On behalf of the Department of Neurology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine we would like to introduce you to our Residency program. As one of the largest Residency program in the country, and one of the most respected clinical neurology and neuroscience departments in the nation, we are committed to excellence in the areas of clinical teaching, research and education. We have expanded our program to 42 residents (and 20 Fellows) seeking highly qualified applicants.

The mission of the Department is threefold—to provide unparalleled care to patients; to expand knowledge of the causes, treatments, and cures for neurological disease; and to train the next generation of clinicians and neuroscientists. Widely recognized as an international referral center, neurologists from Latin America, Florida, and the rest of the United States, consistently turn to our 85 faculty members (67 clinical, 18 research) for expertise in solving complex neurological problems.

The department is comprised of clinical divisions, research laboratories, clinical laboratories, and research centers including:

- National Parkinson’s Foundation Center of Excellence
- McKnight Brain Institute for Memory Disorders
- Brain Endowment Bank for Pathology
- Sleep Disorders Center
- International Center for Epilepsy
- Kessenich Family MDA ALS Center
- Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease Division, American Stroke Association—Award Winning
- Multiple Sclerosis Center of Excellence
- Patrick Cesarano Neurovascular Laboratory

The depth and breadth of clinical exposure make UM/Jackson an ideal place to train. We invite you to learn more about our program by reading this newsletter and visiting our website:
http://neurology.med.miami.edu

Greetings Neurology Applicants!

Sincerely,

Ralph L. Sacco, MD, MS, FAHA, FAAN
Chair, Department of Neurology
President, American Academy of Neurology

Leticia Tornes, MD
Director, Neurology Residency Program
Assistant Professor, Clinical Neurology
Faculty Spotlight: Michael Benatar, MBChB, DPhil

Dr. Michael Benatar was born and raised in South Africa, where he also attended medical school. As a Rhodes Scholar, he then completed a PhD in neuroscience at Oxford University in the United Kingdom. This training abroad explains the unusual letters behind his name: MBChB (MD) and DPhil (PhD). He then completed a neurology residency and neuromuscular fellowship, both at Harvard, and a Masters in the Science of Clinical Research at Emory University, where he stayed on as faculty for 8 years. Dr. Benatar joined the Department of Neurology at the University of Miami in 2010 as Walter Bradley Chair in ALS Research and the Chief of the Neuromuscular Division, which comprises faculty members with specialized clinical programs in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), myasthenia gravis, muscular dystrophy and inherited neuropathies, as well as electromyography (EMG) and neuromuscular pathology. In addition to these clinical services, the neuromuscular division is home to very active investigator-initiated, clinical and translational research programs focused on ALS, myasthenia gravis and inherited neuropathies. The neuromuscular faculty is well known for their commitment to resident education, with most faculty having received teaching awards in recent years. All neurology residents participate in the aforementioned programs and acquire hands-on experience performing electrodiagnostic studies through a formal month-long neuromuscular rotation. The Neuromuscular Division also offers clinical and research fellowships, and there is ample opportunity for residents to get involved in ongoing research projects.

Assoc. PD Spotlight: Mohan Kottapally, MD

Dr. Mohan Kottapally, MD comes to the University of Miami as Assistant Professor of Clinical Neurology and Neurocritical Care, as well as Associate Director for the Department of Neurology Residency Program. Having earned his MD from The Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, Dr. Kottapally subsequently completed Neurology Residency at the University of Miami and Jackson Memorial Hospital. While at UM he also served as Administrative Chief Resident for the Department of Neurology. Following residency training he further pursued his passion for Neurocritical Care by completing Fellowship training at The University of California San Francisco. Dr. Kottapally is highly interested in traumatic brain injury, sports-related concussion and medical education. He has been involved in numerous research studies as well as educational initiatives for medical students and residents, and is excited to bring these passions to the University of Miami.

