The article “Research Productivity and Rankings of Anesthesiology Departments in Canada and the United States: The Relationship Between the h-Index and Other Common Metrics” (Bunting AC, Alavifard S, Walker B, Miller DR, Ramsay T, Boet S. Anesth Analg. 2017 Sep 28. [Epub ahead of print]) ranked us in the top 10 for research productivity out of anesthesiology departments in the US and Canada!

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) granted full accreditation to our Regional Anesthesiology and Acute Pain Medicine Fellowship, effective September 21, 2017. Read more

Phillip S. Adams DO was named a 2018 recipient of the inaugural Young Investigator Research Grant from the Society for Pediatric Anesthesia (SPA) Patient Safety, Education and Research Fund for the project “Association between Perioperative Respiratory Adverse Events and Nasal Nitric Oxide Measurements” (Mentor: Peter J. Davis, MD). Dr. Adams will present his work at the SPA-American Academy of Pediatrics Pediatric Anesthesiology 2019 meeting in Houston, TX.

Our Pain Medicine fellows Jessica M. Albasha, DO and Youngeun Cho, MD were selected as two of only 60 pain fellows nationwide to participate in the American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine (ASRA) Advanced Neuromodulation Comprehensive Hands-on Workshop with Practical Case Management for the Future Implanters on Wednesday, April 18, 2018, immediately preceding the World Congress on Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine in New York City. Drs. Albasha and Cho will receive a travel scholarship to attend the meeting.

Lilinete Polsunas, MD, a combined Pediatrics/Anesthesiology Resident and a Puerto Rico native, has been working tirelessly since Hurricane Maria to provide much needed medical supplies and funds to her island home. She started by energizing the anesthesiology and pediatric residents to raise $1,440. Read more

Pittsburgh Magazine named Francis Feld (CRNA, UPMC Passavant) and John M. O’Donnell (CRNA, UPMC Presbyterian and Director, University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia Program), as 2017 “Excellence in Nursing” honorees. Read more

The 2017 Cameos of Caring Gala was held Saturday, November 4 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, where two of our outstanding CRNAs were honored. Rick Henker, CRNA PhD won the Advanced Practice Award. Pam Norton, CRNA, BSN from UPMC Presbyterian also won an award. Read more

On September 6, 2017, Andrew Herlich, DMD, MD, FAAP, FASA was appointed to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Health Rare Diseases Advisory Council. Read more
Grace Lim MD, MS will serve as Chair of the Physician Specialty Education Subcommittee of the Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology (SOAP) Education Committee. Read more

Stephen M. McHugh, MD was selected to serve as an American Board of Anesthesiology question writer for a two-year term. Read more

William R. McIvor, MD, Rita M. Patel, MD, and Raymond M. Planinsic, MD were recently appointed Fellows of the American Society of Anesthesiologists (FASA™). FASA identifies and promotes ASA members exhibiting the highest standards in professionalism/leadership, advocacy for the profession and patient safety, and education. Becoming a FASA is a prestigious honor in the specialty, setting its designees apart from their peers. The criteria required for earning the FASA designation demonstrates a candidate’s commitment to advancing the practice and securing the future of anesthesiology. Drs. McIvor, Patel, and Planinsic join fellow recent FASA designees Drs. Andrew Herlich, David G. Metro, and Erin A. Sullivan.

Elsie Murray, CRNA Emeritus, MPM, a former member of our department who worked at UPMC South Side Mercy Hospital from 2006 until retiring in 2011, passed away on Wednesday, November 15, 2017. Read more

Steven L. Orebaugh, MD served as workshop instructor and presented the lecture “Utility of Peripheral Nerve Blockade for ACL Reconstruction Surgery” at the 16th annual NYSORA Symposium on Regional Anesthesia, Pain, and Perioperative Medicine on September 23-24, 2017 in New York, NY. In addition, he will participate as a Workshop Coordinator (Ultrasound-guided Peripheral Nerve Blockade), Workshop Instructor, and Abstract Session Moderator at the 43rd Annual Regional Anesthesiology and Acute Pain Medicine Meeting, on April 19–21, 2018 in New York, NY.

