

DIVISION OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AND NEUROIMMUNOLOGY NEWSLETTER

Dear All,

Happy fall from the Division of Multiple Sclerosis & Neuroimmunology! As the leaves change and 2026 somehow starts winding down already, we have lots to celebrate and share.

This season, we're welcoming new faces, celebrating our incredible team, and sharing exciting research happening across MS and neuroimmunology. Our work has also taken us beyond Chicago, from collaborations in Guinea and the inaugural AFRICTRIMS Conference in Ghana to a new project exploring air pollution and brain health in Mongolia.

Most importantly, we're grateful for the patients, families, research participants, colleagues, and friends who make this work possible. We hope you enjoy this issue, have a wonderful fall, and join us for some of the activities ahead.

Have a great (and hopefully not too cold) last few months of 2026!

Sincerely,

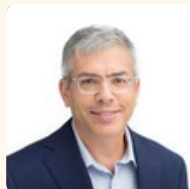
Farrah Mateen, MD, PhD

Charles L. Mix Professor of Neurology

Chief, Division of Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroimmunology



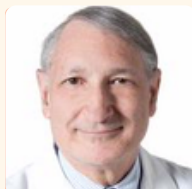
Brought to you by our faculty:



**Benayahu
Elbaz-Eilon, PhD**
Assistant Professor, Neurology



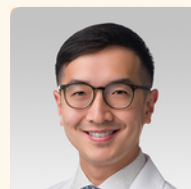
**Brian J
Popko, PhD**
Professor, Neurology



**Bruce A
Cohen, MD**
Professor, Neurology



**Carolyn J
Bevan, MD, MS**
Adjunct Lecturer, Neurology



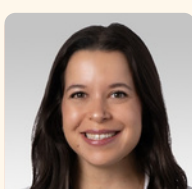
Dan Tong Jia, MD
Assistant Professor,
Neurology



**Edith L
Graham, MD**
Assistant Professor, Neurology



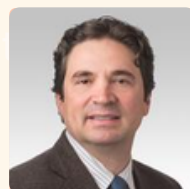
**Elena
Grebenciucova, MD**
Assistant Professor, Neurology



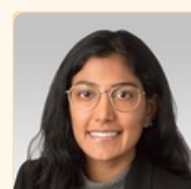
Hannah Kopinsky, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor,
Neurology



**Kavita
P Thakkar, MD**
Assistant Professor, Neurology



**Roumen
D Balabanov, MD**
Professor, Neurology



Shailee S Shah, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor,
Neurology



NEW FACES & DIVISION NEWS



Meet our new CRC! **Audrey Chang**

Clinical Research
Coordinator
Department of Neurology
Northwestern University

Can you describe your role at the Center for Global Neurology?

I work closely with a motivated team of coordinators to plan events that bring together community members around a shared interest in global neurology.



What are you most excited to work on or learn about in your new role?

I am most looking forward to the opportunity to learn from physicians and patients abroad in an upcoming neuroimmunology research trip to the Republic of Guinea.

What do you hope to learn or accomplish during your time with the Center?

I hope to learn about ways to design neurological research projects that are both supportive, respectful, and inclusive of underrepresented populations in our global community.

What keeps you hopeful about the future of global neurological health?

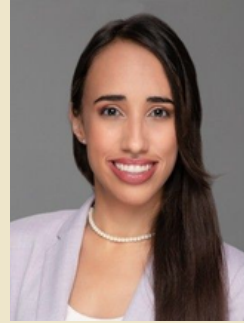
Current and ongoing partnerships between the Center for Global Neurology and hospitals around the world remind me that there are still available avenues to prioritize care of people with neurological disorders in resource-limited settings.



What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I enjoy reading, running, spending time outdoors, and trying new food cuisines!

Welcome, Dr. Veronica Torres!



We are excited to welcome Veronica Lilyana Torres Torres, MD, our **Neuroimmunology and Multiple Sclerosis Fellow** for 2026–2027. Dr. Torres joins Northwestern after neurology residency at the University of Puerto Rico, where she served as chief resident.



Congratulations, Dr. Balabanov!