Resident pictures!
I think I always knew I would end up choosing Neurology as a career! I knew from a young age that I was interested in medicine, and fell in love with Neuroscience during my first semester of undergrad at Johns Hopkins University. When applying for residency programs, I knew I wanted a large program that was strong across the board in the Neurology subspecialties because I wanted a broad exposure to all that the field had to offer. When I came to interview at the University of Miami, I knew that it had everything I was looking for in terms of exposure to a diverse patient population and a wide range of neurological diagnoses, which would prepare me well for my career no matter what I decided to pursue after residency. I also loved how effortlessly I fit in with the residents and faculty I met here, which made the transition from medical student to resident surprisingly easy. During my residency, I had the chance to learn Neurology from incredible patients and faculty, and further my interest in research under the mentorship of Drs. Luca and Rundek, as part of the Resident Clinician Researcher Program. As a chief resident during my 4th year, I was able to share my knowledge and serve as a mentor to the next generation of Neurology residents and students. After residency, I elected to stay at UM where I am currently doing a fellowship in Movement Disorders. As a fellow, I have had the opportunity to continue my research and present my work at both the national and international level, including the American Academy of Neurology meeting in Los Angeles and the International Congress of Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Disorders in Hong Kong. I am planning to pursue a career in academic medicine after fellowship. Best of luck in the application and Match process—I am confident you will be as happy as I am that you chose a career in Neurology!
Dr. Andres Kanner, MD, FANA is Professor of Clinical Neurology, Chief of the Epilepsy Division and Director of our Comprehensive Epilepsy Center. Dr. Kanner was born and raised in Mexico. He came to the United States to complete Residency trainings in Psychiatry and Neurology, followed by a fellowship in Epilepsy and Clinical Neurophysiology at the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Kanner is boarded in Neurology, Psychiatry, Clinical Neurophysiology and Epilepsy. He joined our Faculty in 2013. The Epilepsy Division has 8 Faculty members and provides comprehensive evaluation and management in the outpatient and inpatient settings. There are 6 (2 pediatric) video-EEG monitoring beds at JMH (level IV), 6 at the University of Miami Hospital (level IV) and 2 beds at Miami Veterans Administration Hospital (Epilepsy Center of Excellence). The Epilepsy team provides continuous video-EEG monitoring coverage for all cases of status epilepticus (24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week in all 3 institutions). In addition, patients undergo comprehensive evaluation to establish their epilepsy syndrome and formulate a treatment plan that may include surgery, as needed. All residents enjoy rotating through our services in the course of their training. During the rotations, residents participate in weekly didactic conferences in addition to direct patient care.

Welcome to the University of Miami Neurology Residency Program! We are home to great neurologists who are invested in ensuring the transition of residents from the shadows to the academic spotlight. One irrevocable fact pertinent to medical students looking for residency positions is finding a program with a plethora of opportunities for academic growth and recognition. In addition to a lifetime of clinical experience bestowed on residents by training at one of the largest hospitals in the country, we have a conspicuous presence at both national and international conferences with more than 50 poster and platform presentations amongst the residents and faculty presented last year. To highlight a personal example, I had the opportunity to participate as a site sub-investigator/blind assessor in the landmark DAWN trial and am a principal investigator in an ongoing on-site novel project, which would have been impossible without faculty mentorship available here. Our research efforts resulted in my being awarded the “Young Investigator Resident Award” at the American Academy of Neurology Conference 2018 and “Junior Investigator Travel Grant” at the International Stroke Conference 2018. No wonder I am staying back in Miami to pursue both Vascular and Endovascular Surgical Neuroradiology Fellowships. Of course it doesn’t hurt that it last snowed in Miami in January 1977 and we have year round “convertible” weather! I have come to call Miami the land of eternal “white noise” - waves, breeze and rain. Now, I would like to take this moment to thank you for allowing us to give you a glimpse of what it is to be a part of the UM family. Please don’t hesitate to contact me for any questions that you may have! Wish you all the best! the best!