Cristina Roosen-Marcos, MD was awarded the Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC (CHP) Patient Safety Award on Wednesday, November 15, 2017. Read more
Nicholas J. Schott, MD accepted the position of Associate Director of our ACGME-accredited Regional Anesthesiology and Acute Pain Fellowship Program starting January 1, 2018. Read more

William Simmons, MD received the 2017 Oswald Nickens Physician of the Year award from the Gateway Medical Society (GMS). GMS, a component society of the National Medical Association, honors one or more physicians in Western PA annually whose clinical work and community contributions make them a great asset to the community. Dr. Simmons received this honor at the GMS Scholarship and Awards Gala on October 28th, 2017.

Kathirvel Subramaniam, MD, MPH was appointed a Fellow of the American Society of Echocardiography (FASE). The FASE designation is a peer-review process that recognizes dedicated American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) members with an extraordinary commitment to the field of cardiovascular ultrasonography, designating those with proven professional contributions, diverse sets of skills, and knowledge of all aspects of cardiovascular ultrasound. Dr. Subramaniam’s appointment will be recognized in the 2018 ASE Scientific Sessions Final Program and he will be listed on the ASE website among other highly-certified practitioners who have achieved this title.

An abstract by Nicole Verdecchia, MD; Michael L. Kentor, MD; Jim W. Ibinson, MD, PhD; and Steven L. Orebaugh, MD, “The Ability of Anesthesiologists to Distinguish Closely Associated Nerve Elements in the Interscalene Groove,” won the best abstract award at the 16th Annual NYSORA Symposium on Regional Anesthesia, Pain, and Perioperative Medicine, September 23-24, 2017.

Yan Xu, PhD has been appointed the Peter Winter Professor of Anesthesiology. This endowed professorship is named in honor of Peter M. Winter, MD, the renowned second chair of our department. Dr. Xu presented the inaugural lecture, “Losing Your Mind: The Wonders of Anesthesia” as the Peter Winter Professor on Monday, October 2, 2017, Lecture Room 6, Scaife Hall. After the lecture, Dr. Xu’s appointment and Dr. Winter’s life and contributions to the department, the university, and the anesthesiology profession were celebrated at the University Club. Read more

Department Staff Celebrate Halloween

Pediatric Anesthesiology fellows and attendings celebrated Halloween with a group costume inspired by the one and only Dr. Peter Davis, Chief Anesthesiologist of Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC!
NRMP Fellowship Match Results for Academic Year 2018-2019

Our clinical fellow recruitment process through the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) has concluded and we are proud to announce that the following outstanding fellows will join us for the 2018-2019 academic year!

Obstetric Anesthesiology Fellows

Chad Dean, MD  
Medical School: West Virginia University School of Medicine  
Residency: University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center/Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Anesthesiology

Pain Medicine Fellows

Kelsey Bauer, MD  
Medical School: Drexel University College of Medicine  
Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

Anna Carpenter, MD  
Medical School: Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine  
Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

Kathleen Coy, MD  
Medical School: Ohio State University College of Medicine  
Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

Matthew Drakeley, MD  
Medical School: Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University  
Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Alex Dressler, MD  
Medical School: New York Medical College  
Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology
Andrius (Dre) Giedraitis, MD
Medical School: University of Michigan Medical School
Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

Andrew Hall, MD
Medical School: University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine
Residency: University of Miami/Jackson Health System, Anesthesiology

Eugene (Geno) Raggi, MD
Medical School: Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine
Residency: UPMC, Anesthesiology

Pediatric Anesthesiology Fellows

Jacob Bray, MD
Medical School: Louisiana State University School of Medicine
Residency: University of Virginia

Nicholas Houska, DO
Medical School: Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine
Residency: Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center

Yaqi Hu, MD
Medical School: State University of New York Upstate Medical University
Residency: Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Faraz Quraishi, MD
Medical School: St. George’s University
Residency: Rutgers University New Jersey Medical School

