Letter from the Vice President

Dear Postdoctoral Scholars and Fellows,

In addition to pursuing good science and advancing our career development, summer is a great time to recharge by enjoying a balanced lifestyle and plenty of social & cultural activities around Charleston.

As part of our Postdoctoral Association (PDA) goals, we are committed to work with you to organize regular career development activities throughout the year. Thus, I am excited to share that we will soon have a Career Development Toolkit on the PDA website prepared by our Career Development & Advocacy Chair, Chantelle Ferland, Ph.D. This toolkit will help postdocs in mentoring programs, so stay tuned for the official launch. To develop a strong campus-wide postdoctoral community, we are also expanding the number and diversity of social events. As always, we encourage all postdocs to join us in these activities.

Finally, in our last PDA meeting, it was resolved that all future PDA meetings will be open to the postdoc community. Guest speakers are welcome to share significant points but need to be on the agenda which will be emailed to postdocs prior to every meeting. Please reach out to us to extend your ideas and participate in our programs to ensure that the PDA can play an active role in fostering your scientific advancement and entertainment. By working together, the PDA, the MUSC postdoc community and Dr. Edward L. Krug (Associate Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs) can strive to make our postdoctoral training experience both productive and enjoyable!

Wishing you a summer full of fun and activities,
Mauhamad Baarine, Ph.D.

“By working together [we] can strive to make our postdoctoral training experience both productive and enjoyable!”

— Mauhamad Baarine, Ph.D.
2015 PDA Vice President

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Implicit Bias

Melissa O’Connor, Ph.D.

Three weeks to the day, I saw the news that nine were murdered inside the Emanuel AME Church that I passed daily on my commute to MUSC. The shock of such a tragic, hate-laden event taking place in my hometown was unsettling to say the least. It left an oppressive vulnerability even though I sat over 4,000 miles away in a German konditorei. Immediately, concern for the safety of family and friends surfaced, followed by incomprehensibility one could be filled with so much hate…and ignorance.

Reflections of Charleston and a longing to be close to my grieving community consumed my thoughts as I prepared a lesson for my upcoming human biology lecture on the nervous system. I was disgusted by the display of hate but even more strengthened by the amazing grace afforded by the families of the nine. The stark contrast piqued my interest into the neurobiology behind our emotionally driven decisions, which ended up detouring slightly into the field of unconscious or implicit biases.

According to the Ohio State University Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner. These partialities are involuntarily motivated, without awareness or intentional control. We tend to hold implicit biases that favor our in-group (those we subconsciously perceive as similar to ourselves), and we are able to perform in-grouping at the mere age of four months. That coupled with the fact that our brain has a neural bias for negativity, processing bad news more quickly than good, words such as “hate”, “violence” and “disaster” faster than “love”, “peace” and “prosperity”, and it is a wonder we all aren’t depressed bigots. We are hard-wired for bad news and begin developing implicit biases based on race, sex, social status and personality as early as our toddler years.

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No need for despair! There is hope yet for those altruists out there. Although its origins date from the 1980s, the field of implicit bias is experiencing a tremendous growth in scientific research the past few years. The results are impacting businesses, health care administration and the American Bar Association among others. It is acknowledged that in business, diversification while preserving meritocracy produces greater success; and in healthcare and law there must be awareness of unconscious biases in order to overcome potential favoritism of patients, victims and defendants.

A group of researchers from Harvard University, the University of Washington and the University of Virginia developed an online test to uncover these unconscious biases, called Implicit Association Tests (IATs). In an interview for the Boston Globe in 2013, one of the founders of the IAT, Mahzarin R. Banaji, acknowledges, “we should not be naïve about how easily we can change [our implicit biases]”; however, there is encouraging emerging reproducible data showing that we can shift them.

These biases will affect our decisions such as hiring, promoting, committee selections, creating shortlists for speakers and so on. Although British Nobel Prize laureate, Sir Tim Hunt, recently let slip words in jest that may have revealed his implicit bias of women in science, the vast majority of us are completely unaware of ours. Yes, even the most egalitarian among us will suffer the effects of implicit bias on some level.

