



# INSTITUTE FOR RNA MEDICINE

## newsletter

June 2017

## HMS Initiative for RNA Medicine Launched at RNAMEDICINE2017



Revolution was in the air at RNAMEDICINE2017, the third annual RNA Medicine Symposium. This year, the event also served as the official launch party for the newly minted HMS Initiative for RNA Medicine (HIRM), hosted by the Cancer Center at BIDMC.

“It has only been two or three decades since we recognized the awesome power of RNA,” said Frank J. Slack, PhD, HIRM Director, in his welcoming remarks. “Our mission is to make breakthrough medicines for patients by breaking down the barriers to RNA research. Our emphasis on clinical impact is what distinguishes us.”

The HIRM grew out of the Institute for RNA Medicine at BIDMC, which was founded in 2014 by Slack, Pier Paolo Pandolfi, MD, PhD, Director of the Cancer Center at BIDMC, oncologist Daniel Tenen, MD, and pathologists John Rinn, PhD, and Jeffrey E. Saffitz, MD, PhD. “RNA medicine is having a profound impact on every aspect of cell biology and cuts across every disease,” said Saffitz, who is Chief of the Department of Pathology at BIDMC and Mallinckrodt Professor of Pathology at HMS.

Pandolfi and Richard I. Gregory, PhD, will serve as Co-Directors for the new Initiative. Gregory, a cancer researcher at Boston Children’s Hospital, gave a scientific presentation during the Symposium on Perlman’s syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that causes often-fatal excess growth of organs in newborns, and the role an RNA inhibitor may play in it.

Additional Symposium presenters included George A. Calin, MD, PhD, of The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center; Anna M. Krichevsky, PhD, of Brigham and Women’s Hospital and HMS, David J. Mooney, PhD, of Harvard’s School of Engineering and Applied Sciences; Melissa J. Moore, PhD, of Moderna Therapeutics and University of Massachusetts Medical School; Sakari Kauppinen, PhD, of Aalborg University, Copenhagen; Larry Gold, PhD, of SomaLogic and University of Colorado Boulder; Andrew Fire, PhD, of Stanford University School of Medicine; Dalia Cohen, PhD, of The RNA Medicines Company; Craig P. Hunter of Harvard University; Joan A. Steitz of Yale University; and Anita G. Seto, PhD, of miRagen Therapeutics, Inc.



*from the desk of*

**Frank J. Slack, PhD**

Director, HMS Initiative for RNA Medicine

Director, Institute for RNA Medicine, Cancer Center, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Shields Warren Mallinckrodt Professor, Departments of Pathology and Medicine, Harvard Medical School

Find us on the Web:

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### Recent News

#### [Code Collaboration](#)

From Harvard Medical School, May 8, 2017

HIRM launched at RNAMEDICINE2017

[Personalized Cancer Vaccine Prevents Leukemia Relapse in Patients](#)

From *GEN*, December 7, 2016

HIRM Member Dr. David Avigan on the development of a promising cancer vaccine

[When will we cure cancer? Dr. Pier Paolo Pandolfi says 'we are doing it every day'](#)

From *CBC Radio*, November 30, 2016

HIRM Member Dr. Pier Paolo Pandolfi on the future of cancer treatment

# Call for Membership Applications

The HMS Initiative for RNA Medicine welcomes applications for new members. Full and Associate membership is open to faculty members at Harvard-affiliated institutions who are contributing to the peer-reviewed literature in RNA biology/medicine (complete criteria available online or by request.) Junior faculty planning to conduct research in RNA are eligible for membership and are especially encouraged to apply. Prospective members should contact Hilary Prosnitz at [hprosnit@bidmc.harvard.edu](mailto:hprosnit@bidmc.harvard.edu).

## New Members

The HMS Initiative for RNA Medicine is pleased to welcome the following new members:

### **Myles A. Brown, MD**

Dr. Brown is Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Physician, Oncology, Brigham and Women's Hospital; Professor of Medicine, Medical Oncology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute; and Co-founder, Center for Functional Cancer Epigenetics at the Dana-Farber. Dr. Brown's research laboratory focuses on elucidating the epigenetic factors underlying the action of steroid hormones. This work has important implications both for normal physiology and for the treatment of hormone dependent malignancies including breast and prostate cancer. Dr. Brown's contributions have uniquely reformulated the understanding of steroid hormone action in normal physiology and in hormone-dependent cancer.

### **X. Shirley Liu, PhD**

Dr. Liu is Professor, Department of Biostatistics and Computational Biology at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard School of Public Health, and Co-founder, Center for Functional Cancer Epigenetics at the Dana-Farber. The Liu lab focuses on algorithm development and integrative mining from high throughput data to understand gene regulation in cancer biology. Members of the Liu lab have developed a number of widely used algorithms for transcription factor motif finding, ChIP-chip / ChIP-seq / DNase-seq / CRISPR screen data analysis. The Liu lab models the specificity and function of transcription factors, chromatin regulators, RNA binding proteins, kinases, and lncRNAs in tumor development, progression, drug response and resistance.

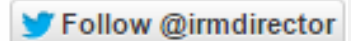
### **Danesh Moazed, PhD**

Dr. Moazed is Professor of Cell Biology, Harvard Medical School, and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator. Research in the Moazed laboratory is focused on understanding how silent chromatin domains are established and epigenetically inherited. Silent domains, also called heterochromatin, are a conserved feature of eukaryotic chromosomes and play central roles in maintenance of chromosome stability and epigenetic memory of gene expression states. The Moazed lab applies a combination of approaches ranging from genetics, biochemical reconstitution, biophysics, proteomics, genomics, and structural biology to study epigenetics in yeast and mammalian cells.

## Sponsorship Opportunities

The HMS Initiative for RNA Medicine welcomes inquiries from individuals and companies interested in supporting RNA medicine. Donations to the HIRM can be directed toward research or the overall operating costs for a particular event, including our annual Symposium. Please contact us for more information.

## Twitter



June 7, 2017

HMS Dean and HIRM member @G\_Q\_Daley on "Signaling through RNA-binding proteins as a cell fate regulatory mechanism" [tandfonline.com](http://tandfonline.com)

May 2, 2017

Honored that Dr. Vittorio de Franciscis is today's speaker for the iRM Seminar Series

March 21, 2017

MicroRNA therapeutics: towards a new era for the management of cancer and other diseases in @NatRevDrugDisc

## Events

### **HIRM Seminar Series**

Suneet Agarwal, MD, PhD, Boston Children's Hospital  
July 25, 2017, 3 PM  
CLS 421, 3 Blackfan Circle

### **HIRM Seminar Series**

Amber Dahlin, PhD  
Brigham & Women's Hospital  
September 5, 2017, 3 PM  
CLS 421, 3 Blackfan Circle

### **RNAMECINE2018**

April 26, 2018  
Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School, 77 Avenue Louis Pasteur  
Registration will open in January 2018

## Contact Us

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