Archana Singaravelu Ramesh, MBBS
Medical School: Madras Medical College
Residency: University of Nebraska Medical Center

Daniel Springer, MD
Medical School: Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University
Residency: UPMC

Sara Straesser, MD
Medical School: Drexel University College of Medicine
Residency: UPMC

Lieu Tran, MD
Medical School: University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry
Residency: UPMC

Nicole Verdecchia, MD
Medical School: Ohio State University College of Medicine
Residency: UPMC

Recent Publications


Upcoming Events

Wardhan R, Chelly JE. Recent Advances in Acute Pain Management: Understanding the Mechanisms of Acute Pain, the Prescription of Opioids, and the Role of Multimodal Pain Therapy [version 1; referees: 3 approved]. F1000Research 2017, 6(F1000 Faculty Rev):2065 (doi: 10.12688/f1000research.12286.1)

City-wide Charity Event at PPG Aquarium
Medical Providers Against Opiate Addiction
January 27, 2018
Please visit www.unitypittsburgh.eventbrite.com for more info about the event, buy tickets, and/or donate to the cause.
FREE PiYo Class for Pitt and UPMC Staff
Staff member Barbara Bowers is offering a free PiYo class. PiYo Live is low impact but features high energy sequences and flows to help define every muscle. The class incorporates dynamic balance, dance conditioning, plyometrics, strength, and functional training emphasizing the athleticism of Pilates and yoga. Guaranteed to leave your body feeling energized and empowered. Modifications will be provided for all fitness levels. The class can be done in shoes or bare feet with a yoga mat (participants must bring their own mat).

Dates: Dec 15, 2017 and January 12, 2018 through March 2, 2018
Where: Bellfield Hall Aerobic Room
Class starts at 12:15pm and runs about 30-40 minutes. Come early if possible for an intro to some of the movements.

The class is limited to 15 people. Please contact Barb at barbarabowers@pitt.edu if you are interested. A waiver form will be emailed to registered participants.

The Pitt United Way Campaign Ends December 22, 2017

University of Pittsburgh employees can learn how to participate in the 2017 United Way Campaign at www.unitedway.pitt.edu.

ANESTHESIOLOGY 2017 Wrap-up

The American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) Annual Meeting is a major department event, with an impressive number of medical students, residents, fellows, and faculty members presenting every year. The 2017 meeting was held October 21-25 in Boston, MA. Department members delivered 49 presentations and 23 faculty members, one resident, two fellows, and two recent alumni served on ASA and ASA-related committees.

Work by Matthew Orlowski and his mentor, Howard B. Gutstein, MD received the 2017 Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research (FAER) Medical Student Anesthesia Research Fellowship (MSARF) Symposium Best Basic Research Abstract Award for “Imatinib Prevents EGF-induced Analgesic Tolerance to Morphine in Opioid Naive Rats.” The abstract was accepted as an oral presentation at the symposium at the 2017 ASA meeting.

Our newly appointed Fellows of the American Society of Anesthesiologists (FASA™) Drs. Andrew Herlich, William R. McIvor, David Metro, Raymond Planinsic, and Erin Sullivan were honored at a recognition ceremony at the meeting, where they received distinctive ribbons and priority seating at three major lectures at the conference.

Our yearly alumni reception was held Sunday, October 22nd from 6-10 pm at the Seaport Ballroom, Seaport Hotel & Seaport World Trade Center. We were very happy to see the familiar faces of our old colleagues and trainees at the party. One of our former residents from Belgium, Dr. Jan Hendrickx, was in attendance and was eager to share the following article about his impressions of his training with our department.
The ASA Meeting

After a hectic and busy 2017 ASA meeting in Boston, I was ready to return to Belgium. On Sunday afternoon, while rushing through one of the corridors at the convention center, Andy Herlich’s “Hey Jan” immediately captured my attention. This was a scenario that had been repeating itself during many of the ASA meetings I have attended there. Before coming to Pitt, I had attended a residency program at the Anesthesiology Residency Program in Pittsburgh. In 1996, I was one of my favorite attendings at Eye and Ear Hospital. Working with him always came with laughs and fun – and yet another technique to secure a difficult airway. In the hallway, Andy reminded me to attend the UPMC Department of Anesthesiology alumni meeting that evening. So, I followed my former attending’s advice and there I was: Sunday evening, timer set on my iPhone so I wouldn’t miss my flight, walking into the alumni reception.

