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 From left: Brian Sansbury, Ph.D.; Ashley Ogawa-Wong, Ph.D.; Yashini Govender, Ph.D.; Deepak Bhare, Ph.D.

BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION

The BWH Post(Doc)

Spring/Summer 2019



PostDoctoral Association

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BWH Postdoc Journal Club: Enhance Your Training Experience

by Sadaf Atarod, Ph.D.

The tradition of running Journal Clubs (JCs) at hospitals and universities dates to 1800s. The earliest record of which can be found in the memoirs of the British Surgeon, Sir James Paget. The reason for which they started a JC still holds true, a place where a small group of scientists gather to discuss and enhance their learning beyond what is offered in their labs or research groups.

Since then JCs have become part of the learning experience of every trainee researcher. Globally, JCs have become part of participatory learning experience of every young researcher. To provide the opportunity to trainee researchers in our community, we have started the BWH Postdoc JC. Our first JC event was on May 8th, 2019.

There are numerous benefits in joining our journal club, including: enhancing our understanding of new innovative technologies and methodologies in the life sciences; improving presentation, communication, and critical thinking skills; and to engage with fellow researchers with different expertise to gain novel viewpoints and suggestions which may inspire future collaborations

The multidisciplinary JC will meet on the **FIRST WEDNESDAY** of every month. In every meeting, we expect **two** members, from different research groups, to present an article each, shared prior with the group for pre-selection. The duration of the presentation (preferably slides) will be 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes Q&A and discussion with the goal of delineating the salient features of the results and its impact on the future studies it encourages.

The articles will be chosen based on the following criteria:

- Areas of interests/suggestions or recent research interests in biomedicine
- The article must be published within the past 2 years
- The study must contain no major methodological flaws and articles should be published in reputed journals

We invite interested researchers to share the article or if they have any additional queries with Sadaf Atarod, PhD (<mailto:satarod@bwh.harvard.edu>).

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Interested in joining the editorial team or becoming a contributor? Do you have a question, comment, or ideas for our next issue? Let us know!

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Best Practices for Visa Holders

by Noel Palatas, Partners Office for International Professionals and Students (PIPS)

The U.S. immigration landscape has shifted dramatically under the Trump administration. The BWH research community should be aware of two recent changes, which impact both visa holders and their families.

Accrual of Unlawful Presence

Unintentional violations can immediately nullify F or J visa status. On August 9, 2018, a new policy memorandum went into effect that changes how F, J, and M visa holders accrue unlawful presence in the U.S. Under this new memo, people in these visa classifications begin accruing unlawful presence from the date a status violation occurs, even if that violation was unintentional. Due to the language of the memo, the definition of visa violation is quite broad. Possible violations could include: failing to file U.S. taxes, employment at a worksite not listed in the J record, income not reported on a DS-2019, or activities outside the scope of the J-1. Accruing unlawful presence can ultimately lead to a 3 or 10 bar from returning to the U.S.

Revised Form I-539 Adds Fingerprinting Requirements & New Fees

On March 21, 2019, the U.S government revised form I-539 (application to extend or change non-immigration status). At BWH, this form is mostly used by the family members of H-1B visa holders. While the previous form I-539 allowed multiple people filing together such as a parent ("primary applicant") and one or more children ("co-applicants") to file a single application, the new form I-539 requires each co-applicant to complete his/her own form I-539A. After filing the application with the U.S. government, every applicant and co-applicant, regardless of age, will receive a biometric services appointment notice in the mail. Each applicant will be required to be photographed and fingerprinted at the nearest USCIS Application Support Center (ASC) before the case can be adjudicated.

PIPS Advice

While these changes can be stressful for nonimmigrants living in the U.S., visa holders can take the following steps to help minimize the impact:

