

NP3 2021 Practice-Based Research Seed Grant Recipients

The [Northwestern Primary Care Practice-Based Research Program \(NP3\)](#) is excited to formally announce the four [2021 Practice-Based Research Seed Grant Program](#) awardees. The NP3 seed grant program supports research partnership development and collaboration between community-based primary care practices and academic researchers.

These one year awards, totaling \$100,000, are generously supported by the Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (NUCATS), the Center for Community Health, and the Division of General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics. We thank these groups for their continued dedication to practice-based research.

The 2021 seed grant recipients are below (alphabetical, by project title). Abstracts for each project are available on the following pages.

- ***Light therapy for depression in adolescent outpatients: a pilot study***

Principal Investigators:

- [Rachel Ballard](#), MD, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Lurie Children's Hospital
- [Lisa Gadek](#), MD, [Lake Forest Pediatrics](#)
- [John Parkhurst](#), PhD, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Lurie Children's Hospital
- [Dorothy Sit](#), MD, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Feinberg School of Medicine

- ***Partnership to Align Epic Tools and Practice Teams to Offer Evidence-based Weight Management Interventions in Primary Care***

Principal Investigators:

- [Ronald Ackermann](#), MD, General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine
- [Shalini Bhattacharya](#), MD, [Northwestern Medicine Bucktown Practice](#)

- ***Promoting COVID-19 Vaccination among At-Risk Adults: A Community, Academic and Health Center Partnership***

Principal Investigators:

- [Stacy Bailey](#), PhD, General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine
- [Mia Cross](#), RN, [Family Christian Health Center](#)

- ***Promoting Health Equity through High-Priority Outreach in Primary Care***

Principal Investigators:

- [Muriel Jean-Jacques](#), MD, General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine
- Lauren Leviton, LCSW, [Northwestern Medicine General Internal Medicine Clinic](#)
- Maria Vargas, MPH, [General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine](#)
- Alfred Washington, BA, [Northwestern Medicine General Internal Medicine Clinic](#)

Email us at np3@northwestern.edu to learn more about practice-based research.

Light therapy for depression in adolescent outpatients: a pilot study

Principal Investigators:

- Rachel Ballard, MD – Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Lurie Children’s Hospital
- Lisa Gadek, MD – Partner, Lake Forest Pediatrics
- John Parkhurst, PhD – Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Lurie Children’s Hospital
- Dorothy Sit, MD – Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Feinberg School of Medicine

Abstract:

Depressive disorders in adolescence are common and impairing conditions that require treatment. Psychotherapies and medications have been shown to be effective to treat depression but have limitations that create barriers to uptake. Non-medication treatments for adolescent depression have not been well studied in adolescents. Bright Light Therapy (BLT) is an established and effective treatment for adult depression, seasonal affective disorder, and bipolar disorder. Investigation into BLT with adolescents has been encouraging despite the limited context of use in the inpatient hospitalization samples. Feasibility and acceptability of the treatment, optimal dose, and optimal timing of BLT requires further investigation in an outpatient population. We propose a pragmatic investigation of BLT in partnership with primary care physicians who most often identify adolescents in need of treatment for depressive disorders. This mixed-methods study will engage stakeholders to identify barriers to adolescent engagement in BLT. Using insights from the stakeholder panel, we will conduct an 8-week dose-finding and trial of BLT with 16 adolescents referred from primary care settings. Outcomes from this study will inform recommendations for future trials of BLT in primary care.

Partnership to Align Epic Tools and Practice Teams to Offer Evidence-based Weight Management Interventions in Primary Care

Principal Investigators:

- Ronald Ackermann, MD – Professor of General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine
- Shalini Bhattacharya, MD – Health System Clinician, Northwestern Medicine Bucktown Practice

Abstract:

Modest weight loss (~10 to 20 pounds) improves cardiovascular disease outcomes and risk factors, reduces need for blood pressure and diabetes medication, improves quality of life, and reduces future healthcare expenditures. Effective lifestyle interventions involve longitudinal coaching support (typically in 10 to 20 contacts per year), which presents challenges for primary care practices because of low knowledge and skill with behavior counseling, underuse of available technologies to engage patients, time constraints, and limited reimbursement. The US Preventive Services Task Force recommends health systems to offer intensive lifestyle interventions by linking with community resources. This approach offloads much of intervention delivery to non-clinical partners, but a defined process for implementing and coordinating both primary care and community components is needed. Our team spanning NU and Northwestern Medical Group recently collaborated to develop practice tools for patient goal-setting, linkages to community lifestyle programs, remote monitoring, and weekly coaching support via automated messaging and telephonic outreach by practice nurses. This seed grant will deepen our academic-practice partnership and stakeholder engagement to evaluate how best to support routine delivery of these pragmatic, evidence-based, person-centered services, and to inform a collaborative R01 application to support a system-wide evaluation relevant to other primary care networks nationally.

Promoting COVID-19 Vaccination among At-Risk Adults: A Community, Academic and Health Center Partnership

Principal Investigators:

- Stacy Bailey, PhD – Associate Professor of General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine
- Mia Cross, RN – Director of Community Health Programs, Family Christian Health Center

Abstract:

Misinformation regarding COVID-19 and available vaccines is common and a major public health challenge. Vaccine messaging needs to be culturally tailored and health literacy-appropriate to promote widespread COVID-19 vaccination. For this project, Northwestern University will partner with Family Christian Health Center (FCHC), a Federally Qualified Health Center affiliated with AllianceChicago, to address low COVID-19 vaccine uptake in Chicago's Southland communities. We will develop - using community-based participatory methods - patient-centered COVID-19 vaccine messaging materials that can be delivered via multiple modalities and strategies. To guide materials development, we will obtain input from community members and will use health literacy 'best practices' to ensure materials are easy to navigate and understand. We will then conduct qualitative interviews with 10 FCHC patients to finalize our materials and approach. We will then implement materials at FCHC and disseminate strategies to AllianceChicago and other partners. Our approach utilizes community-based participatory methods and our expertise in health literacy, graphic design, and health information technology to develop, implement, and disseminate patient-centered materials and messaging to promote COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and uptake among underserved communities.

Promoting Health Equity through High-Priority Outreach in Primary Care

Principal Investigators:

- Muriel Jean-Jacques, MD- Assistant Professor of General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine
- Lauren Leviton, LCSW – Social Worker, Northwestern Medicine General Internal Medicine Clinic
- Maria Vargas, MPH – Research Manager, General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine
- Alfred Washington, BA – Resource Coordinator, Northwestern Medicine General Internal Medicine Clinic

Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic has leveled a devastating burden on individuals and communities of color, who have experienced higher rates of infection and mortality, lower rates of vaccination, and greater social needs. These stark health and social inequities occur in the context of heightened awareness about structural racism and other systemic forces that underlie these unacceptable patterns and highlight the need for a proactive response by health systems to address the social determinants of health. The proposed study aims to promote health equity by implementing and evaluating high-priority outreach to historically marginalized patients who receive care primary care in the Northwestern Medicine General Internal Medicine Clinic (Galter 18). The outreach will assess unmet health needs, streamline access to primary care visits, identify social needs, and make referrals to community-based resources. The study will implement this outreach jointly by a funded part-time research coordinator and an established, interdisciplinary outreach team based in the Galter 18 primary care practice. The proposed research will rigorously evaluate the impact of high-priority outreach on patient-level outcomes and implementation metrics needed to define the program's success. Study findings will be shared with leaders in Quality and Primary Care to inform related efforts across Northwestern Medicine to expand and sustain high-priority outreach to populations that have faced the greatest burdens of structural racism and economic inequality.