Good Old Pitt

It felt like time instantaneously rewound 25 years. Several of my attendings were there: Drs. Andy Herlich, Steve Whitehurst, Bill Simmons, Joe Quinlan, Mark Hudson – and Jan Smith and his wife! When Jan met Jan again, there wasn’t a fraction of a second when either of us wondered “who was that again?” This was as rewarding as an encounter between a previous teacher and pupil can get. Jan Smith was one of those attendings that leave a lasting impression during one’s entire career – the way he mentored just encouraged me to continue to do what I was doing. Every year when I go to ASA, I know a moment will come when I say to myself: “This in and by itself was worth attending the ASA meeting for.”

Enter Andre De Wolf

Earlier that day, I had also met Dr. Marc Bloom (who previously served as Director of Neuroanesthesiology at UPMC Presbyterian) at the convention center. I still teach my own residents about “the vein of Bloom,” a great, large vein that runs at the back of the forearm, about 5 cm distal from the ulnar groove. And a few weeks earlier, Drs. Michael Pinsky (University of Pittsburgh Department of Critical Care Medicine) and Andy Kofke (who was an attending when I was a resident) had come to Belgium to speak at our NAVAt meeting (see below). Later at my home, we lit a huge campfire and Jan Hendrickx and Jan Hendrickx, Andy Herlich, and Steve Whitehurst reunited at the 2017 PWS/UPMC Department of Anesthesiology alumni reception.

Jan Hendrickx (L) with Andre De Wolf (R) at the 2017 ASA Meeting

...to welcome my former Pitt attendings. It’s just a great feeling to be part of this family. Over the years, it has really dawned on me what my residency at the Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine (1992!) has meant to me. Only lately I have started to realize what a unique set of teachers/colleagues I have been honored to work with and how they instilled in me a passion to continue to learn, explore, study, and care. I just blossomed in an environment where every attending at any level was approachable, down to earth, and eager to teach. I just blossomed in an environment where every attending at any level was approachable, down to earth, and eager to teach my own residents about “the vein of Bloom,” a great, large vein that runs at the back of the forearm, about 5 cm distal from the ulnar groove. And a few weeks earlier, Drs. Michael Pinsky (University of Pittsburgh Department of Critical Care Medicine) and Andy Kofke (who was an attending when I was a resident) had come to Belgium to speak at our NAVAt meeting (see below). Later at my home, we lit a huge campfire and Jan Hendrickx and Jan Hendrickx, Andy Herlich, and Steve Whitehurst reunited at the 2017 PWS/UPMC Department of Anesthesiology alumni reception.

Jan Hendrickx (L) with Marc Bloom (R, displaying the “vein of Bloom”) at the 2017 ASA Meeting

Guided by Andre, I learned in and started to thrive and became part of a great family. We had a great year, visit my attendings Drs. Lisa Sinz, Dan Sabo, and Brian Willenkin coming to mind.

Then came the day I worked with Andy Kofke during my neuroanesthesia rotation. During my residency in Belgium before coming to Pitt, I had read the work of Lowe and Ernst, authors/teachers of the “vein of Bloom” (LSK). My wife Christine and I had been renting an apartment in the House Staff building next to LSK. That time marked the start of my residency in Pittsburgh as well as the start of a long-lasting friendship, mentorship, and co-authorship with Dr. Andre De Wolf. Andre was member of Dr. Yoogoo Kang’s liver team, working with the legendary Dr. Thomas Starzl to perform more than 600 transplants per year. Being from Belgium himself, he had mentored several Belgian trainees who came to UPMC. Drs. Thierry De Bock, Roland Gieraerts, Wouter Lust, and Filip Soetens.