By biasing our workforce, our collaborations, committees for creative input, we are limiting our opportunities for growth, novelty and ultimately success. In her TEDx talk filmed in November of 2014, I admire Vernā Myers’ charge to walk boldly toward our biases. Stop ignoring differences. Acknowledge them, then find justified reasons to appreciate them. As a leader, have the courage to start these conversations; as a scientist do not fear it but continually search for truth.

The first step is awareness. We all have them, which are yours? Find out at Project Implicit: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/index.jsp

Music to lighten the mood: the satirical tune “Collaborations Don’t Work” by the teaming of 70s U.S. glam rock band, Sparks & Scottish rockers Franz Ferdinand: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkPNPh_X8oY

TEDxBeaconStreet talk by Vernā Myers: https://www.ted.com/talks/verna_myers_how_to.overcome_our.biases.walk.boldly.toward.them
The Value of Postdoctoral Labor in Biomedical Research

Sverre Erik Aune, Ph.D.

Those of us who take an interest in wildlife conservation have likely watched footage of baby sea turtles scrambling down the beach to the ocean. Numerous and tiny, only a fraction of them finish their race to the sea. Students pursuing careers in biomedical and clinical research can take a lesson from those small creatures. Many freshly hatched doctorates continue the push to research independence (defined as presiding over an externally funded research laboratory) by pursuing postdoctoral work at large research universities. Postdocs must rely heavily on mentors for direction. After all, the postdoctoral scholar position was created to provide a defined transitionary period of additional mentored training, with the objective of acquiring a tenure-track faculty position. At least that is what more than 60% of postdocs hope. Though increasingly necessary for transition to faculty jobs, postdoctoral positions are a dangerous venture: less than 20% of biomedical Ph.D.s who want to attain tenure-track positions in their field actually do so. One influential economist describes this predicament as a tournament system, wherein many biomedical research careers end after a few years of competition for a small number of available faculty positions. Why are the odds so slim?

There is evidence that universities are hatching far too many Ph.D.s than will actually attain independence. Between 40,000 and 65,000 postdocs in the life sciences currently work in the U.S., each with thousands of hours of post-secondary training. However, the massive investment made in educating trainees to answer questions of health and disease is often lost when the postdoc years end. Is this set-up sustainable?

Many respected organizations such as the National Science Foundation, American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and National Research Council (NRC) say it is not, with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) also beginning to take note. These organizations, along with many internationally respected biomedical principal investigators have proposed several solutions to correct the expansion of an unsustainable STEM bubble in the U.S.

These groups (including Dr. Shirley M. Tilghman, president of Princeton University) call for pressure on the U.S. congress to reduce “perverse incentives” that award universities indirect cost recovery on government grants. They ask universities to reduce the number of gra-
-duate students enrolled in Ph.D. programs, thereby eventually reducing the pool of postdocs. How would universities cope with this loss of labor? The NRC urges universities to invest in their scientific labor force by creating more permanent (and better paid) staff scientist positions. Yet another creative solution would be to prepare graduate students and postdocs for scientific careers outside of academia.

Are universities providing a launch pad for promising young scientists, or are they using trainees as highly skilled but temporary and cheap labor? Fortunately, this conundrum offers universities wonderful opportunities to engage with the student community to enact lasting solutions. Every person with a personal investment in medical research would benefit by familiarizing themselves with the big picture of the problem, starting with the references listed below. Alberts, et al. state it well in their 2014 article published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences: “No less than the future vitality of U.S. biomedical science is at stake”.

References

(1) http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/policy/what-is-a-postdoc
Advocacy Strategies Built from the Ground Up

Ed Krug, Ph.D.

One of my external responsibilities is participation in the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) Annual Meeting, “the” place where postdoctoral administrators and associations exchange initiatives towards bettering the postdoctoral experience. The 2015 conference (held on March 13 – 15) met my expectations of a stellar meeting for postdoc offices and associations to discuss challenges facing postdocs across the country—in institutions with both small and large communities of postdocs.

You can view many of the presentations on the NPA website (see the NPA Resources Section on page 7) to get a flavor of how other institutions are making progress towards a more productive and equitable training experience. It also serves as a repository of potential speakers or webinars that the MUSC PDA might be interested in hearing from first hand.

