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If you are interested in being a part of the editorial team, please contact us.

## Quarterly Newsletter | Issue #1 | November 2023

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Welcoming Daria Hazuda, Ph.D. to our Board of Directors

The Center for Discovery and Innovation is proud to introduce our newest Board member, Daria Hazuda, Ph.D. With an illustrious career spanning over 30 years, Dr. Hazuda brings a wealth of expertise to our esteemed team.



Currently serving as the head of infectious disease and vaccine research at Generate: Biomedicines, Daria leads pioneering research in leveraging The Generate Platform for vaccines and infectious diseases. Her extensive background includes roles as the Vice President of Infectious Disease and Vaccines and Chief Scientific Officer at the Merck Cambridge Research site, where she spearheaded the discovery and development of groundbreaking drugs, including first-in-class HIV integrase inhibitors. We look forward to benefiting from Dr. Hazuda's remarkable insights and achievements as we continue our mission of innovation and discovery.



#### Judy L. Aschner joins CDI as a Faculty

Judy L. Aschner, M.D. is an internationally recognized leader and physician-scientist in pediatrics, neonatology and perinatal biology. Her laboratory and translational research focus is the regulation of the newborn pulmonary circulation. We warmly welcome Dr. Aschner as a new faculty member at CDI.

#### Evaluate Diagnostics - the first spin-out company based on CDI science

The company has taken shape, with the aim of creating tests which will establish a new “threshold of detection” for cancer and other diseases. EValuate Diagnostics will market a new system of diagnostic assays that will help select and identify disease biomarkers for earlier-than-ever detection of cancer and a wide range of other diseases and appear to have great promise in better diagnosing metastatic cancers.



## EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear CDI members,  
I am delighted to introduce our inaugural quarterly newsletter, an exciting window into the world of innovation and research at the Center for Discovery and Innovation (CDI). As the editor-in-chief, it's my privilege to share the exceptional work and discoveries of our dedicated scholars and scientists.

In these pages, you'll find insights, breakthroughs, and collaborative efforts that define our institute's commitment to knowledge, progress, and excellence. We hope this newsletter serves as a source of inspiration and fosters a sense of community among our readers.

Thank you for your support and curiosity as we embark on this journey of knowledge sharing. Stay tuned for more exciting updates.

Warm regards,

Madhuvika Murugan, PhD  
Editor-in-Chief

## NEW RESEARCH FUNDING

Award start date: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 onward

Congratulations **Dr. Aschner** on her NIH UG3 Grant- Enriching ECHO Cohorts with High-risk Pregnancies and Children with Disabilities.

Congratulations to **Dr. Feinman** for securing funding from the Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

Congratulations to **Dr. Hirsch** for the K-grant from NIH.

Georgetown/Ruesch Center Pilot Grant awardees – **Drs. Kevin Tong and Jigar Desai**.

We also want to congratulate **Drs. Carter-Bawa, Zhang, Rosenstein, Lu, Xue, Ogedegbe, Perlin, Kreiswirth** and their lab members for the grants awarded for their work.

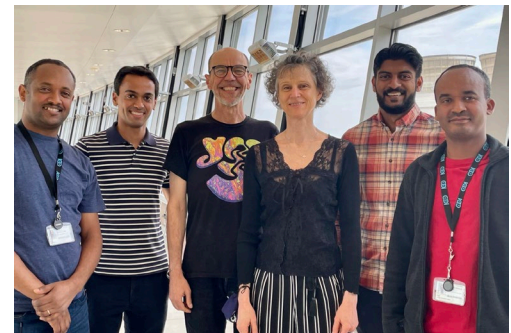
## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

### Veronique Dartois and Thomas Dick make advances on the treatment of *Mycobacterium abscessus* resistant isolates

By Irene Gonzalez Jimenez, PhD

The persistent global health crisis of drug-resistant bacterial strains presents a pressing challenge, undermining conventional clinical treatment methods and patient care. In a recent study led by Min Xie and Uday Ganapathy, the authors explore the potential of ADP-ribosylation-resistant rifabutin analogs as a new treatment option for drug-tolerant isolates of *Mycobacterium abscessus* growing in necrotic lesions.

Published in the esteemed journal "*Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy*", this research describes a novel assay of caseum surrogates offering valuable insights for assessing bactericidal activity against this specific form of *M. abscessus*.



## RESOURCES

### New Grant Management Portal

We are excited to announce the launch of our new **Grant Management Portal**, now accessible via PeopleSoft. This portal, thoughtfully tailored to cater to the unique requirements of CDI faculty, has been meticulously crafted by Alla Rabinovich, our esteemed Chief Operating Officer.

