

SOUNDWAVES

Department of Otolaryngology / Head and Neck Surgery

Summer 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Dr. Jeffrey P. Harris

It is graduation time, and as always, we face the inevitable departure of our chiefs and fellows and welcome in new trainees. It is a bittersweet time indeed since we spend 6 years getting to work “in the trenches” with the residents and 1-2 years of intense work with our fellows and now we have to say goodbye. I dare say, most of our residents look back fondly at this period of their lives despite the investment and sacrifice they and their families make during training. In this issue you will see where they are headed and who will be joining us.

This year we were honored by having as our guest for graduation, Dr. Carol Bradford, the Dean of the Ohio State Wexner School of Medicine, and Professor of Otolaryngology. Dr. Bradford gave an inspiring talk about academic medicine and the balance between patient care, family obligations and personal wellbeing. She also deftly handled several challenging

unknown patient cases that our residents presented to her for discussion. The day culminated with cocktails and dinner at the Martin Johnson House where we celebrated the graduates, and I provided a short history of the department with some choice photos of past faculty and residents as I reminisced about 38 years as Head of Otolaryngology.

The Department keeps growing. We are adding a third laryngologist, a generalist and a sixth head and neck surgical oncologist to keep up with the volume of our Gleiberman Head and Neck Cancer program and the VA medical center’s needs.

UCSD as of December 11, took over Alvarado Medical Center and it has now become UCSD Heath-East Campus. We are in the process of expanding our collaborations with several excellent community otolaryngologists as we ramp up our staffing needs at that facility. Acquiring this facility greatly enhances our ability to accommodate referrals to our system as well as serve the needs of the community in the East County region and beyond.

The Vestibular and Balance Center under the direction of Aki Matsuoka, MD, PhD’s team now includes Christina Biondolillo, NP and a new vestibular audiologist Renee Landon-Lane. They provide the full range of diagnostic and treatment options for patients with balance disorders including Meniere’s disease, Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo and the sequela of viral labyrinthitis. Recently, Dr. Matsuoka received a grant from the Mal De Debarquement (MdDS) Foundation to investigate new treatment options for this potentially life altering condition. He is collaborating with the US Navy and Dr. Charlotte Hughes to gather data from sailors on board the USNS Mercy.

In this issue you will see examples of the incredibly rich research environment that targets head and neck cancer, otology, rhinology and laryngology. These investigators have been successful in obtaining competitive research grants from the NIH and have put us in the top tier in the nation in funding as well as being 14th ranked best Otolaryngology programs by the USNWR.

Jeffrey P. Harris, MD, PhD., FACS
Distinguished Professor of Otolaryngology and Neurological Surgery
Chair, Department of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery

**Department of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery Annual Photo
Graduation Academic Morning Conference
Goldberg Auditorium - June 14, 2024**



Dr. Jeffrey Harris and Guest Speaker Dr. Carol Bradford with the Resident and Fellow Class of 2024

Honorary Guest - Carol R. Bradford, MD, MS, FACS



Dr. Carol R. Bradford

An internationally recognized head and neck cancer researcher, surgeon and leader in academic medicine, Dr. Bradford became the dean of The Ohio State University College of Medicine and vice president for Health Sciences at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center in 2020. She is also the Leslie H. and Abigail S. Wexner Dean's Chair in Medicine.

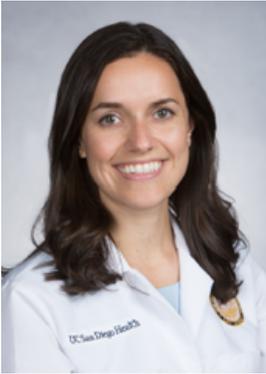
Dr. Bradford earned her master's and her medical degree at the University of Michigan. She completed an otolaryngology –head and neck surgery residency at the University of Michigan before joining the faculty there in 1992. She became department chair in 2009 and executive vice dean for academic affairs in 2016. From 2012 – 18, she held the Charles J. Krause, MD, Collegiate Professorship in Otolaryngology.

Dr. Bradford specializes in head and neck cancer surgery, focusing her research on identifying and evaluating biomarkers that can predict outcomes. Dr. Bradford was elected as the first woman president of the American Head and Neck Society in 2012, and received that organization's Distinguished Service Award in 2015. In 2014, she was inducted into the prestigious National Academy of Medicine.