Workshops Relevant to Advocacy by PDAs

There were four workshops that were particularly relevant to advocacy by PDAs:

“Human Resources for Postdoctoral Scholars: How to Turn Challenges into Success”—Taylor Libby, UNC at Chapel Hill.

“How to Avoid Self-Sabotage and Win at Salary Negotiations”—Dara Wilson Grant, UNC at Chapel Hill.


“Achieving Meaningful Change at Your Institution”—Drs. Rebecca Bauer, Antoine de Morrée, Catherine Gordon and JT Neal, from the Stanford University PDA.

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A Successful Advocacy Case Study

This last workshop organized by the Stanford University PDA was the most impactful for me for two reasons: 1) it was presented by postdocs who were frustrated with the status quo of being overlooked for benefits that impacted their daily lives, and 2) the careful way that they built consensus to achieve their intended goal. They described what I feel is the prototype strategy for rectifying critical issues facing any organization.

The issue they addressed related to the high cost of living in the Palo Alto area. In order to find more affordable housing most “Stanford-ites” seek housing in the outlying areas. While rents are less expensive elsewhere, commuting costs are substantial. The Stanford administration, in recognition to this financial reality, provided a financial offset for transportation for faculty and staff, but did not extend that benefit to postdocs.

The Stanford PDA used a combination of surveys to assess need by the postdocs, petitioned support from faculty and chairs, and acquired data from similar institutions to foster an appreciation for common needs and mutual benefit for postdocs and faculty. The attitude throughout the entire process was one of understanding that the goal of subsidized transportation costs benefitted all parties. It also appeared that all parties were open to truly listening to each other’s challenges towards meeting that common goal. The session left the audience with the sense that the biggest challenge for affecting change in any circumstance is adopting a “this will benefit everyone” attitude.

The biggest challenge for affecting change in any circumstance is adopting a “this will benefit everyone” attitude.

NPA Resources

The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) is a member-driven, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides a unique, national voice for postdoctoral scholars. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the NPA meets its agenda through advocacy, resource development and community-building.

OFFICIAL WEBSITE
http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/

2015 MEETING AGENDA

2015 MEETING WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS
https://npamembers.sitemym.com/?2015AMPres

2016 14th ANNUAL NPA MEETING
March 4 – 6, 2016
Van Andel Institute
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Faculty Q & A: Work-Life Balance

Vitria Adisetiyo, Ph.D.

In the spirit of summer, six established and esteemed MUSC faculty members answer questions regarding the much discussed topic of “Work-Life Balance”. Despite their busy careers (see their full academic titles at the end of this article), they have graciously taken the time to offer candid advice on the matter. Here is what Drs. Kathleen T. Brady, M.D., Ph.D., Deborah Deas, M.D., M.P.H., Perry V. Halushka, M.D., Ph.D., Joseph A. Helpern, Ph.D., Peter W. Kalivas, Ph.D. and Carrie L. Randall, Ph.D. had to say:

Q: Work-life balance: realistic or unattainable?

DEAS: I don’t see work and life as dichotomies, but rather integrated parts that are essential to a happy and productive life. There is always a struggle when one tries to balance work/life, however it is more realistic to have work/life integration. This implies that both are important, and they are integral to one’s happiness and success. When work and life are integrated, there may be times when you give more time/energy to one than the other, and this may alternate based on current obligations. Work/life integration is attainable and realistic.

HALUSHKA: Realistic.

HELPERN: I think it may be more difficult today with the pressures on young scientists to find sources of funding. Having said that, I do think it is attainable but it requires effort and each person is going to have a different concept of “balance”.

KALIVAS: Of course it’s realistic and very doable to have a happy and productive life balance. Of course it requires hard work and a devotion to your career, but you can also have a family or engage other passions. When it comes to having a high-end academic career, balance can be found most readily in successful time

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KALIVAS: … allocation, and working with full passion and confidence on whatever is in front of you, whether its sending a paper off to Nature (that is likely not getting in) or telling a story to your kid at night before reading grants for study section. You can be great at both, even while you wish you had more time for each.