Dr. Dileep R. Yavagal, MD is Director of Interventional Neurology and Co-Director of Neuroendovascular Surgery and Professor of Neurology and Neurosurgery at the University of Miami & Jackson Memorial Hospitals. He is also the Director of the Neurological Platform of the Interdisciplinary Stem Cell Institute at the University. He is the Founder and Past-President of the Society for Vascular and Interventional Neurology (SVIN) and a international leader in endovascular therapy for ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke. He was a steering committee member of the of the landmark MR RESCUE trial and co-athor of the DAWN clinical trials both published in the NEJM that changed clinical practice for treatment of acute ischemic stroke. His pioneering translational basic research the field of intra-arterial (IA) delivery of stem cells in stroke therapy has been supported by several state and federal research grants to study endovascular stem cell therapies for ischemic stroke using small and large animal models of stroke in his research laboratory. He co-lead the first multicenter clinical trial of IA delivery of autologous bone marrow stem cells for ischemic stroke: RECOVER Stroke.
Faculty Spotlight: Leticia Tornes, MD

Dr. Leticia Tornes is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Neurology, Director of the Residency Program and part of the Multiple Sclerosis and Epilepsy Divisions. Dr. Tornes was born and raised in Miami. She attended the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, followed by Neurology Residency, where she was chief resident, followed by Fellowships in Clinical Neurophysiology and Multiple Sclerosis/Neuroimmunology. Dr. Tornes is board certified in Neurology and Epilepsy. She joined our Faculty in July 2011 and was Associate Program Director for one year. She took over as Program Director in April of 2013. Clinically, she evaluates and treats epilepsy patients and patients with multiple sclerosis (MS). Her particular clinical interests include women with epilepsy and cognitive dysfunction in multiple sclerosis. Her research interests currently focus on MS and she is involved in 16 clinical trials with the MS division, including 2 where she is the principal investigator. Having trained at the University of Miami in recent years, Dr. Tornes has firsthand experience with our residency program. This provides the residents with the unique opportunity to work with a true resident advocate that strives to make our program the very best! On her free time she enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband and 2 children.

Class Representatives

Melissa Bailey, MD
Georgetown University
Class of 2021

Andres De Leon, MD
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia
Class of 2021

Joshua Lukas, MD
Indiana University
Class of 2021

Daniel Garbin Di Luca, MD
Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil
Class of 2020

Sishir Mannava, MD
University of Oklahoma
Class of 2020

Resident Spotlight: Joshua Lukas, MD

Here in Miami you’ll find a unique program that truly fosters your passion and interests of every variety. If your interest is in research, this program has the resources and support to make it happen. Last year as an intern, I was able to submit 6 abstracts and attend/present at 2 conferences (AAN and SVIN). This year I’ve contributed to two abstracts with several manuscripts on the horizon. Today I continue to pursue multiple projects through networking with Neurologists in various institutions, spanning multiple subspecialties, including interventional/vascular neurology and Neurocritical Care - none of which would be possible without the support of this program.

My passion for research and patient care lead me to the realm of Quality Improvement and Patient Safety, which resulted in my appointment to the QI subcommittee of the AAN last in my internship year.

This has given me a unique opportunity to interface with national leaders and personally contribute, as a member of the committee, to the formation of guidelines and quality measures which will be incorporated into the practice of Neurologists nationally and internationally. It has been incredible seeing and experiencing the value of implementing a system-wide policy and the subsequent impact on the individual patient.

The beauty of a program this large, is there’s always support from your residency cohort, your upper levels, and especially the attendings. Early on we are assigned “big brothers/sisters” from the upper level residents to ease our transition and guide us as we begin our journey in Neurology.

Additionally, we are given faculty mentors who are always available to guide us to, not only identify our goals, but also how to accomplish them. For those interested in research, the research track is available with specific “research mentors” and advanced training in research methodology and statistical analysis.

You’ll quickly find that the people you’ll meet here are more than “co-residents and attendings” - we’re a family. This is a rare and special place where everyone truly wants everyone else to succeed. If you have any interest in research, all you need is an idea and you’ll see, with the support of this program, there’s no limit to what you can accomplish.
Questions?