Congratulations to our Class of 2024 !

Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Resident Graduate



Dr. Kayva Crawford received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Washington, majoring in Spanish and graduating cum laude. She subsequently earned her Doctor of Medicine from Tufts University School of Medicine, where she was valedictorian.

We were very fortunate when Kayva matched with us at UC San Diego. She has proven to be a natural leader and a colleague you can count on for her calm and collected demeanor.

Throughout her residency, Kayva has made numerous contributions to the field, publishing over 20 peer-reviewed papers, and joining the Resident Advisory Board for the journal Facial Plastic Surgery and Aesthetic Medicine.

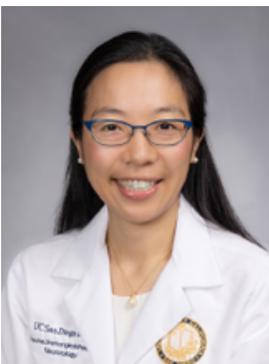
Following graduation, Kayva will head to Oregon Health & Science University to complete a one-year Fellowship in Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.



Dr. Mena Said has navigated a very successful educational journey through the UC institutions since his undergraduate years. Over the years, Mena has demonstrated leadership and a high level of responsibility for his patients and his resident team.

The faculty have frequently commented on his advanced surgical skills and the enjoyment we have when he works alongside us. In mastering numerous surgical procedures, he has developed particular finesse in the realm of endoscopic sinus surgery. After graduation, he will be exceedingly well-prepared to begin his career with our wonderful colleagues at the ENT Associates Group here in San Diego.”

Neurotology Fellowship Graduate



“**Dr. Pawina Jiramongkolchai** is a skilled neurotologist, excellent clinician and a confident teacher. I believe that she has a great future as a surgeon-scientist and look forward to following her career at Washington University, St. Louis.”

Pediatric Otolaryngology Fellowship Graduate



“**Dr. Ethan Frank** came to us looking to change the world and undoubtedly will. His relentless pursuit of knowledge, commitment to bettering himself and those around him combined with his passion to take care of children drives every facet of his life.

“His ability to think outside the box allows him to look beyond the status quo and apply his knowledge to innovative solutions to difficult problems. He has an exciting career ahead of him and we look forward to him continuing to develop as part of our team.”

Welcome our Incoming Class of Residents and Fellows!

Our two new Otolaryngology resident interns are starting with our program this month. We are pleased to report we matched our own Dr. Olivia La Monte, and Dr. Bitia Naimi is from Boston University who was one of our Sub-I's. Welcome Olivia and Bitia!



Dr. Olivia La Monte PGY - 1
UC San Diego
Otolaryngology Intern



Dr. Bitia Naimi PGY - 1
Boston University
Otolaryngology Intern

Dr. Krish Suresh is our incoming Neurotology Fellow, joining us from his residency at Harvard



Dr. Krish Suresh
Neurotology Fellow
Harvard Residency

Dr. Deema Almutawa is our Pdeiatric Otolaryngology Fellow, joining us from McGill Univeristy in Montreal University in Montreal, QC

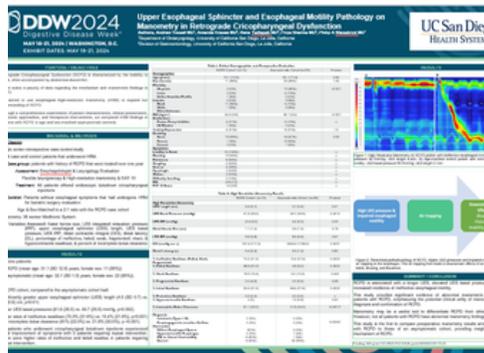


Dr. Deema Almutawa
Pediatic Otolaryngology Fellow
McGill University

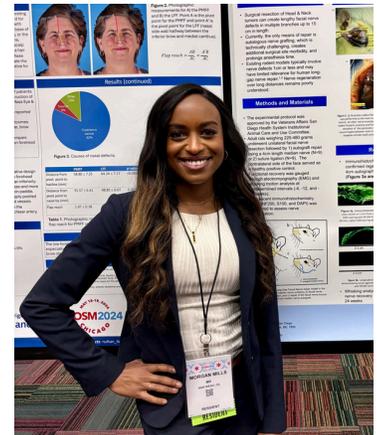
RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Jeffrey Bernstein
Podium presentation, **American Broncho-Esophagological Association (ABEA)**
“Risk Factors For Voice, Swallow, & Airway Complications In Anterior Cervical Spine Surgery: A National Inpatient Survey Study”



