 - Lupus
- Please email us at <u>ussonar@srahec.org</u>, with subject "SIG: (topic)" in the subject line.



Membership Committee



Michelene Hearth Holmes



Marven G Cabling





Your Membership Committee

Michelene Hearth Holmes, MD, RhMSUS San Diego, CA (Formerly Omaha, NE)

Marven G Cabling, MD, RhMSUSc Loma Linda University Health, Loma Linda, CA

- our newest member!

Zineb Aouhab, MD
Loyola University, Chicago, IL
- our newest member!

Kristal S Choi, MD, RhMSUS UCLA–Santa Monica Hospital Los Angeles, CA

- our newest member!

Membership – Who are You?

The membership portion of the **USSONAR.org** website is being revamped, and will be up and running by **September 2022**. We will be inviting members to update their membership profile.

Keep your eyes peeled for the **email to update your profile**. This will help us
know who you are, what your needs are.
What information will we ask for? This will



include your level of experience in ultrasound, your current use of ultrasound in your practice.

USSONAR Membership Benefits

- · Access to the website and its learning programs
- Discounts on course registration rates
- Access to participate in research projects
- Ability to vote on matters requiring member approval including election of board members
- Participate on committees
- Nominate Board and committee members
- Attend annual business meeting
- Quarterly newsletter and latest up-to-date communications
- Access to social media sites and other communications

Membership – Who are we as far as we know?

On July 2021, Michelene Hearth Holmes did an analysis of our organization and its membership (See table)

Data is gold

- we want to know who you are!

Come September

- please set up your profile!



MEMBERSHIP ANALYSIS (July 2021)	
ACR RhMSUS Credentialed	373
USSONAR Lifetime Members (LM)	202
ACR RhMSUS Credentialed and USSONAR members	64 /373(17%)
Fundamentals Course List (May 2021)	487
Finished the course out/have taken test (as of 2020)	382
Took end of year exam + ACR RhMSUS	77/382 (20%)
Took end of year exam, USSONAR members	39 (10%)
2020 Virtual Course Attendees	211
USSONAR Members	60 (28%)
USSONAR members + ACR RhMSUS	28 (13%)
2021 Virtual Course attendees	56
USSONAR members	19 (40%)



Your USSONAR Pediatrics Committee

Johannes Roth, MD PhD FRCPC RhMSUS

Deirdre De Ranieri, MD RhMSUS

Patty Vega-Fernandez, MD MSc

Clara Lin, MD RhMSUS

RhMSUS & Tracy Ting MD MSc RhMSUS

Heather Benham, DNP APRN CPNP-PC RhMSUS

Tracy Ting, MD MSc RhMSUS

Laura (Ballenger) Pratt, MD

Children's Hospitla and Medical Center

Omaha, Nebraska

Karina Torralba, MD, RhMSUS (Board Liaison)

On Going Projects

Research

 Development of novel ultrasound image acquisition protocols and scoring systems of the Pediatric Joints

- Detection of subclinical synovitis in children with Oligoarticular JIA
- US Pediatric Fellowship Survey to Program Directors to assess interest, prevalence and training of MSUS in Pediatrics
- US Pediatric Fellowship Survey to current fellows and recent graduates to assess interest and exposure to MSUS

USSONAR Peds Cmte: Education Ultrasound course for pediatric fellows

We are formalizing plans to launch this course in 2023!!!

- Audience: Pediatric rheumatology fellows who are currently in a fellowship program that does not have any pediatric rheumatology faculty that are teaching ultrasound.
- Materials: Most programs have access to a machine. For the very few that have none, we will consider loaning a Butterfly probe to the program. Didactic presentations will be prepared, each dedicated to an anatomic region.

Didactic: For each joint, there will be a 20 min ppt presentation followed by a 10 min pre-recorded scanning video of that joint. We would like to host these on the USSONAR website.



Practical: Each fellow to be paired with 1 mentor. The live scanning exercise will take place at a time that is pre-arranged with the mentor and will last approximately one hour.



Your Research Committee
Fawad Aslam, MD, RhMSUS (Chair)
Mayo Clinic - Arizona

Tate Johnson, MD – our newest member! University of Nebraska

Krishna Chaganti, MD UCSF

Hulya Bukulmez, MD Case Western Reserve University

Jane Nishio, MD, RhMSUS Walnut Creek, CA

Eugene Kissin, MD, RhMSUS Boston University

Amy Cannella, MD , RhMSUS (Board Liaison)

The research committee reiterated its commitment to help the education committee with projects/publications related to educational publications.

