



UCSF Department of Medicine ZUCKERBERG SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL

WOMEN CHAMPIONS OF ZSFG'S DOM

In recognition of International Women's Month, the Department of Medicine at Zuckerberg San Francisco General celebrates the contributions of all our women and devotes this newsletter to a handful of our many extraordinary women in the Department. Five of these women, proclaimed as "Champions" by Dr. Neil Powe, exemplify the world-class work consistently performed by all in research, clinical care and education at ZSFG:

ELISE RILEY, PHD:
Professor, HIV, ID & Global Medicine

In 2000, deciding to work at ZSFG was a relatively easy decision for Dr. Elise Riley. With



a passion for HIV/AIDS research and the care of vulnerable populations, San Francisco and its general hospital checked all the boxes.

"They were a group – one of the few in

the country – that were looking at homeless people with HIV," she said. "So I took to them and really connected with them."

For Dr. Riley, San Francisco brought a different perspective on a similar problem, which she saw at John Hopkins in Baltimore. That change in scenery and perspective – focused on San Francisco's most vulnerable population – drives her career today.

Currently, she is a lead investigator on two separate grants – both having to do with drug use, its consequences and its effect on HIV, including in homeless women – and is a critical thinker on the side effects of drug use on users. In the 17 years in San Francisco, drug use and causes have shifted and changed.

"It's been huge in the last 17 years, and I do



WOMEN AT ZSFG'S DOM

- Four of 13 Division Chiefs
- All 12 Division Managers
- 10 of 16 Central Leadership roles
- 92 of 174 paid faculty members
- 238 of 330 staff members
- Two Chief Residents

credit San Francisco often times leading the pack with a wave of innovation," she said. "Thankfully, San Francisco is one of the closest things you would find for full health care. It's a model that other cities could follow."

NIHARIKA DIXIT, MD:
Assistant Professor, Hematology & Oncology

After coming to San Francisco from Boston in 2011, Dr. Niharika Dixit wanted to dive



deep into the health disparities in San Francisco. ZSFG was the perfect home for her, as she was able to dip her feet into a mix of teaching, clinical care and research.

"San Francisco General gave me what I was looking for," Dixit said.

Her work focuses on breaking barriers between patients and physicians, allowing the best and most effective care possible, she said.

"There are side-effects you have to worry about," Dixit said. "One of the challenges is overcoming the language barrier and having discussion with patients about life and death ... And it takes a lot of time to be able to do that. It's difficult in all circumstances but especially if you don't speak the same language."

"Their challenges sometimes seem insurmountable. But we have a community of people that go out of the way to treat their patients."

That incredible care is what Dixit works on improving each day. Her goal: increase communication between specialists and primary providers, while improving care. Currently, she focuses on cancer care and preparing for patients living longer while going through treatment.

"I think cancer care is becoming more and more important because some of our patients are living longer," Dixit said

JINOOS YAZDANY, MD, MPH:
Associate Professor, Rheumatology

As an Iranian born woman, whose family immigrated to the United States during the



Iranian Revolution in 1978, Dr. Jinoos Yazdany has always had a soft spot for immigrants and what it costs to settle in a foreign land.

That relationship pushed her to ZSFG,

which focuses on helping the underserved and immigrant populations, she said.

"The thing that draws me to San Francisco General is the immigrant experience," Yazdany said. "Many people and many families, they struggled to try to leave everything behind and start a new life. They gave up a tremendous amount to gain opportunities for their children. So I relate to them – very deeply. That's actually the reason that's why I'm here."



The division managers of the DOM at ZSFSG, starting from the top left to right: Elissa Roeser, Jennifer Perlman Thomas, Nyya Lark-Wilson, Jep Poon, Mary Ellen Kelly and Deborah Grantz. Bottom left to right: Amy Akbarian, Jena Desai, Jemy Fowler, Amy Foster and Peggy Weix

SPOTLIGHT

WOFSY'S LASTING IMPACT

Dr. Constance B. Wofsy's impact on HIV/AIDS research at ZSFSG – and throughout the country - is easy to quantify for former colleagues Dr. Donald Abrams and Dr. Paul Volberding. She was a leader who was straightforward, intelligent and inspirational.

"She absolutely had an impact," Volberding said. "She was one of the founders of the world's first AIDS clinic, and was there from the earliest days. She probably has seen AIDS patients earlier than I had. This model of care - comprehensive one-stop shopping - was



really important. Her attention to women's issues and was also really important. And, she had a way to have a human face to the response the epidemic."

Dr. Wofsy, who passed away due to breast cancer in 1996, was a pioneer in the development of HIV care, especially in women. She was the co-founder of the AIDS program, with Dr. Volberding, in 1983 and she was one of the first to develop care for HIV in women.

"It took courage, for anybody in those days - because we didn't know how this disease was transmitted - to be on the frontline," Dr. Abrams said. "In my opinion, Connie was very courageous by coming up to bat and taking a risk"

Her personality resonated most with her colleagues.

She had "a quaint sense of humor and that would come out every once in a while," Volberding said. "And it connected her with people."

"She was an amazing person and we still miss her."

Her remembrance still lives through the Distinguished Professorship, established in 1998 for the Chief of the ZSFSG Medical Service.

— Connor Ramey: Connor.Ramey@ucsf.edu

Those values help during her research, which sets to improve the quality of health care for those that suffer from health disparities. Her goal is to uncover places where improvement is needed and help foster that change. This includes a national registry in rheumatology and building learning networks to pinpoint improvement.

HEATHER HARRIS, MD:
Associate Professor, Hospital Medicine

Palliative care is no easy task as patients suffer from debilitating diseases, but for Dr. Heather Harris that work is as rewarding as it can get - it's a celebration of life. For her and many of her co-workers, that celebration exemplifies the mission of the Department of Medicine at



ZSFSG. The mission was a driving force that led to her joining the hospital in 2009.

"It was a dream come true for me," Harris said. "It was an opportunity to transition more fully to palliative

care and in a setting that resonated so deeply with me."

Harris, along with Anne Kinderman, co-founded the Supportive and Palliative Care Service at ZSFSG as the Associate Medical Director in 2009. The program grew quickly, wildly surpassing its expected patients in the first year.

"The pump was very primed for us when we opened our doors," she said. "We had many people excited"

It's there where she continues to be a leader as more growth – and moving into the outpa-

tient arena - is expected in 2017.

PRISCILLA HSUE, MD:
Professor, Cardiology

During medical school at UCSF, Dr. Priscilla Hsue developed a long-standing passion for the research that would drive her professional career. While at UCSF, Hsue's interest and



love for cardiology grew, and it's there where she makes an impact. Hsue focuses on the link between cardiology and HIV, and the interaction between each other, she said. And the

mission of ZSFSG feeds that focus.

"This is an underserved population and there is an amazing amount of medicine and social issues that you come across directly on the frontline that you don't see at other hospitals," she said. "Here we see advanced diseases that you never see at other hospitals."

With that experience, Hsue started the HIV Cardiology Clinic in 2004 – one of the first clinics of its kind in the country.

"We took cardiology and HIV and then asked why do they have this high risk, even though they are seeking treatment?" Hsue said. "There was high residual risk that was distinct from traditional risk factors. There was an HIV related focus. It seemed to be a strong contributor and it was predictive."

From there, Hsue has expanded her research in cardiovascular risk in HIV.

"I just want to make an impact," she said. And she does.

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