RANDALL: As I see it, it’s all a matter of personal choices and individual priorities, especially when beginning a career. I am from a very different generation—we made either/or choices since in the early 1970’s, we worked hard to open the door for women with the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and the Women’s Liberation Movement. Our goal was to open doors for women who wanted careers in male-dominated professions like science, medicine, engineering and business.

Q: What is your version of work-life balance?

BRADY: Work-life balance for me means spending an adequate amount of time on career activities to insure an upward trajectory, but also paying attention to my loved ones, health and making time for a hobby or two.

DEAS: My version of work/life integration is to find joy in what I do at work, home, community and for myself. When you find joy in these areas, you strive to give your best in all spheres. These areas are not necessarily compartmentalized. Oftentimes, one engages in two or more areas within the same hour if necessary. Sometimes, I am at a family outing and find the need to call to check on something at work, and vice-versa. When I integrate work/life, I don’t feel like I am neglecting one for the other.

HALUSHKA: For work; finding what you are doing rewarding and that you want to come to work. At the same time, making sure that you set aside time to be with your family (if applicable) and friends. An important part of being able to balance the two is to learn how to manage your time efficiently.

HELPERN: For me, there is some periodicity to it. I try to make up for lost time in between grant writing! Obviously it becomes more difficult when you are dealing with grant deadlines. We all tend to get distracted and the key is to organize your time. But that is more easily said than done. I make deals with myself. I try to incentivize my efforts. If I get such and such work done by this time or date, then I can have time to spend doing something else on the “life” side.

KALIVAS: I keep my life simple and have three devotions, my family, my research lab, and over the last 15 years, my department. I take a real vacation (3 weeks is ideal). A longer vacation also allows me to travel to out of the way places (perhaps a 4th passion), and allows me to reconnect with family and recalibrate my career goals.

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RANDALL: Everybody's definition of work-life balance is different; one needs to choose a career doing something that they don't consider "work", but rather something that they "want to be doing and really enjoy doing"—in that way, there is never resentment toward work and things won't ever seem terribly out of balance.

Q: Given your successful career, how do you make time for balance?

BRADY: While this sounds like it might be difficult to achieve, it is important to choose wisely in terms of career opportunities (i.e., you don't need to say "yes" to everything) and when at work, work efficiently and stay focused. Sometimes junior scientists think that if they pass up an opportunity, it won't come their way again. I have found that for every opportunity I passed up, several new opportunities came my way.

DEAS: I tend to set priorities and schedule things in order to get the most out of my days. One should try to find what works best for her/him, because there is no right or wrong way to make it work. I enjoy doing a variety of things; therefore I put those things into my schedule. If it is scheduled, I make every effort to do it. For example, I exercise 4 to 5 times/week and I protect my time to do it.

HALUSHKA: Setting priorities.

HELPERN: Believe it or not, the sun will still rise tomorrow even if you don't get that paper done tonight! You always have a sense that what you are doing is so important and that it can't wait, but in reality it can. This reminds me of a line from the movie Men in Black, "There's always an Arquillian Battle Cruiser, or a Corillian Death Ray, or an intergalactic plague that is about to wipe out all life on this miserable little planet". I guess what I am saying is that there is always a deadline and you shouldn't get so caught up with work pressures that you forget to enjoy life.

KALIVAS: For me, the key is focused attention on

KALIVAS: … what is important during the time I allocate for one of my devotions. For example, when I'm at work I often don't stop work for lunch, I focus on what I am doing and rarely stop just to visit. While not at work, when I had kids at home it was a focus on playing with them or working with Sue to raise them, now it’s playing with Sue and enjoying a beer while looking out at the marsh and planning our next travel adventure. For the first 15 years as a faculty member, I stayed at work one night a week until very late, writing papers and getting all my brainless work done when I got too tired to think (i.e., administrative, regulatory). This was a good strategy, and allowed me to not stress the rest of the week when at home and focus on my family.

RANDALL: I chose to make work my priority, made the decision not to have children, and I used competitive tennis as my stress reliever for my entire academic career. It took my mind totally off work-related issues when other things didn't. My circle of friends were not work friends, so that also helped to put a balance in my life.