Dr. Andrew Yousef
Poster presentation at **DDW Upper Esophageal Sphincter and Esophageal Motility Pathology on Manometry in Retrograde Cricopharyngeal Dysfunction** Authors: Andrew Yousef, Amanda Krause, Rena Yadlapati, Priya Sharma, **Philip A Weissbrod**



Dr. Morgan Davis Mills
Poster presentation: **Beyond the Critical Gap: A Long-Gap Facial Nerve Regeneration Rodent Model Using the Median Nerve.** American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at **COSM, Chicago, IL. 15-16 May 2024.**



Dr. Carol Yan's Medical Students MS2 Vivienne Li gave oral presentation at **ARS at COSM** about shared decision-making and chronic sinusitis

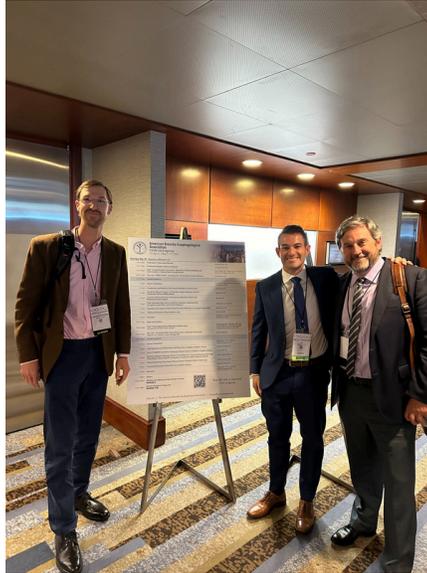
CONFERENCES

Triological Society

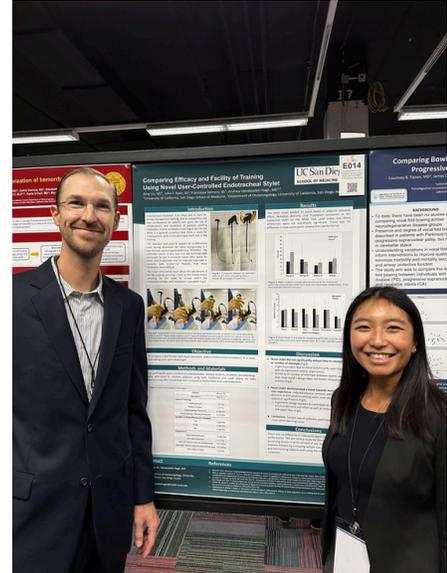


Dr. Jeffrey Harris receives Vice-Presidential Citation of the Triological Society from former resident, **Dr. Cherie-Ann Nathan**, Chair of Otolaryngology, LSU-Shreveport and Southern Section VP of the Society. Dr. Harris previously received this award from the Western Section bestowed at that time by Dr. Al Merati, Professor, University of Washington.

COSM Chicago 2024



From Left: Andrew Vahabzadeh-Hagh, Jeffrey Bernstein, and Phillip Weissbrod MD



Dr. Andrew Vahabzadeh-Hagh and prior medical student Amy Liu

COSM



From right: Priya Bisarya, Morgan Davis Mills, and Carol Yan, MD

ABEA



Dr. Jeffrey Bernstein at American Broncho-Esophagological Association (ABEA) Podium presentation on Risk Factors For Voice, Swallow, & Airway Complications In Anterior Cervical Spine Surgery: A National Inpatient Survey Study”

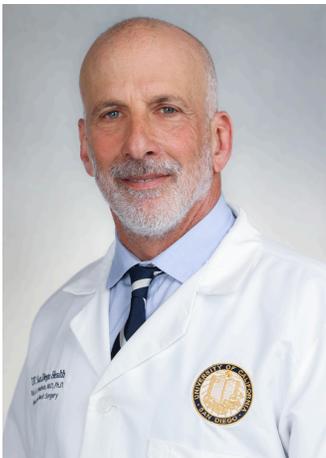
DR. JOSEPH CALIFANO AWARDED R01 FOR OPTIMIZING IMMUNORADIOTHERAPY FOR HEAD AND NECK SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA



