

# USSONAR Winter Newsletter



January 2026

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Dear Ultrasound Friends,

Happy New Year! It was wonderful to see many of you at the USSONAR Business Meeting during ACR in Chicago last October. We are now busy preparing for the USSONAR 2025–2026 Fundamentals of Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Program mid-year hands-on course, which will take place in Tampa, Florida. This course will be led by co-course directors Vice President Dr. Jonathan Samuels and Education Committee member Dr. Jen Medlin, with valuable patient-model recruitment from Dr. Natalie Faith. Our Program Director Phil Chu, MD, RhMSUS, Assistant Program Director Erin Chew, MD, RhMSUS, along with Education Committee members Samar Aboulain, MBBCh, RhMSUS, and Jane Nishio, MD, RhMSUS, continue to work diligently on curriculum updates using our new Canvas platform.



**Minna Kohler MD, RhMSUS**

### **A special thank you to our Top 10 Scan Review Mentors:**

Thus far, students have submitted over **4000 scans**.

- **Jon Arnason**
- **Amy Cannella**
- **Prashant Kaushik**
- **Dan Malone**
- **Pankaj Bansal**
- **Charles Pritchard**
- **Philip Chu**
- **Lily Kao**
- **Gene Kissin**
- **Arash Mollaeian**

Recently, you should have received a [USSONAR membership survey](#), and I strongly encourage you to take a few minutes to complete it. Your feedback is invaluable as we work to improve the programming, resources, and communications that matter most to our members.

**As a thank-you**, everyone who completes the survey will be entered into a drawing to win one of four prizes:

- Two winners will receive **\$200 off registration** for the **USSONAR Multi-Track Conference (May 2026)**
- Two additional winners will receive **\$50 gift cards**

We are also excited about the upcoming [USSONAR Multi-Track Conference in May 2026](#). If you're considering applying for **RhMSUS certification or recertification**, this course will satisfy your knowledge needs as well as fulfill the CME hours criteria required by the ACR.

Many thanks to the course leadership:

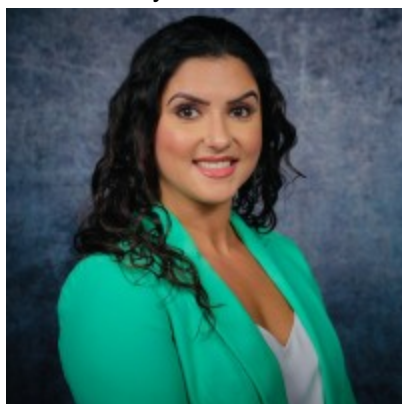
- **Drs. Lily Kao and Zineb Aouhab**, MSK Ultrasound Track
- **Dr. Ed Oberle**, dedicated Pediatric Ultrasound Track
- **Dr Minna Kohler**, leading the Vasculitis and Sjögren's Ultrasound Track

Please help spread the word about these exciting agendas. **USSONAR Fundamentals graduates and mentors** will be eligible for a **special registration discount**.

Looking ahead in 2026, we eagerly anticipate updates to several **ACR–USSONAR Guidance Documents**, including:

- **Ultrasound for Psoriatic Arthritis**
- **Ultrasound for Rheumatoid Arthritis** (both led by Drs. **Gurjit Kaeley**, **Catherine Bakewell**, and **Veena Ranganath**)
- **Ultrasound-Guided Procedures in Rheumatology** (led by Drs. **Norm Madsen** and **Myma Albayda**)

These documents are in their final stages and have been submitted to the **ACR Board of Directors** for review—stay tuned!



Lastly, thank you to our generous **sponsors** and the **USSONAR Board of Directors** for their continued support and dedication to our growing organization.

As always, we welcome your ultrasound updates and encourage you to become more involved in USSONAR. Please feel free to reach out to me or our new **USSONAR Association Manager**, [Aviva Rothman](#), with ideas, updates, or questions. Enjoy the rest of the newsletter!