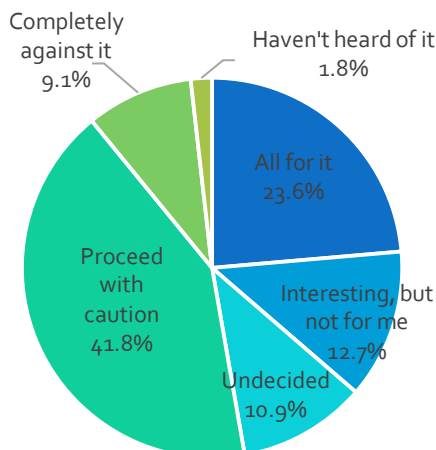
- ✓ Pursue only the activities for which your visa was requested.
- ✓ Always print your I-94 Admission Record and those of your dependents after each entry into the U.S. and review them for accuracy. If you see errors, contact PIPS as soon as possible and if you are an F-1 visa holder, contact your university's international office for assistance.
- ✓ Ensure taxes have been timely filed each year. All non-immigrant visa holders (J, H, F, E, O and TN) must file tax forms even if they did not earn money from a U.S. source.
- ✓ Be cautious about what you post online. Anything that can be publicly searched will be reviewed and potentially considered by the government when adjudicating a visa, permanent residence (green card) application, or admission to the U.S.
- ✓ If you are seeking a green card, use reputable local counsel to represent you. For a list of recommended attorneys, contact pips@partners.org.
- ✓ Report a change of home address to the U.S. government. J-1 visa holders must alert their ARO (J-1 visa holders sponsored by PIPS should contact pips@partners.org), F-1 visa holders must alert their university's DSO when they move, and all other visa holders (H-1B, E-3, TN, O-1) must file a form AR-11.
- ✓ J-1 visa holders must maintain J compliant health insurance for themselves and their J-2 dependents the entire duration of the visa program, which includes the grace period.
- ✓ H-1B visa holders should work with their departments to start preparing H-1B extension requests 6-7 months before their current visa status expires. PIPS has a two month processing period on all H-1B requests. If your department is paying premium processing (\$1410) USCIS will then have 15 days to respond to the H-1B petition. USCIS has an estimated process time of 7-10 months on cases filed without premium processing.
- ✓ Most importantly, visa holders should never guess or make assumptions about whether an action would violate their status. Researchers with visas sponsored by PIPS can contact pips@partners.org with questions and F-1 visa holders should contact their university's international office with questions.

For further news updates please sign up for our listserv and visit our website's [news section](#).

SURVEY RESULTS

What do BWH postdocs think of DNA testing? Survey responses were collected over two weeks. Here are the results.

What are your thoughts on DNA testing?



18.2%

Respondents who have used a DNA testing service.

What are they saying?

"I think that genetics and genomics will provide fascinating insights into many facets of human health, behavior, and disease. However, I do worry about the applications and the use of genetic data. Privacy is an issue that comes to mind.

Discrimination based on genetic information is a source of worries, especially with regards to insurance systems and employment. I think a more far-ranging discussion is needed, which should involve bioethicists, doctors, biologists, bioinformaticians, and politicians."

*--Mattia Rosso, M.D.
Postdoctoral Research Fellow*

Exploring Alternate Careers in Science: Conversation with a Venture Capitalist

by Shabir Hassan, Ph.D. & Abhijeet Sonawane, Ph.D.



To learn about various alternative careers, we wanted to connect with successful BWH Alumni to find out what they do. Due to a decrease in opportunities in academia, researchers are opting for alternative careers as exciting as research careers. Venture capital (VC) firms are an exciting avenue where you can influence funding for novel healthcare products. To talk about such an interesting career, we sat down with Dr. Joao Ribas, a BWH alumnus now working as an Investment Associate at Novo Holdings (Novo Nordisk Foundation) - Denmark.

SH & AS: Dr. Joao Ribas, thank you for agreeing to talk to us. Please briefly tell our readers about your journey so far.

JR: It has been an incredible journey from being a scientist at one of the best US hospitals to now being an investor at one of the best European VC firms. After my BWH experience, I joined M Ventures - Europe, the corporate venture capital arm of Merck KGaA, as an investment analyst. I later co-founded a medical device company and joined a VC firm, where I am currently at.

SH & AS: What is the work profile of your current role?

JR: Currently, I am an Investment Associate at Novo Holdings, and on top of all the other roles mentioned before, I also actively look into building new companies as well as help manage the portfolio of companies we have invested in. It is a fantastic experience, and very fulfilling to help life sciences companies get closer and closer to reaching patients.

SH & AS: How much time did you spend at BWH and in what capacity?

JR: I spent about 4 years at BWH developing my PhD in bioengineering. My research focused on the broad topic of organs-on-a-chip and how can we develop better in vitro systems for disease modeling and drug discovery. I was particularly focused on developing a model of the blood vessel that accounted for flow and mechanical stretching. I was able to simulate hypertension and advanced vascular aging, as well as test some drugs in clinical trials which showed to be promising. A year later a clinical trial article was published showing one of the drugs was able to prolong the life-span of children with a genetic disease that causes premature aging. This was a great validation of the technology.

SH & AS: As a member of the HST (Health Sciences and Technology program of Harvard and MIT), you were involved with co-organizing MIT Hacking Medicine. How was that experience and how did it shape your career decision?

JR: It was an honor to be part of MIT Hacking Medicine and travel the world teaching healthcare-innovation from Ecuador to Austria, Netherlands, and beyond. Curiously, I was first introduced to the concept of healthcare hackathons at BWH and learned how they could bring together teams with different skillsets to invent solutions for pressing unmet clinical needs. Being part of MIT Hacking Medicine allowed me to explore further career options alternative to research.

SH & AS: At BWH, how did your extra-curricular activities shape you?

JR: The local Boston/Cambridge ecosystem can offer you a lot, and I was lucky to be part of several initiatives. Harvard clubs were always an excellent place to meet other people and attend exciting events – the biotech club was a constant here, with several events on company creation, entrepreneurship, and career fairs. At MIT I also had the chance to attend the Healthcare Ventures course where I learned about creating healthcare companies. Together with others, we took an idea through the MIT \$100k competition, and the company later moved to California. In addition to these, I continuously mentored startup teams and was the president of a non-profit.