Q: Was there a particular time in your career when balance felt easier to attain? If so, what factors helped to facilitate that?

DEAS: Once I became an Associate Professor, it seemed easier. I attribute that to really feeling that I had a grasp on what I needed to do to be successful in my career. The happier I was in life, the better I was at work and vice-versa. Recognizing the extent to which the integration of work/life contributed to my joy and productivity, I strived harder to maintain the integration.

HALUSHKA: Probably as I got used to the demands of academic life and clearly as I got older. Success in my position [was a factor]; some of the early stresses of the position were reduced.

HELPERN: Early on, you feel like you have to say yes
HELPERN: ... to everything because you are building your career. But that is also the fun and excitement of your career path; going to meetings, meeting people from all over the world, talking with others who are interested in what you have to say. I was lucky to have a partner in life that understood the need to establish my career early on so that we would have opportunities later on. I believe it does become easier as you get older. I don’t know if this is just a function of feeling more confident as your career builds or if it is just a function of aging and realizing that there is more to life than work.

KALIVAS: Once my kids left for college I found I had more time, but research was always rewarding so more time didn’t make much difference to my productivity. However, I did lose a little weight because I had more time to exercise. Having been a chair for a while, and watching how it goes with everyone, I think being a postdoc is easiest, if you are productive, coming from a good lab you’ll find a job and get a grant, such is the current economy for well-trained and productive scientists. When you become a faculty member, my strongest advice is to stay in the lab like you were still a postdoc for at least another decade. You need that time to develop a full, creative intuition of the complex problems facing your field and to get your research onto the edge of knowledge. If you have a family, once you learn how to allocate your time and everyone comes to peace with that allocation, life becomes easy again compared to when you first have your kids and are working this out (takes a year or two, so be patient). You will always feel like you don’t have enough time for anything, but if you can effectively allocate and focus your time you will be highly productive and at peace (most of the time).

Q: Do you have any last advice regarding work-life balance for early career scientists?

DEAS: ... necessary to get joy out of work/life. Take good care of yourself with proper diet, exercise, adequate sleep, fun and plenty of laughter. If you are not good to yourself, then it is hard to be good to others. Ask for help—we are interdependent.

HALUSHKA: Family and friends are an important part of your life, so make sure that you set aside time for them. They can be very supportive, particularly when things are not going as planned. As you have a family, spending time with your children is extremely important.

HELPERN: Well, the key word here is balance. I have come to the conclusion that like many other aspects of your life you have to plan it, whether it be setting aside specific time like weekends or specific days or evenings, it is up to the individual. Try different ways and go with what works for you. Whatever you do, remind yourself often that your life is so much more than just your work.

KALIVAS: In addition to focus, recognize that your job is very hard, involves risk-taking and will at times be all-encompassing. It’s not for everyone, and it’s OK to choose a different career. If you make it work, it’s totally worth it to be an explorer and an honor to make scientific contributions. Final words of wisdom: effectively allocate your time and attention to be productive, creative and rewarded in your relationships and research, don’t panic and remind yourself how awesome life is (most of the time!).

Dr. Brady: Distinguished Professor; Associate Provost, Clinical and Translational Science; Director, South Carolina Clinical and Translational Research Institute.

Dr. Deas: Professor; Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education; Interim Dean, College of Medicine.

Dr. Halushka: Distinguished Professor; Director, Medical Scientist Training Program.

Dr. Helpern: Professor; Vice Chair, Radiology Research; Endowed Chair, Brain Imaging; Director, Center for Biomedical Imaging.

Dr. Kalivas: Professor; Chair, Neuroscience.

Dr. Randall: Distinguished Professor; Interim Director, Addiction Sciences Division.
Most international postdoctoral scholars/fellows who visit the U.S. apply for a J-1 visa, which fall under the Exchange Visitor (J) non-immigrant program category through the U.S. Department of State (http://j1visa.state.gov). As an international postdoc, one of the most important responsibilities you have is maintaining your legal visa status in the U.S. during your training.