Congratulations to Dr. Roumen Balabanov who was recently promoted to **Professor of Neurology!**

We are thrilled to celebrate this recognition of Dr. Balabanov's sustained contributions to neuroimmunology therapeutics and his dedicated commitment to patient care, mentorship of trainees, and collaboration amongst colleagues. We take this opportunity to express our enduring appreciation of Dr. Balabanov's daily impact!



Welcome to Lake Forest!



We are delighted to welcome Dr. Hannah Kopinsky to our growing MS and Neuroimmunology team at Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital.



Rare Neuroimmune Disorders Symposium

Dr. Elena Grebenciucova will be presenting "Fatigue, Sleep, and Cognition" at the 2026 Rare Neuroimmune Disorders Symposium, held October 15–17 in Dallas and online.



Explore the full program and register here:



Join our new studies!

CONCIERTO: An Observational Study for MS Patients Treated with Ocrelizumab Subcutaneous

This observational, longitudinal study aims to understand the risk of injection reactions in patients who have been or will be newly treated with ocrelizumab SC. Participants will be contacted after each ocrelizumab SC administration to share the incidence of any injection reactions with the study team.



Contact:

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Real world experience with BRIUMVI® (ublituximab-xiyi) treated patients: a Longitudinal registry study (ENABLE)

We are recruiting individuals diagnosed with relapsing multiple sclerosis who are planning to begin treatment with Ublituximab-xiyi (Briumvi), including those who have been previously treated with a different disease-modifying therapy. As part of the study, during each infusion, we will ask you to complete two surveys about how MS impacts your daily activities and your experience with Briumvi.



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REMASTER: Remibrutinib for Secondary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis (SPMS)

We are enrolling individuals with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis (SPMS) for a study of remibrutinib, an investigational oral medication. The study aims to determine whether remibrutinib is safe and effective and whether it can slow disability progression in people living with SPMS. Participants will receive regular clinical evaluations, MRI monitoring, and safety assessments throughout the study.



Contact:

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More of our studies!

Ublituximab (Briumvi) for Early forms of Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis

The goal of this study is to understand the safety and tolerability of Ublituximab (Briumvi) in people with early relapsing MS. We also want to measure changes in a blood biomarker (neurofilament light chain) before and after treatment.

People with Multiple Sclerosis treated with Ocrelizumab and Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 agonist

We are enrolling individuals with MS who are being treated with Ocrevus and are either currently taking or planning to start a GLP-1 medication. The study aims to better understand how GLP-1 medications may affect MS symptoms, energy, walking ability, and overall quality of life.

Ocrevus Zunovo for MS: Mixed Methods

We are enrolling individuals with MS who are currently receiving or planning to start Ocrevus Zunovo (OZ), a recently approved subcutaneous (under-the-skin) form of ocrelizumab. The study aims to better understand patients' experiences with OZ, including treatment satisfaction and quality of life, and identify ways to improve access to high-efficacy MS treatments.

Plasma Collection for Cell-Free DNA Methylation Profiling in Multiple Sclerosis and Controls

This study hopes to better understand MS by looking at cell-free DNA—tiny genetic fragments in blood that give clues about what's happening in the body. We are looking for samples from patients with MS and volunteers who do not have MS. Participants will complete a baseline visit and follow-up visits every 6–12 months for up to five years, including blood draws, clinical assessments, OCT imaging, and surveys.



Contact Information for All of the Studies Listed Above:

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AROUND THE DIVISION & AROUND THE WORLD

Global Neurology Spotlight: Guinea



This fall, members of our team traveled to the **Republic of Guinea** as part of ongoing collaborations in global neurology and neuroimmunology.

During the trip, Mateen Lab members collected valuable data to support ongoing MS research, while Dr. Mateen provided neurological expertise and clinical guidance.



The trip reflects the Division's commitment to strengthening international partnerships and expanding collaborative research and education in neurological care.

Research Spotlight: Mongolia



Congratulations to Dr. Mateen and Nomin Enkhtsetseg, who received the Research Catalyzer Award from the Robert J. Havey,



MD Institute for Global Health to lead a new study in **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**. In collaboration with Otgontenger University and Northwestern University, the study will examine air pollution and brain health among adults living in ger and apartment districts across the city during Ulaanbaatar's winter air-pollution season.