Happy scanning,

**Minna Kohler, MD, RhMSUS**  
USSONAR President, 2024–2026

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**Thank you to our 2026 Corporate Sponsors**

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

## 2026 USSONAR Schedule of Events



# Webinar Series

Monday, January 26 | 8:30 PM EST

Post-ACR Ultrasound Abstract Review Part 2



Joseph Azzam  
MD, RhMSUS



Christopher Estes  
NP, RhMSUS



Christine Parsons  
MD

- **Christopher Estes** will discuss abstracts related to APP education and MSKUS, workforce shortage, access to care, and interprofessional communication.
- **Christine Parsons** will review key ultrasound education abstracts and takeaways.
- **Joey Azzam** will present on abstracts in SLE and Sjogren's ultrasound.

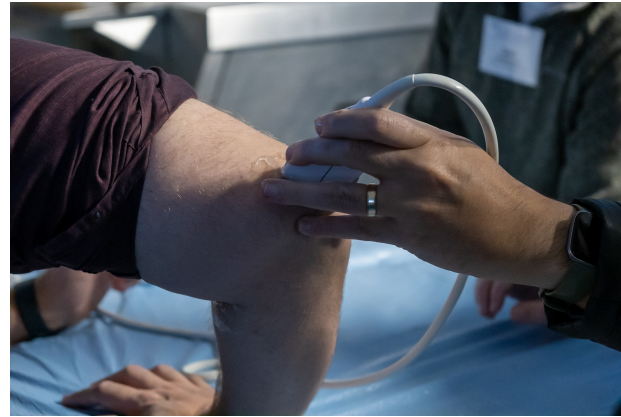
[Click Here to Register!](#)

January 30 - February 1, 2026

# 2026 Fundamentals Hands-On Course in Tampa, FL

## Fundamentals Training Program

\*Open only to participants of the USSONAR Fundamentals in Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Program



## 2026 Multi-Track Ultrasound in Rheumatology Conference

May 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | Tampa, FL



This year's conference features three specialized educational tracks designed for hands-on, in-person ultrasound training:

### Basic/Intermediate Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Track

Deepen your rheumatology ultrasound skills across all major joints, learn to identify key inflammatory and crystalline findings, perform guided procedures, and gain practical insights for diagnosis, treatment, and billing

### Ultrasound for Vasculitis & Sjogrens Disease Track

Gain hands-on expertise in vascular and salivary gland ultrasound for rheumatology, mastering imaging techniques, interpretation of inflammatory and structural findings, and practical workflow, coding, and billing strategies.

### Comprehensive Pediatrics Rheumatology Track

Learn pediatric musculoskeletal ultrasound across all major joints, focusing on imaging optimization, inflammatory pathology, guided procedures, and practical billing and certification insights.



We're thrilled to welcome an international guest faculty member to this course. Dr. Valentin Schäfer will be lecturing and scanning alongside learners in our Vasculitis & Sjögren's Disease Track—a rare opportunity to learn directly from a leading expert in a highly interactive, small-group setting. Space is limited, so don't miss the chance to sharpen your skills and gain practical, hands-on guidance from Dr. Schäfer and our faculty team.



[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE!](#)

## Committee Updates

### Fundamentals Committee:

During this year's pathology scavenger hunt, which took place over November and December, over **130 pathology scans** were submitted and adjudicated by mentors. The most pathology scans were submitted by Faria Sami (UAB), Israrul Haque (IPGMR), Divya Sudireddy (BU), and Nishitha Shekhar (UCI).

**Special thanks to Mentors:** Jon Arnason, Gene Kissin, Arash Mollaeian, Charles Pritchard, and Philip Chu for reading the most adult pathology scans and thanks to Ed Oberle and Heather Benham for reading the most Pediatric pathologies during the past months!

Following the competitive pathology scavenger hunt, a total of **40 scholarships** were awarded for the 2026 Fundamentals Mid-year Workshop, 21 full scholarships and 19 partial scholarships.