**J-1 Visa Basics**

Using a J-1 visa, you are eligible to study/work in the U.S. for a maximum of five years, however the actual duration of your J-1 visa status is determined by the dates printed on the Certificate of Eligibility Form SEVIS DS-2019 that serves as a document for your Exchange Visitor Program duration and legal status of residence in the U.S.; these dates are determined by your contract with your visa sponsor (e.g., principal investigator [P.I.] before starting your postdoc. In most cases, after completion of your J-1 program (as determined by the expiration date listed in the DS-2019), you must return back to your home country for a cumulative total period of at least two years as part of the J-1 visa’s two-year home-country physical presence requirement (a.k.a. foreign residence requirement). During this requirement period, you are not permitted to change to a different non-immigrant U.S. visa or adjust status to/receive an immigrant U.S. visa unless you are granted a waiver of this requirement.

**Extending the J-1 Visa**

If your J-1 program duration in the DS-2019 is less than the maximum 5 year limit, you are eligible to extend your J-1 visa beyond the end date printed on your DS-2019. To do so you should inform your P.I. well in advance about your DS-2019’s date of expiration. If you have not been granted a waiver of the foreign residence requirement, part of your extension process will include applying for a waiver of this requirement, which has to be obtained from your home country. The document that is required by the U.S. Department of State to process the change in status-visa is called “No Objection Statement” which is generally issued by your government. The detailed information about obtaining waiver is generally available on your country’s embassy website. General information about waivers can also be obtained from U.S. Department of State’s website (http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/study-exchange/student/residency-waiver.html).

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International Affairs Resources

MUSC CENTER FOR GLOBAL HEALTH & OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

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http://globalhealth.musc.edu/staff/

http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/esl/studentprograms/studenthandbook/Services/

http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/esl/studentprograms/studenthandbook/Organizations/univwide.html

http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/immigrationservices/index.htm

Appointment Office Hours
Tuesday – Friday
1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Email to make an appointment

A J-1 visa extension must be completed before the expiration date in the DS-2019. A 6-month window is typically sufficient to extend your J-1 visa. At the very latest, this matter should be discussed with your P.I. three months before the expiration date of your DS-2019. If your P.I. wants to extend your DS-2019, he/she will contact the University’s international affairs department who will take care of obtaining the new DS-2019 on your behalf from the U.S. Department of State. Once a new DS-2019 form is issued, it will reflect the period of J-1 program extension. J-1 visas are not extended in U.S. but rather through a U.S. Embassy in one’s home country. Thus, you must return to your home country and undergo the same process of applying for interview with the counselor officers. Once the counselor approves your return to America, a J-1 entry visa stamp is issued for the extended period of time that is mentioned in your new DS-2019.

After the J-1 Visa Completion

It is important to return to your home country once the exchange visitor program is completed. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) allows participants a 30-day travel period after the expiration of their DS-2019. During this time, you are no longer in J-1 visa status and are under the jurisdiction of USCIS. This period is generally granted for participants to settle their affairs and prepare to return to their home countries, thus participants are not allowed to work during this time and are recommended not to leave U.S. during this period as they may not be granted re-entry.

Resources at MUSC

I hope that this article will help answer many questions that you have regarding J-1 visas. However, as I am not an international scholar advisor, the best resource for international affairs at MUSC is The Center for Global Health & Office of International Support (see the International Affairs Resources Section on this page). Have a happy and productive stay in the U.S.!
Significance of Social Media in Science

Mauhamad Baarine, Ph.D.

During last year’s MUSC Professional Development and Career Fair for Biomedical Scientists, I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Gary Bowers, Director of Research and Development (Biotransformation and DrugDisposition) at Glaxo Smith Kline, Research Triangle Park, NC. When asked about the best way to connect with professional people and employers without knowing them, his short answer was “LinkedIn. It’s professional and makes the initial contact easy and simple”. He stressed the importance of keeping your LinkedIn profile updated so it conveys your background, experience and accomplishments to potential future employers.

Today, Social Media (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook) is used by companies for marketing and hiring. It is also used for networking with friends, family and beyond. For scientific journals, social media is a newer tool to communicate in an informal way for increasing number of readers. Indeed, the media could be used by a scientist to enhance his/her career development. However, most researchers may ask why scientists need to communicate about their science through social media?