Jan Hendrickx (L) with Andre De Wolf (R) at the House Staff residence next door to the Liliane S. Kaufman Building on Fifth Avenue in the 1990s

Becoming in July of 1992, Dr. Bob Willenkin, then the Pitt Anesthesiology Residency Program director, welcomed all us incoming residents in the Kaufman Medical Building (LSK). My wife Christine and I had been renting an apartment in the House Staff building next to LSK. That time marked the start of my residency in Pittsburgh as well as the start of a long-lasting friendship, mentorship, and co-authorship with Dr. Andre De Wolf. Andre was member of Dr. Yoogoo Kang’s liver team, working with the legendary Dr. Thomas Starzl to perform more than 600 transplants per year. Being from Belgium himself, he had mentored several Belgian trainees who came to UPMC. Drs. Thierry De Bock, Roland Gieraerts, Wouter Lust, and Filip Soetens.

Jan Hendrickx, MD, PhD
Department of Anesthesiology, Onze Lieve Vrouw Hospital, Aalst, Belgium
1996 Graduate of our Residency Program

Life after Graduating from the UPMC Anesthesiology/ Critical Care Medicine Residency Program: What my Training Means to me over the Long Haul

Jan Hendrickx (L) with Marc Bloom (R, displaying the “vein of Bloom”) at the 2017 ASA Meeting

Jan Hendrickx, MD, PhD
Department of Anesthesiology, Onze Lieve Vrouw Hospital, Aalst, Belgium
1981). Ever since, I had been injecting liters and liters of liquid enflurane into the circle breath- ing system in Belgium, but my attendings kindly asked me to stop this practice. So, imagine the day I got to work with Andy Kofke – he loved closed circuit anesthesia! Andy wrote the chapter “Closed Circuit Anesthesia” in Clinical Anesthesia Procedures of the Massachusetts General Hospital (3rd Edition). This, of course, immediately created a bond: here finally was someone who understood me. He just happened to work on the other side of the Atlantic!

In the early nineties, desflurane became clinically available. Bob Willenkin had invited Ted Eger to come over from San Francisco. I had read all of Dr. Eger’s work, and now he was coming to Pitt to make a video about desflurane – and we were the audience! What a university. Every week I checked out the departmental calendar and had my choice of lectures from countless eminent visiting speakers.

At some point, I showed Andre some calculations based upon Lowe’s work, which suggested that the brand-new desflurane Ted had come to talk about was actually cheaper than isoflurane when administered in a closed-circuit. We wrote a paper on the work, sent it to Anesthesiology, and Larry saidman, Ted’s good friend and Editor-in-Chief of Anesthesiology, accepted it. This was my first publication. Pitt and UPMC just fostered research. Peter Winter encouraged us as residents to take on research projects. I measured isoflurane and desflurane uptake during liver resection and transplantation and found that isoflurane uptake pattern Anesthesia machines are based on Ernst model. Twenty-five years later, Andre and I have published more than 60 manuscripts, over 100 abstracts, and several book chapters and editorials, and we host our own annual meeting, NAVAt (www.navat.org), which stands for “NAVigate towards your Anesthesia tar- gets.” The focus of this meeting has been anesthetic uptake, low flow anesthesia, and anesthe- sia machines. Fun is still the number one reason we do this – and the environment where this all sprouted was UPMC.

After four years and after having been invited to join several research projects, I did not sleep well for weeks, having to decide whether to stay in Pittsburgh or return to Belgium. My academ- ic future in the USA seemed unsure at the time, HMOs were starting to take over and research funding was starting to dry up. So, Christine and I returned to Belgium with two children, Nikki and Wannes, and bags full of memories, knowledge, passion for the job, intellectual honesty, and training in the profession that was second to none.

