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) and are seeking highly qualified applicants.

The mission of the Department is twofold—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 of Excellence 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
Past-President, American Academy of Neurology

Leticia Tornes, MD, FAAN
Director, Neurology Residency Program
Associate Professor, Clinical Neurology
Faculty Spotlight: Ralph L. Sacco, MD

Ralph L. Sacco, MD, MS, is the Chairman of Neurology, Olembur 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. He was President of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) from 2017-19, and now has an active role as the sitting past president (a 2 year term). 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: Leticia Tornes, MD

Dr. Leticia Tornes is an Associate 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! In her free time she enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband and 2 children.

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.
Faculty Spotlight: Associate Program Director, Jason Margolesky, MD

Dr. Jason Margolesky is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Neurology in the Movement Disorder and Neurohospitalist divisions. Beginning in the 2019-20 Academic year he is also the associate program director for the Neurology Residency. Born in Miami, he left for college to Emory University in Atlanta, spent one year at Georgetown receiving a Masters, and then returned to Miami for all of his medical training (Medical School, Residency, and Fellowship) at UM/JMH.

He completed his fellowship in Movement Disorders in 2017 and remained on faculty (received teaching awards from residents and medical students that year). In the clinic, he evaluates and manages patients with abnormal and involuntary movements, predominantly Parkinson’s disease. The other part of his clinical life is spent in the hospital seeing all neurological conditions, with the relished opportunity of working closely with the resident team. Research interests involve clinical biomarkers for prodromal PD or PD progression, as well as integrating the inpatient and outpatient worlds to better evaluate and manage movement disorders seen in hospitalized patients.

As associate PD his goal is to foster resident’s education and experience during their time spent in Miami, utilizing his experiences in the department at all levels of service. He has twin 2 year old girls, a wife and neurotic dog at home that he is happy to have occupy most of his free time. He is also an avid reader, loves Stephen King.

Class Representatives

Matthew Feldman, MD
University of Miami
Class of 2022

Whitney Mayberry, MD
Class of 2022

Stephanie Picon, MD
Class of 2022

Melissa Bailey, MD
Georgetown University
Class of 2021

Andres De Leon, MD
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia

Joshua Lukas, MD
Indiana University
Class of 2021

Resident Spotlight: Daniel Garbin Di Luca, MD

Welcome to the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital Neurology Program! I was born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil where I also attended medical school. During my last year of graduation, I performed several clinical rotations in Boston, New York and even Germany, followed by a brief research fellowship at Harvard/MassGeneral Institute for Neurodegenerative Disease. After my global experiences, my plan was to pursue residency in a large hospital that would provide me the best clinical training while allowing me to chart my own path in research and academic neurology.

Choosing UM was the obvious option, especially considering the friendly atmosphere and supportive environment for scientific growth. Now as a resident, I can confidently say I couldn’t have made a better choice. The ordinary, day-to-day professional activities of our residency training are never boring and constantly filled with challenging cases. A major strength of our program is the breadth and depth of diagnosis, often consisting of patients from underserved regions with complex pathologies. Training in such environment provides a robust clinical experience thus helping residents to face the challenge of mastering modern neurology with all of its social and cultural implications.

Additionally, there are innumerable research opportunities for residents. As part of the clinical research track, I was honored to find a space for academic growth and close mentorship. In the last 3 years, I was able to publish over 8 manuscripts, 9 abstracts and currently serve as an active reviewer for 4 journals, including Neurology®. Following residency, I will pursue a 2-year movement disorders fellowship at the University of Toronto, my first choice. Ultimately, my goal is to become a clinician-investigator and UM has prepared me well for this task. I wish you best of luck in the application process and I look forward to seeing you here!
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 electroencephalography (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.

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 a Professor of Clinical Neurology. She balances the rigors of academics, including clinical care, teaching, research, and family, including a 13-year-old daughter Conner, and an 9-year-old son, Aidan. Her family shares a love for animals, and they now have 3 dogs, a bearded dragon, a hedgehog and two parakeets.

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.

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 college 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 completed fellowship in Movement Disorders. As a fellow, I had the opportunity to continue my research and present my work at both the national and international level, including at the American Academy of Neurology meetings in Los Angeles and Philadelphia, and the International Congress of Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Disorders in Hong Kong. I am very excited to be joining the faculty this year and continuing my work in research and education.
Dr. Andres Kanner, MD, FANA, FAAN, FAES 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 9 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 with resection, laser ablation or neuromodulation therapies including Responsive Neurostimulation, Deep Brain Stimulation of Anterior Thalamic Nuclei and Vagus Nerve Stimulation, 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.

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 Neurolological 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-author 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.

Cerebral phaeohyphomycosis due to Curvularia species
1 of <10 reported cases

Giant Cell Arteritis presenting as hemi-tongue infarction

Susac syndrome: branched retinal artery occlusions, white matter lesions, and hearing loss.
Questions?

For more information and application information, visit our website: 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 Terry and Andy, our 2019-2020 Administrative Chief Residents, our Program Director, Dr. Tornes and our Associate Program Director, Dr. Margole-sky are all happy to help. Good luck!

Sishir Mannava, MD
Administrative Chief Resident
Sishir.mannava@jhsmiami.org

Daniel Garbin Di Luca, MD
Administrative Chief Resident
Daniel.garbindiluc@jhsmiami.org

Lee Lau, MD
Administrative Chief Resident
Hsienlee.lau@jhsmiami.org

Tamara Stiep, MD
Administrative Chief Resident
Tamara.stiep@jhsmiami.org

Questions?

Educational activities

Weekly professors' rounds

Daily noon conferences

Weekly bedside teaching (Dr. Adams)

Annual Resident Research Day

Graduation

Monthly Brain Cutting
Ramon Flores-Gonzalez, MD  
Med School: University of Puerto Rico  
Fellowship: Multiple Sclerosis

Lixandra Gonzalez, MD  
Med School: Ross University  
Fellowship:

Andrew Kim, MD  
Med School: SUNY Upstate University  
Fellowship: Epilepsy

Lee Lau, MD  
Med School: St. George’s University  
Fellowship: Movement Disorders

Carlos Oliu, MD  
Med School: University of Miami  
Fellowship: Epilepsy

Stacey Williamson, MD  
Med School: University of Cincinnati  
Fellowship: Neurocritical Care

Daniel Garbin Di Luca, MD  
Med School: Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil  
Fellowship: Movement Disorders

Abdullah Ibish, MD  
Med School: Georgetown University  
Fellowship: Vascular Neurology

Nastajjia Krementz, MD  
Med School: Thomas Jefferson University  
Fellowship: Vascular Neurology

Sishir Mannava, MD  
Med School: University of Oklahoma  
Fellowship: Vascular Neurology

Tamara Stiep, MD  
Med School: New York Medical College  
Fellowship: Movement Disorders

Jessica Yen, MD  
Med School: Indiana University  
Fellowship: Epilepsy
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.

Recent Graduate Spotlight: Janice Leon, MD

Hello, and welcome to Miami! Last year, I was one of the fourth year residents. Our roles change year by year, and 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 has prepared 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/Neuromyelitoid, 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.
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!!!