In the article “An Introduction to Social Media for Scientists” published in PLoS, Drs. Holly M. Bik and Miriam C. Goldsteinone, state “in the age of the internet, social media tools offer a powerful way for scientists to boost their professional profile and act as a public voice for science”. The authors discuss prospective benefits that can stem from online science conversations, explain how scientists can efficiently and effectively harness online resources, and provide an overview of popular online tools. By reading this article you may gain a new perspective on why participating in social media discussions is not a waste of time and a distraction from research and teaching duties.

Today, social media profiles have become prominent in our careers and job searches. They represent our personal and professional identities we reveal to the world through the internet. CV writing experts advise you to link your CV with social media profiles that are associated with your professional identity and to limit access to your personal content that do not wish to be viewed.

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Want to Improve Your Sleep?
Be Physically Active!

Angela M. Malek, Ph.D. and Ben Yocum, M.S.

Insufficient sleep is reported by over 25% of the U.S. population. This is of concern as adequate sleep is vital to maintaining good health. Several chronic conditions, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, as well as machinery and motor vehicle-related injuries have been associated with short sleep duration. While physical activity, in general, is known to play a role in improving sleep, less is known with regard to the effectiveness of different types of physical activity.

A recent study conducted by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School Of Medicine compared sleep habits over the past month among 429,110 adults practicing different types of physical activity vs. walking and no activity. Existing data available from the 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, a cross-sectional survey administered nationally by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was used for the analysis. Grandner et al. reported an association between 8 (of the 10) activities and better sleep, whereas 2 of the activities, childcare and household work, were associated with poorer sleep after adjustment for age, sex, education level and body mass index. More specifically, participation in the following activities was associated with better sleep: biking, running, weight-lifting, yoga/Pilates, aerobics/calisthenics, gardening, golfing and walking.

Michael Grandner, Ph.D., who led the study stated in AAAS EurekAlert! that, “Not only does this study show that those who get exercise simply by walking are more..."
likely to have better sleep habits, but these effects are even stronger for more purposeful activities, such as running and yoga and even gardening and golf. It was also interesting that people who receive most of their activity from housework and childcare were more likely to experience insufficient sleep—we know that home and work demands are some of the main reasons people lose sleep\textsuperscript{4}. One potentially interesting distinction for future research might be a differentiation between “Leisure Time Physical Activity (LTPA)” and “Occupational Physical Activity (OPA)” as defined by Howley\textsuperscript{5}. The difference being that “OPA” being perceived as a stressor in and of itself could potentially be associated with poorer quality of sleep\textsuperscript{6}. Whereas “LTPA”, particularly activities which require a certain “purposeful” attentional focus may offer a perceived separation from stressors and be associated with greater quality of sleep\textsuperscript{7}.

These results were presented at the 29\textsuperscript{th} Associated Professional Sleep Societies LLC Annual Meeting, and similar to past studies, support the relationship between poor physical and mental performance and insufficient sleep\textsuperscript{4}. However, additional research is needed to confirm these findings and further explore differences in types of physical activities as they relate to LTPA and OPA as well as to examine the temporality of poor sleep and subsequent participation in physical activity.

References


Dr. Malek is a Research Associate in the Department of Public Health Sciences at MUSC and Mr. Yocum is the Assistant Coach of the Women’s Track and Field at the College of Charleston.
EVENTS CALENDAR

**JULY**
- **23**: MUSC Woman Scholars Initiative Authorship Workshop, BEB 112, 1-3pm
- **29**: SCTR Media Training for Researchers, BEB 112, 12-1pm
- **31**: GSA Summer Happy Hour, Carolina Ale House (Calhoun), 5-8pm; Reggae Nights, James Island County Park

**AUGUST**
- **1**: Swing: Cancer Benefit Concert, CHS Music Hall
- **7, 14, 21, 28**: Movies in Memorial Waterfront Park
- **14**: Comedy Get Down, North CHS Coliseum
- **17**: Public School Starts

**SEPTEMBER**
- **3-6**: Low Country Jazz Festival, Performing Arts Center
- **15-19**: National Postdoc Appreciation Week
- **19**: Latin Night, CHS Music Hall

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