Research Spotlight: AFRICTRIMS in Ghana



Dylan Rice presented at the inaugural **Advancing MS Care, Research and Innovation in Africa** Conference in Accra, Ghana. His mixed-methods research in Guinea examined traditional healers' knowledge and practices surrounding MS, highlighting their often underrecognized role in pathways to neurological care.

"Traditional Healers' Knowledge, Experience, and Practices Related to Multiple Sclerosis in the Republic of Guinea: A Mixed Methods Study"

ACTRIMS/ECTRIMS Patient Day:

23 October 2026 15:00–18:00 EDT

Patients, families, caregivers, and members of the MS community are invited to connect with experts and learn about advances in MS research and care during Patient Day at ACTRIMS/ECTRIMS 2026.



REGISTER ONLINE
(In-person & remote):



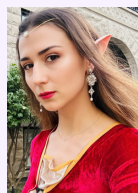
ECTRIMS
EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR TREATMENT
AND RESEARCH IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS



TRICK OR TREAT: Meet our faculty!

What was your favorite Halloween costume you've ever worn?

Dr. Elena Grebenciucova:
"Galadriel from The Lord of the Rings, leading the Northern armies against the evil rising in Mordor :)"



Which Halloween candy are you grabbing first, and which are you leaving behind?



Dr. Edith Graham:
"Grabbing first – Dots
Leaving behind –
Candy corn"

What's your favorite spooky movie?

Dr. Edith Graham:



"Horror happens to be my favorite genre. Some recent standouts are Bring Her Back, Weapons, and Barbarian, with an honorable mention for Widow's Bay."

If you had to spend a night in a supposedly haunted place, whom from the team are you bringing with you?

Dr. Elena Grebenciucova :

"No doubt, Dr. Graham , I call her Edie Bond, as in James Bond, enough said."

If you could spend Halloween anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Dr. Farrah Mateen:
"Transylvania!"

Dr. Elena Grebenciucova:
"My homeland –
Transylvania :)
Dracula's castle"



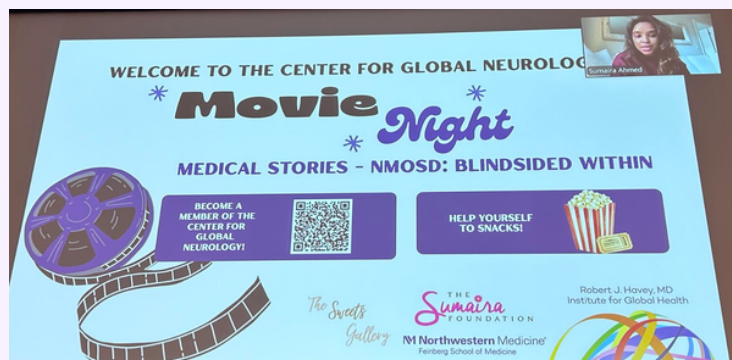
What's the best part of fall in Chicago?



Dr. Elena Grebenciucova:
"The magical autumn colors amongst the gothic architecture of University of Chicago campus. The pictures are Harry Potter like"

Lights, Camera, NMO!

We hosted a movie night featuring *Medical Stories – NMOSD: Blindsided Within*, bringing together faculty, staff, and patients to learn more about the lived experience of NMOSD and connect through film, conversation, and plenty of movie night snacks!



Save the date: MS Symposium



Join **Dr. Bruce Cohen** and colleagues for the 5th Annual Northwestern Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Program, featuring updates and discussions on MS care and research.

Saturday, November 21, 2026: 10AM–12:30 PM

Fall is vaccine season:



People receiving certain MS and neuroimmunology treatments may have special considerations around the timing and type of vaccines they receive. Talk with your healthcare team about recommended fall and winter vaccinations and how they should be timed around treatment.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

<https://www.neurology.northwestern.edu/divisions/msneuroimmunology/index.html>



Support Our Work!

Your generosity helps us accelerate discoveries, expand clinical trials, and improve MS care. You can support MS research at our center by scanning the QR code below or visiting:



<https://feinberg.nu/MSResearch>

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