Joseph Califano, MD

There have been critical developments on the cancer immunotherapy front. Co-Principal Investigators Joseph Califano, MD, and Andrew Sharabi, MD, PhD, have received a 5-year, \$2.3 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) R01 grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) titled "Optimizing immunoradiotherapy for HNSCC [head and neck squamous cell carcinoma]." This grant will fund experiments to define a new precision approach to targeting combination immunotherapy and radiation to improve outcomes and reduce toxicity in patients with head and neck cancer.

Dr. Califano has also received a 5-year, \$2.4 million NIH grant from the NCI called "Neoadjuvant immunoradiotherapy for HPV [human papillomavirus] mediated oropharynx cancer" that will fund a multi-institutional clinical trial for HPV-mediated throat cancer. This will combine sophisticated, targeted radiotherapy sequences with novel immunotherapies to treat newly diagnosed HPV-related throat cancers. University of California, San Diego, will lead the trial, which will also be conducted at Oregon Health Sciences University and Providence Hospital in Portland, Oregon.

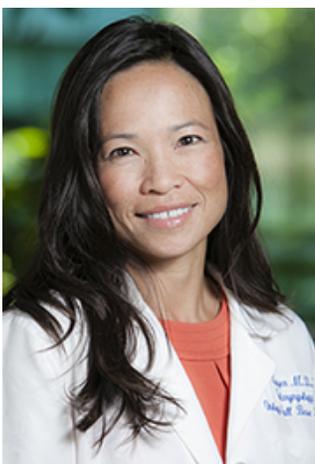


Rick Friedman, MD

The Friedman lab in collaboration with researchers from the Salk institute, demonstrated that treatment with a small molecule, CMS 121, can attenuate age-related hearing loss in a mouse model. Attenuation of Age-Related Hearing Impairment in Senescence-Accelerated mouse prone 8 (SAMP8) Mice Treated with Fatty Acid Synthase Inhibitor CMS121. Going the distance in acoustic neuroma resection: Microsurgical outcomes at high-volume centers of excellence

Dr. Friedman's second publication is based upon the data from our acoustic neuroma program which has performed over 1,000 surgeries since the arrival of Drs. Friedman and Schwartz, we demonstrate that over all outcomes for surgically treated patients are superior at high volume treatment centers. Our programs data was compared to national databases reporting morbidity, mortality, complications, and length of stay. Going the distance in acoustic neuroma resection: microsurgical outcomes at high-volume centers of excellence.

DR. QUYEN NGUYEN AWARDED R01 FOR NEW METHOD FOR MONITORING PERIPHERAL NERVE INJURIES



Quyen Nguyen, MD

Peripheral Nerve injuries incurred as a result of trauma, tumors, or other medical conditions may cause complete or partial paralysis and require \$50,000-\$200,000 reconstructive surgeries annually. The autograft is the current "gold standard" of treatment, but it requires additional procedures to harvest the graft, can be challenging to perform in a pediatric population and often leads to neuroma formation and loss of function at the donor site.

Dr. Nguyen is CO-I on a 5 year \$3M NIH grant from Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development entitled "Pre-clinical validation of 3D-printed nerve conduits for pediatric peripheral nerve repair" that has a project goal of validating the materials and methods to fabricate pre-clinical polymeric three-dimensional (3D) nerve conduits with an embedded wireless sensor for continuous monitoring of functional recovery to be used in infants/children.



Dr. Philip Weissbrod is CO-I on a 5 year \$71K NIH grant from National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders entitled “Mechanisms of intelligibility change after loud or slow speech intervention in children with cerebral palsy” that will fund a clinical trial conducting laryngoscopic, stroboscopic, and voice examinations of the participants with dysarthria secondary to spastic cerebral palsy.



Dr. Theresa Guo RECEIVES V FOUNDATION AWARD
 Congratulations to Theresa Guo, MD, on her V Foundation award. Her \$200,000 award is entitled, “Defining the relationship between aberrant splicing burden and anti-tumoral immunity in head and neck squamous cell carcinoma”.