It offers an immediate overview of your funding profile, streamlining the grant management process for the contemporary generation of faculty members.

Further information about the portal's features and training sessions on its utilization will be presented during our upcoming faculty meeting.

### Bioinformatics Core

We are thrilled to highlight the Bioinformatics Core at CDI. This dedicated resource will empower our researchers with advanced tools and expertise to enhance genomic and computational analyses. For more details visit the CDI website or contact our Bioinformatician - Ariel Aptekmann.

## Social Events

**Halloween Get-Together** | October 26



*Compiled by Vijeta Sharma, PhD*

## Upcoming Seminars

**November 14- Christian S. Hinrich, MD**, seminar: "Cell therapy for HPV-associated cancers and other solid tumors"

## McAllister & Quinn Training Series for DoD and CDMRP Funding

This webinar series will provide researchers with the tools to evaluate which biodefense programs are a potential fit for their research and how to take the next steps towards proposal submission.

The webinars will be available to HMH investigators and are especially relevant to CDI grant seekers. A hold has already been placed on your calendar (please accept to confirm).

### WEBINAR DATES:

November 27, 2023 | 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

December 11, 2023 | 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

## CREATIVITY CORNER

*By Yasmine Hassoun, PhD*



## Thanksgiving & Diwali celebration

Wednesday, November 15th, 2023

1:00pm- 3:00pm

Location: CDI Lobby Area

## CDI Holiday Event

Tuesday, December 12th, 2023

4:00pm- 8:00pm

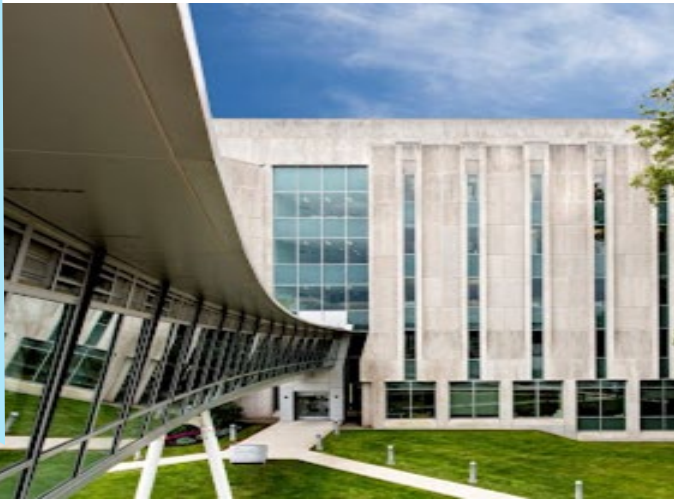
Location: The Roosevelt  
356 Paterson Ave, East Rutherford, NJ

## HMH WEEK – Spirit Day

As a spirited contribution to HMH Week's Spirit Day, CDI's dedicated team, under the artistic leadership of Iriana Colorado, hand-painted a vibrant homecoming-themed banner. This collaborative effort embodies our team's unwavering spirit and commitment to our 5C's values!



Please contact [Madhuvika.Murugan@hmh-cdi.org](mailto:Madhuvika.Murugan@hmh-cdi.org) for additional information on topics included in this newsletter and if you would like to share content or ideas for future publications.



### Clinical Research Resources for Cancer Studies

We are pleased to announce the official launch of JTCC-CDI Translational Office (JCTO) at CDI. JCTO will facilitate collaboration between JTCC clinicians and CDI researchers to operationalize translational clinical research studies that accelerate oncology IIT activities for the institution and the NCI consortium.

For more information contact our Manager - Chintan Patel

**The 2nd Annual Men's Health Day** held on September 30<sup>th</sup> was a partnership with CDI, the HUMC Department of Urology, HMH Community Outreach Program, and the Cancer COE Program.

At this event, we screened men in the community for prostate cancer, diabetes, hypertension, colorectal cancer, oral cancers, and spread mental health awareness.

We emphasized men at higher risk of prostate cancer, including African American men and men with a family history.

**We had >150 men and their family members attend with >15 different hospital/ community/ religious organizations participating.**



**Annual Men's Health Day**

## IDWeek™

**Oct 11-15 | Boston, MA**

ID Week is an annual gathering of infectious disease experts, providing a platform for sharing research and advancing global healthcare practices in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

The Center for Discovery and Innovation was honored to be featured at the ID Week held in Boston in October. Our work in diagnostics, therapeutics, and prevention took the spotlight, underlining our commitment to advancing the global battle against infectious diseases. Our contributions left an indelible mark on this prestigious event.



**CDI featured at ID week 2023**