Life after Pitt

Upon my return to Belgium, I worked for a year in The Netherlands (Catharina Hospital, Eindho- ven) with André van Zundert, a mutual friend of mine and Andre De Wolf’s. I never collected more data (vaporizer settings, fresh gas flows, in- and expired concentrations) in such a short time as I did there. This resulted in a PhD thesis (The Pharmacokinetics of Inhaled Anesthetics and Carrier Gases) at Ghent University (Belgium) in 2004. From Eindhoven, I moved to the OLV hospital in Aalst, Belgium, a locally well-known cardiac center. That’s when I really felt how well I was trained as a clinician in Pitt. I was comfortable managing any situation that arose. I en- joyed teaching in this private practice teaching hospital and could continue my clinical research. My daughter Anneleen was born, Christine was teaching physics, and all was well.

Well, not all. Andre and I had submitted three manuscripts that were all refused by Anesthesiolog- ical. I felt like I wasn’t killed the travel bug yet, so I mailed Steve Shafer, told him I needed help, and in 2004 off the five of us went to So Stanford for a two-year fellowship in pharmacokinetics. Pharmacokinetics! I learned about NONMEM and drug-interactions, was fortunate to work a bit with Ted Eger, and felt readily accepted by the faculty. My kids thrived, and a second son, Thomas, decided to join the crowd. It was magic, but expensive magic: after two years, the cost of living with a large family in Silicon Valley made us decide to return to Belgium. I returned to my former department – and I can recommend taking a sabbatical: I looked at that same depart- ment with an entirely new set of spectacles.

And now

My backpack full of training and mentoring by the best seems to never run empty. Andre and I continue to explore new aspects of anesthesia machines (related to low flow and CO₂ absorbency in particular). Besides continuing to publish, our clinical research on anesthesia machine tech- nology led me to become a member of the European Soci- ety of Anesthesiology (ESA) Committee on Equipment, Monitoring, and Computing, the ESA Patient Safety and Quality Committee, and the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation Committee on Technology. Also, every year, Andre and I or- ganize our NAVAt meeting in Aalst. Pittsburgh was the common theme for the 2017 meeting. It was a true pleasure to have my former attendings participate: Andre, Michael Pinsky, Andy Kofke, and Larry Saidman, mentored by the famous Göran Hedenstierna at NAVAt 2017. Eger, and felt readily accepted by the faculty. My kids thrived, and a second son, Thomas, decided to join the crowd. It was magic, but expensive magic: after two years, the cost of living with a large family in Silicon Valley made us decide to return to Belgium. I returned to my former department – and I can recommend taking a sabbatical: I looked at that same depart- ment with an entirely new set of spectacles.

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Summer 2018 Anesthesiology Research Fellowship Applications
Due January 31, 2018

Our department regularly serves as a host site for the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research (FAER) Medical Student Anesthesia Research Fellowship (MSARF). Since 2008, the University of Pittsburgh has hosted 17 medical students in this summer research fellowship program, some from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine as well as from other institutions.

The FAER MSARF Summer 2018 Program application website is now accepting applications through January 31, 2018.

Medical students who participate in the summer anesthesia research fellowship will be provided with:

- Eight weeks of focused research related to anesthesiology in addition to clinical shadowing time
- A dedicated mentor who will provide training in research techniques and scientific methods (research labs are located here at the University of Pittsburgh as well as at other universities)
- The opportunity to present a scientific poster or oral presentation during the FAER MSARF Symposium held at the American Society of Anesthesiology (ASA) ANESTHESIOLOGY® annual meeting
- A $400 per week student stipend, ASA student membership dues, plus additional funds to help cover the costs of travel to the ANESTHESIOLOGY® annual meeting

Important Dates:

- Dec. 8, 2017: Application website opens
- Jan. 31, 2018: Application deadline

Please visit the FAER MSARF website for more information and to download the complete 2018 MSARF Summer Program Information guide that covers eligibility requirements, application instructions, information on the stipend and funding, and student and host department responsibilities. For questions, please contact Sandy Hirsch at hirschsc@upmc.edu

Have News to Share? Please e-mail us!

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