For more information and application information, visit our website: [www.neurology.med.miami.edu](http://www.neurology.med.miami.edu)

Our main Residency page and Frequently Asked Questions section cover a variety of topics, and the Campus Tour and Photos and Life in Miami sections will provide details about living in South Florida. If you have additional questions, our program managers Andy and Terry, our 2018-2019 Administrative Chief Residents, our Program Director Dr. Tornes and our Associate Program Director Kottapally are all happy to help. Good luck!
University of Miami
Jackson Memorial Medical Center
Department of Neurology
Class of 2019

Christian Agudelo, MD
Med School: University of Pittsburgh
Fellowship: Sleep Medicine

Eric Geil, MD
Med School: University of Kentucky
Fellowship: Sleep Medicine

Le Treice Irving, MD
Med School: The Ohio State University
Fellowship: Epilepsy

Salem Jafilan, MD
Med School: University of Illinois
Fellowship: Clinical Neurophysiology

Janice Leon, MD
Med School:University of Miami
Fellowship: Multiple Sclerosis

Richard Lewis, MD
Med School: University of Kentucky
Fellowship: Neuromuscular Medicine

Nicholas Liaw MD
Med School: University at Buffalo
Fellowship: Vascular Neurology

Michelle Marrero, MD
Med School: University of Puerto Rico
Private Practice: Epilepsy

Richard Ronca, MD
Med School: Temple University
Fellowship: Sleep Medicine

Vasu Saini, MD
Med School: Maulana Azad Medical College, India
Fellowship: Vascular Neurology

Linda Xie, MD
Med School: University of Massachusetts
Fellowship: Clinical Neurophysiology
Resident Clinician Researcher Track

The Neurology Resident Clinician Researcher Program is aimed to provide residents with necessary faculty mentorship, administrative guidance, infrastructure and research facilities in order to pursue rewarding clinical and basic neuroscience research during residency. It is expected that a research track resident will become conversant in research techniques and will accumulate enough data to submit a career development grant (e.g. NIH K08) upon graduation.

While ~25% of our residents already hold graduate degrees, the program also provides flexibility for residents without a Ph.D. or M.S. to pursue advanced research training. Once accepted, residents are given a stipend for grand seminars, conference travel etc., and are provided extra educational opportunities to succeed in basic and clinical research.

Over the last 4 years, our residents have published more than 50 peer-reviewed publications, and several have recently been involved in the Northern Manhattan Study (NOMAS), the first prospective cohort study among Whites, African Americans, and Caribbean Hispanics to investigate the risks and determinants of stroke and help fill gaps in our knowledge of the epidemiology of stroke and vascular disease in minority populations. This NIH study was founded at Columbia University by Dr. Sacco and is one of a myriad of projects at UM.

Faculty Spotlight: Tanja Rundek, MD, PhD

Dr. Tatjana Rundek joined the University of Miami in May of 2007 and is currently Professor of Neurology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. She also maintains an adjunct research faculty position in Neurology at the Neurological Institute at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. She serves as a Chair of Clinical Translational Research in Neurology and Director of our Clinical Translational Research Division. Her research is directed towards the use of ultrasound for early detection, intervention and prevention of functional and structural changes of arterial wall inflammation. She is PI and co-investigator on multiple NIH grants, and has received foundation support to study the relationship between vascular risk factors, subclinical atherosclerosis, genetics and stroke. She also investigates sex-specific disparities in stroke. She is a fellow of the ANA, a member of the American Heart Association and AAN. She is President of the Neurosonology Communities of Practice of the American Institute in Ultrasound in Medicine, the largest professional medical ultrasound organization in the US. Dr. Rundek serves on the Inter-societal Accreditation Commission (IAC) Vascular Testing Board of Directors, a national organization that accredits clinical ultrasound, echocardiography, nuclear/PET, MRI, CT and carotid stenting programs. Most recently, she was appointed Scientific Director of the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute.