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Oxygenate Your Brains with These Harvard-Sponsored Athletic Facilities

by Rafik Boudra, Ph.D.

The beneficial effects of physical activities on well-being and cognitive functions are well established and practicing your favorite sport on a regular basis could boost your productivity, thereby enhancing your postdoc experience. As part of the Harvard postdoc community, we have access to several facilities for fitness and training at both the Longwood and Cambridge campuses.

[Vanderbilt Hall](#) is located at the corner of Louis Pasteur and Longwood Avenues. The subscription cost is \$490 for a year (from July to July), but can be prorated monthly if you join during any other month of the year. It offers tennis and basketball courts, in addition to 2 squash courts. Additionally, there is a climbing wall and several fitness rooms (with weights, body-building devices, indoor bikes, etc.). The staff also offer personal training plans as well one-to-one training sessions. Frequent pick-up games (soccer, basketball, volleyball) and intramural competitions are organized throughout the year, for those more interested in collective sports. I personally participated in the pick-up soccer and basketball games held on Monday nights. I really enjoyed playing with the very friendly people there, and that helped to relieve me a little bit from the beginning-of-the-week blues.

On the same campus, located in the New Research Building (NRB), [BodyScapes Fitness](#) offers discounted memberships at \$49/month, with 2 complimentary personal training sessions to use within the first 60 days after joining. Classes include zumba, pilates, body pump, yoga, and indoor cycling, among other fitness programs geared towards weight loss or stress management. With full access to state-of-the-art training devices and clean locker rooms with sauna and private showers, it is the ideal place to break a sweat and relax between 2 experiments.

BWH postdocs also have the possibility to get a membership at [Harvard Athletic Facilities](#). There are [10 of them scattered around Boston and Cambridge](#), and all can be accessed with a membership that costs \$300 per year or \$150 per season. The facilities have all the necessary equipment to practice virtually any sport. They also provide numerous classes and personal training sessions to help individuals reach their fitness goals. Additionally, they organize seasonal intramural competitions of football, soccer and volleyball to name a few.

Finally, postdocs enrolled with the new [AllWays Health Plan](#) are eligible for fitness benefits consisting of \$150 or more gym membership fees reimbursement per year at qualified clubs, including Boston Sport Club, Cambridge Athletic Club, Planet Fitness and others.

With all these possibilities, there is no excuse to not exercise your muscles and oxygenate your busy brains!

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SH & AS: You were highly productive as a researcher, why not pursue research further?

JR: I was fortunate to work with great people that have mentored me along the way, and without them, I would not have been as successful. At some point in my career, I realized that publishing papers were not enough. I wanted to see research being translated into the real world, affecting real patients. That realization led me closer and closer to becoming a serious life sciences entrepreneur, and ultimately a venture capitalist.

SH & AS: Would you change anything about your BWH experience?

JR: The experience at BWH was great, and if I could, I would have engaged more with the world-class physicians at BWH and get their input early on.

SH & AS: What is your message to the early career researchers of the BWH/Harvard community?

JR: Enjoy the experience of working in such a vibrant and entrepreneurial community. We need your groundbreaking work to fight the most pressing unmet clinical needs.

SH & AS: Thank you, Dr. Ribas

MEET THE NEW PLC LEADERSHIP

The PDA would like to thank Brian Sansbury, Ph.D., for his work as President of the PLC over the past two years. Under Brian's leadership, the PDA launched several initiatives, enhancing the overall postdoc experience. We extend a warm welcome to Deepak Bhere, Ph.D., who will take over as President. Deepak has been highly active in the PDA community as both Co-Vice President and Chair of the Networking Committee, notably expanding the NPAW celebration to advocate for a larger recognition and appreciation for postdocs. Yashini Govender, Ph.D. and Ashley Ogawa-Wong, Ph.D. will fill the Co-Vice President positions. As Career Development Committee Chair, Yashini added several program offerings for postdocs, including the career panel series this Spring. Ashley launched the postdoc newsletter and provided new communication outlets as Communications Committee Chair. We look forward to working with the new leadership as they continue to serve the postdoc community here at BWH.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Immigration Session

Are you thinking about applying for a green card? You won't want to miss this presentation by Richard landoli, Esq. Richard has over 35 years of experience representing hospital and research staff.

May 21 at 12-1 pm

Location TBA

[More info & registration](#)

Industry Career Panel

BWH alumni share their experiences transitioning from postdoc to industry. Networking session to follow. Dinner to be provided.

June 4, 2019 at 6-8 pm

Location TBA

Annual Summer BBQ

Kick-off the summer at this annual joint BBQ with other LMA-area postdocs.

Time and date TBA

pda.bwh.harvard.edu