- Statisticians have been identified to assist with our projects
- USSONAR Membership Survey
- Flexor tendon Bursa Study

Bryant England has stepped out of committee – USSONAR thanks him for his contributions. We welcome **Tate Johnson** coming into the fold!

The **USSONAR Research committee** serves to facilitate US related research projects. We invite the members to submit research proposals. We can assist in the following ways:

- 1. Review the proposal and make recommendations.
- 2. Impart statistical input.
- 3. Provide guidance related to IRB matters.
- 4. Assist in recruiting investigators.
- 5. Help with questions regarding ongoing projects.

Please also note that if you do not have a research proposal per se but have a research idea that you would like to discuss and develop, we are here to help.

Please contact the chair Fawad Aslam at fawadaslam2@gmail.com or USSONAR at ussonar@srahec.org.

Thanks
USSONAR Research Committee



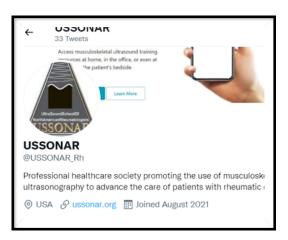
Communications Committee

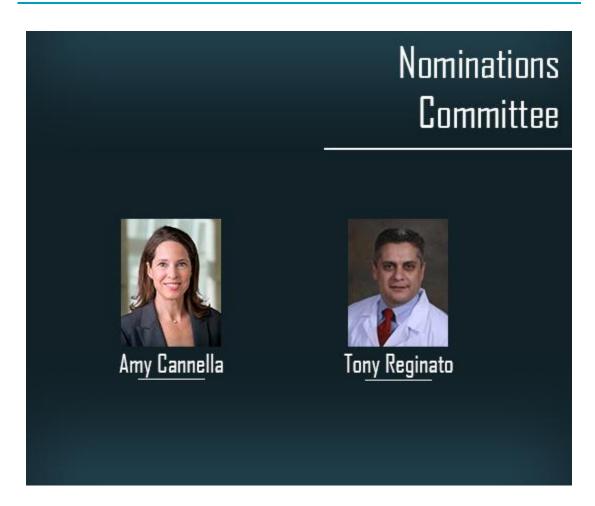
Philip Chu, MD, RhMSUS (Chair) Duke University Durham, NC

No specific updates – some of the news on this newsletter were via our Media Cmte work... Otherwise if you haven't yet - Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

Jonathan Dau, MD, Univ of Colorado

Minna Kohler, MD, RhMSUS Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School; Boston MA (Board Liaison)





Your Nominations Committee

Amy Cannella – University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE **Tony Reginato** – Brown University, Providence, RI

Welcoming our revamped Nominations Core members –

Tony Reginato and Amy Cannella!

The following Committees are seeking members:

Fundamentals Course (current mentors invited)

Image Bank

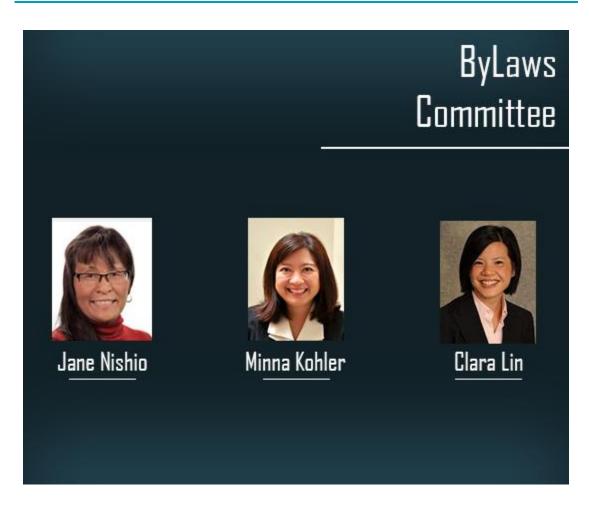
Journal Club

Please send us an email at <u>ussonar@srahec.org</u>

CALL FOR ULTRASOUND COURSE TEACHING FACULTY

If you have **at least 5 years** of teaching ultrasound at your fellowship program and you have never been invited to teach at any of our courses – we are also looking for people with your experience.