Resident Spotlight: Janice Leon, MD

Hello, and welcome to Miami! I am one of the fourth year residents. Our roles change year by year, and this year as the senior resident on service, we guide our junior residents in triaging cases, managing everything from status epilepticus to neuromyelitis optica exacerbations, neurosyphilis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, and so much more. I really like that in our program we get exposure to several different types of hospitals, clinics, and patient populations—from the uninsured, often undocumented patients we see at Jackson Memorial Hospital (Miami Dade County’s safety net hospital), to veterans with excellent outpatient follow up care at the Miami VA, to the private, insured patients at the flagship University of Miami Hospital. I’m sure this training will prepare us well for any setting we choose to practice in after residency. We can also boast that at our program our attendings are world-renowned in so many subspecialties of Neurology— including Neuro-Immunology, Epilepsy, Movement Disorders, and Neuromuscular disease just to name a few. About me—I was born and raised in Miami, I decided to stay at the University of Miami for college, medical school, and became a triple ‘Cane by staying at UM/JMH for residency, and I wouldn’t have it any other way. I’ve chosen to pursue fellowship in MS/Neuroimmunology, which I will be completing at Yale University starting July 2019. I feel blessed to be a part of such a warm, welcoming program, with so many bright, motivated, and friendly people surrounding me at work every day.
Faculty Spotlight: Ralph L. Sacco, MD

Ralph L. Sacco, MD, MS, is the Chairman of Neurology, Olemberg Family Chair in Neurological Disorders, Miller Professor of Neurology, Public Health Sciences, Human Genetics and Neurosurgery, Senior Associate Dean and Director of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute, Executive Director of the Evelyn McKnight Brain Institute at the Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, and Chief of the Neurology Service at Jackson Memorial Hospital. For 2017-19, he is serving as President of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN). He was also the first neurologist to become president of the American Heart Association (AHA). Prior to joining UM he was Professor of Neurology, Chief of Stroke and Critical Care Division, and Associate Chairman at Columbia University. Dr. Sacco is the founding PI of the NINDS-funded Northern Manhattan Study, the FL-Puerto Rico Collaboration to Reduce Stroke Disparities, and the Family Study of Stroke Risk and Carotid Atherosclerosis, as well as co-investigator of multiple other NIH grants. He has also been the Co-Chair of international stroke treatment and prevention trials. Dr. Sacco has published extensively with over 600 peer-reviewed articles and 102 invited articles. His research has also addressed stroke and vascular disparities. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and has lectured extensively at national and international areas of stroke prevention, treatment, epidemiology, risk factors, vascular cognitive impairment, human genetics and stroke recurrence.

Faculty Spotlight: Kristine O’Phelan, MD

Dr. Kristine O’Phelan received her medical degree from Boston University School of Medicine. She completed a residency in neurology at University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital and fellowship training in Neurotrauma and Neurocritical Care at UCLA. Her major subspecialty interest is in critical care of neurotrauma, subarachnoid hemorrhage and multimodality monitoring. She currently directs the Neuroscience Intensive Care Unit at Jackson Memorial Hospital that is one of the largest neuro-ICUs in the country and has a busy, high-acuity service. Dr. O’Phelan has been honored to receive the Chairman’s Award for Teaching Excellence, as voted by the Neurology Residents at UM/JMH, and is an Associate Professor of Clinical Neurology. She balances the rigors of academics, including clinical care, teaching, research, and family, including a 12-year-old daughter Conner, and an 8-year-old son, Aidan. She has been thrilled to return to Miami to help develop the neurocritical care division here and finds working with the team of nurses, a clinical pharmacist, neurology and neurosurgery residents and fellows enormously gratifying.

Faculty Spotlight: Walter G. Bradley, DM, FRCP

Dr. Bradley, Professor and Chairman Emeritus, is one of the greatest strengths of our training program. As past Director of the Neuromuscular division and former medical director of the Kessenich Family MDA ALS clinic, Dr. Bradley maintains a role teaching the Neurology residents at Professor’s Rounds. A world-renowned clinician, and master educator, he is most recognized by Neurology Residents and Neurologists around the world for his seminal textbook, Neurology in Clinical Practice. With over 400 publications and multiple millions of dollars in research funding over his illustrious career, Dr. Bradley is a true pioneer and leader in the field.
Top 10 reasons for Ranking UM #1
(as submitted by a PGY-2 Resident…)

10. The weather
9. Outstanding benefits, salary, and educational allowance
8. Great ocean views and no state tax!
7. Did I mention the weather …?
6. Team-oriented approach/comfortable atmosphere
5. Resident Research Track
4. Program commitment to teaching/education
3. Exposure to a diverse array of neurologic disease
2. World-renowned faculty
1. The residents!!!