### Full Scholarship Recipients:

Alec Yu  
Angela Bobak  
Carlos Pena  
Divya Sudireddy  
Faria Sami

Maria Emilia Romero Noboa  
Max Krall  
Nevetha Rajendran  
Nishitha Shekhar  
Omair Khan

Hayley Lynch  
Israrul Haque  
Jason Yang  
Joshua Moran  
Larabe Farrukh  
Laura Nichols

Qurat Ul Ain  
Ramsha Riaz  
Travis Fulk  
Tun Tun Aung  
Ujjwal Madan

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### **Membership Committee:**

Thank you for being part of the USSONAR community. We recently sent a survey to current members to learn how we can better support you and strengthen the overall member experience. We take this feedback seriously and will use it to guide improvements across our programs and resources. Once the survey closes, we'll review the data and develop a thoughtful action plan based on member input.

### **Research Committee:**

The Research Committee has made strong progress on a foundational workforce project, confirming that the MarketScan dataset can be used to identify and quantify practicing rheumatology ultrasonographers in the U.S. Using CPT coding, the team can assess provider locations and ultrasound-related ordering patterns. While no single dataset captures the full picture, this approach offers a robust approximation that will help inform future ultrasound policy and education initiatives.

### **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:**

Thanks to an educational grant from AstraZeneca, the Lupus SIG completed a strong six-part webinar series last month. We are pleased to announce we had such positive engagement throughout the series that AstraZeneca has renewed their support for another five webinars! We'll share dates and topics as they're finalized.

### **Ultrasound-Guided Synovial Biopsy (UGSBy) SIG:**

UGSBy SIG conducted a workshop on ultrasound-guided synovial biopsy adjacent to ACR 2025 in Chicago. The course was held in the Simulation Lab at Northwestern University, and a half dozen students participated in lecture followed by hands-on cadaver training. Thanks to an educational grant from AbbVie, the course was free of charge to participants.

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**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](mailto: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.

### **Advocacy Committee**

#### **Committee Chair - Mark Matza, MD, MBA, RhMSUS**

Advances USSONAR's advocacy efforts by promoting the value of rheumatology ultrasound and supporting initiatives that strengthen access, education, and appropriate use in clinical practice.

### **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 Fairchild, MD, PhD, RhMSUS**

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, FACR, 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.com](mailto:hxb38@case.com)

Sjogren's/Salivary Gland US Special Interest Group- contact Howard Yang [HHYang@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:HHYang@mednet.ucla.edu)

Vasculitis US Special Interest Group- contact Minna Kohler [mkohler@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto: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](mailto:ussonar@srahec.org). We'd love to review your submissions for inclusion in our upcoming newsletters!

# USSONAR VIDEO ARCHIVE



## Membership Spotlight | By Dr. Zineb Aouhab

In this newsletter, we are putting the spotlight on Dr. Fawad Aslam.

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

### Dr. Zineb Aouhab

#### How did MSK US impact your career as a rheumatologist?

It serves as an easily accessible tool, almost like a stethoscope, to sort out many diagnostic issues without long waits for consults and other imaging. While greatly helpful for procedures, its true utility lies in diagnostics. In the end, it allows me to become a better clinician. It allows patients to actively see and participate in their disease management, and it allows me to improve patient outcomes.



Dr. Fawad Aslam

#### How did ultrasound training prepare you to practice rheumatology?

I was very fortunate to benefit from the USSONAR fundamentals training program and learn from the true great masters of rheumatology ultrasound. There is no other training program that comes close to what USSONAR offers. I was also blessed to have our fellowship program director with a strong interest in ultrasound. She ensured that we were able to have ultrasound training in scheduled ultrasound clinics despite pushback.

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

Our practice has been very supportive of allowing generous times for ultrasound only clinics where we perform diagnostics, injections, trigger finger releases, nerve blocks, and synovial biopsies. Due to the lower reimbursement, we have had some limitation in expanding our ultrasound slots, but we are working on it.

#### How do you imagine the future of MSK US?

I am so excited to see our fellows and even residents so excited and interested about musculoskeletal ultrasound. I see the future full of energy. I remain concerned about the declining reimbursement rates for ultrasound despite strong advocacy efforts. I think rheumatologists should and will take up more advanced ultrasound guided interventions to improve patient care. In addition, there is great excitement about upcoming AI-based ultrasound machines that can scan and report on synovitis, although in a limited way. I believe there is great potential for this to develop further in synergy with us.



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