The study seeks to study splicing alteration in head and neck cancer to help identify which patients will benefit from this treatment, and find new ways to make this treatment effective for more patients. Ultimately, we believe that study of these gene rearrangements will lead to new treatments that could help cure more patients with head and neck cancer by combining splice altering therapeutics with immunotherapies.



Dr. Charles Coffey
 Most notable recent recognition has been the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award from the Arnold P Gold Foundation, 2021.



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Otolaryngology General Support



Hearing Loss - Acoustic Neuroma



Al Merati, MD

Walking out of Hillcrest following General Surgery intern orientation in June of 1991 one thing was clear: the Head & Neck Surgery Housestaff had earned a system-wide reputation for being great residents. I was grateful to all the early faculty and trainees who broke ground – literally and figuratively – to build and sustain our program in the 70s and 80s. The essence of the program continues to be the same – a remarkable group of committed academics training leaders in Otolaryngology – HNS. And my how we have grown!! Many of the lessons I learned during my residency at UCSD (1991-97) are with me to this day. In my current administrative role, I serve as Medical Director for Perioperative Quality and Safety for UW Medical Centers – overseeing the journey of all surgical patients at two of our biggest hospitals. Accountability and culture change – truly the main part of my job - require a sense of confidence and independence that was instilled in me during training at UCSD. While national reputations are built on papers and presentations, intramural reputations are built on clinical excellence.

Without the superb training I received at UCSD and the clinical reputation I built from that, I would not have credibility and gravitas to lead a vastly diverse group of hundreds of surgeons that walk through my OR doors.

Accountability happened at all levels at UCSD; among the residents first and foremost. When you are stretched thin (at one point I believe we had 8 clinical residents covering 5 hospitals), we were all dependent on each other. If I made a bad decision or let something slide that I shouldn't have – believe me I heard about it. When I was careless or not at my best, the faculty called me out on it. One profound experience happened when I was doing a case by myself (yes it was a thing back then) as a chief resident; in a moment of frustration I slammed an instrument down on the mayo stand. Ruth Roque, the long time RN lead for OTO-HNS at Hillcrest, walked over to me and said, quite calmly and clearly: **“Dr Merati, that's not you. That may be other people, but that's not you.”** This belief in each other, making sure we get the best out of each other, was deeply ingrained in me during my time at UCSD.

My national leadership work continues; I had the privilege of serving as both AAOHNS and ABEA President and will serve as ALA president in a few years. I am obsessed with careers of those around me and how to secure the journey of the next generation. I loved my time, I loved that our co-residents held each other to high standards. It **drove** me and I appreciated it. Without UCSD I would have never have had the rich and rewarding journey I've had to this point. More to come!



Quinton Gopen, MD

I am currently a professor in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at UCLA Medical Center. As a neurotologist my clinical practice includes all areas of ear and skull base disease and pathology. My current focus, however, is on a condition known as superior semicircular canal dehiscence, or SSCD for short. Alongside my neurosurgical colleague, Dr. Isaac Yang, we have built a comprehensive center of excellence for the management of SSCD treating both national and international patients. Our center offers an innovative minimally invasive middle fossa craniotomy for the surgical repair of the bony defect in this condition which we developed in 2014. The operation takes just over an hour and patients are typically discharged the following morning. To date, we have performed this surgical repair on over six hundred patients, with a clinical practice that follows over a thousand patient with this condition.

My research endeavors focus on this clinical condition. I have published over thirty peer reviewed papers on this topic including its diagnosis, management, surgical repair techniques and controversies.

I have also presented our research efforts both at national skull base meetings as well as international meetings on a regular basis. My current clinical research laboratory includes undergraduates, medicals students, residents, and fellows.

All of these accomplishments would not have been possible without the training and support I received during my fellowship at UCSD with Dr. Jeffrey Harris. I came into my neurotology fellowship with only a rudimentary understanding of the basics in this field. Dr. Harris and his colleagues at UCSD provided me with the training, knowledge, and skills I would require to be successful in my academic practice. My experience at UCSD was nothing short of superb in all aspects. I enjoyed working with the medical students, residents, and doctorate candidates while at UCSD and found it to be the perfect template to aspire to once I left my training in 2006. I now feel prepared and able to help the most complicated and difficult patients in our field and continue to strive to be better. I cannot thank Dr. Harris and the UCSD program enough for all they have done for me and my career!