• Please send me an email at kdtorralba11@gmail.com.



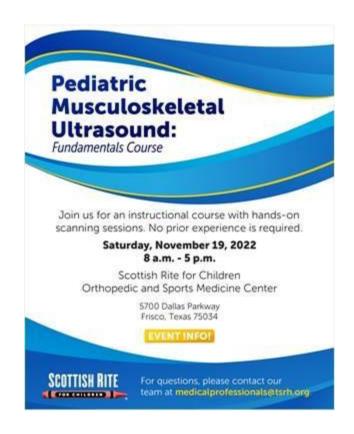
Your Bylaws Committee Jane Nishio, MD, RhMSUS Minna Kohler, MD, RhMSUS Massachusetts General Hospital,

Clara Lin MD RhMSUS Denver, CO

Updates:

- 2022 Revision being prepared. Will send items for review to membership by end of year 2022.
- Welcome to our Board Secretary who now rotates onto this committee!

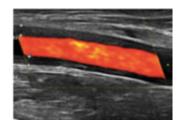
Job Opportunity in SF East Bay region
Up to Full time practice position for BE/BC
rheumatologist in the East Bay region of
the SF Bay area interested in providing clinical and
ultrasound services to colleagues in
established rheumatology practice. Practice is part
of a large hospital system with Primary Care
group. Salary and benefits excellent. Great
opportunity to develop your ultrasound based
practice with administrative and equipment support
as well as mentoring with experienced
ultrasonographer. Academic clinical appointment
available if desired. Contact Midori Jane
Nishio MD
(midori.nishio md@johnmuirhealth.com).



Loma Linda University Faculty Medical Group, Department of Internal Medicine is seeking a Rheumatologist to join our team.

We are seeking candidates who want to devote their careers to academic medicine. Although experience and existing grant funding is preferred, we are open to interviewing candidates of varying stages of careers and varying interests. There are many teaching and research opportunities at our institutions we are affiliated with. Apart from running a very active consult service at the Loma Linda University Medical Center and outpatient clinics at our Faculty Medical Offices, we also provide outpatient and inpatient services at the Riverside University Health System Medical Center, and clinics at the Social Action Community Health in San Bernardino. We have a 2-year fellowship program which currently has 3 fellows per year. Faculty have the opportunity to engage with fellows, residents and students weekly. We run clinical trials and also engage in health services, medical education and translational research. The division is also developing seven centers, namely Center for Arthritis, Lupus center, Scleroderma Center, Myositis Center, Sjogren's Syndrome Center, Vasculitis Center, and the Center for Bone Health and Osteoporosis. We manage the Fracture Liaison Service and infusion centers at our hospitals. Ultrasound machines are available at all of our sites for musculoskeletal, vasculitis, parotid and lung ultrasound. We offer generous benefits.

Loma Linda University Faculty Medical Group is affiliated with LLUMC, the LLU Children's Hospital and LLU School of Medicine. LLUMC the largest tertiary referral source in both Riverside and San Bernardino counties with a surrounding population approaching 4 million. The Medical Center and Children's Hospital are equipped with over 850 licensed beds. This is, unfortunately, not a J1 Opportunity. Please email Dr Karina Torralba, Division Chief of Rheumatology: ktorralba@llu.edu



Registration is open for the 2nd North American
Workshop on Vascular Ultrasound in Large Vessel
Vasculitis. The program will be held August 19-21,
2022, at the Graduate Hotel in Seattle, WA.

This Course is designed to provide basic training for the rheumatologist in performing vascular ultrasound for the diagnosis large vessel vasculitis. Hands-on training will be a significant component of this activity, partnered with expert faculty in the field, who will discuss and demonstrate how to identify the basic vascular pathological findings. Intermediate to advanced skill in the performance of ultrasound is strongly recommended as a prerequisite to this course.

Space is limited!

Continuing Medical Education
University of Washington School of Medicine

4333 Brooklyn Avenue NE | Box 359558 | Seattle, WA 98195

206.543.1050| cme@uw.edu | uwcme.org | http://blogs.ue.edu/cme/



Contact Us

Board President: Karina Torralba – Cell (501)442-3298; Email: <u>Torralba.karinamsus@gmail.com</u>; Twitter: @KarinaTorralba4 SRAHEC: Sarah Catalanotto – email: <u>sarahc@srahec.org</u>







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