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



LA JOLLA CA — October 30, 2023– Alume Biosciences, Inc (Alume) announced today that inventor and innovator, Roger Y. Tsien, PhD (1952-2016) was inducted into the United States National Inventors Hall of Fame®, “the greatest celebration of American innovation.” In partnership with the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the National Inventors Hall of Fame® recognizes innovation pioneers for their world-changing innovations.

Tsien wanted his research in fluorescence to have clinical impact and translate into improved patient care. **Working together with UCSD Professor of Otolaryngology & Pharmacology and Alume CEO & Founder, Quyen T. Nguyen, MD, PhD**, they developed injectable nerve-targeted peptides linked to a fluorescent dye. This work formed the foundation for the core technology behind Alume’s first product, ALM-488, a peptide-dye conjugate that allows surgeons to identify hard-to-see nerves in real time during surgery and avoid inadvertent injury. [Read more on Dr. Quyen Nguyen](#)



Drs. Nguyen, Harris, and Cherie-Ann Nathan, La Jolla 4th of July



Dr. Joseph Califano was celebrated as a 5 Star Physician for 2024

UCSD HILLCREST MEDICAL CAMPUS REDEVELOPMENT



The Hillcrest Medical Campus Redevelopment Project represents a reimagining of how academic medicine can better save you, your family and the whole community

The 6-floor, 250,000-square-foot advanced medical facility will house key clinical programs, addressing the region’s growing demand for specialised diagnostic, treatment and surgical services, notably cancer care.

The opening of the McGrath Outpatient Pavilion planned for Summer 2025

[Click here for more information on McGrath Outpatient Pavilion in Hillcrest](#)

IN THE NEWS

Facial Nerve Surgeons Give Firefighter His Smile Back Specialized team at UC San Diego Health performs facial reanimation surgery to treat facial paralysis



Steve Chafe, a firefighter for more than 25 years, is not taking anything in life, including a smile, for granted.

Nearly five years ago, after finishing a 72-hour shift, his life changed. He couldn't quite gather his thoughts; he couldn't read, and his speech was jumbled. An MRI identified Chafe had a transient ischemic attack. It also found something unexpected: a large tumor the size of a golf ball.

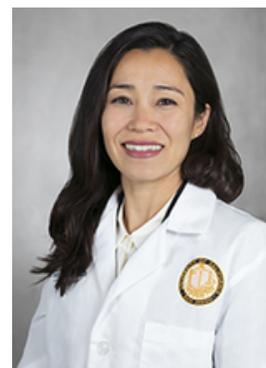
"I thought I had cancer," said Chafe.

Chafe was diagnosed with a rare, benign and slow growing skull base tumor that affects nearby critical nerves. Approximately 3,000 people are diagnosed with this type of tumor annually. The pressure caused by a tumor can result in hearing loss, ringing in the ear, loss of balance and potentially facial paralysis. Surgery at UCSD facial nerve reanimation program was able to restore his facial function. Please see the link below for the complete story.

Facial Nerve Team Performs Delicate Microvascular Reconstructive Surgery to Restore Smile



Quyen Nguyen, MD, PhD, head and neck surgeon with specialty training in Neurotology and Skull Base Surgery at UC San Diego Health.



Jacqueline Greene, MD, head and neck surgeon with advanced subspecialty training in Facial Reanimation and Microvascular Surgery at UC San Diego Health.

<https://today.ucsd.edu/story/facial-nerve-surgeons-give-firefighter-his-smile-back>

PUBLICATIONS

March

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[Altered Rhod3 expression involved in progressive high-frequency hearing loss via dysregulation of actin polymerization stoichiometry in the cuticular plate.](#) **Boussaty EC**, Ninoyu Y, Andrade LR, Li Q, Takeya R, Sumimoto H, Ohyama T, Wahlin KJ, **Manor U**, **Friedman RA**. *PLoS Genet.* 2024 Mar 18;20(3):e1011211. doi: 10.1371/journal.pgen.1011211. Online ahead of print. PMID: 38498576

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April

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