

## AMWA DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SECTION – AWAY ROTATION

MEDICAL STUDENT – MERRYJEAN LOSSO, M4, OAKLAND WILLIAM BEAUMONT SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

LOCATION: RUSH UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

### Clinical Experience at Rush Heart Center for Women

During the month of October, I did an away elective and rotated with Dr. Neelum Aggarwal from the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center and Dr. Annabelle Volgman, from the Rush Heart Center for Women. Dr. Aggarwal, the Director of Research for the Rush Heart Center for Women, and a Cognitive Neurologist at the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center, has worked with Dr. Volgman for the last 4 years to develop a multidisciplinary Clinical Research program that showcases the relationship between Cardiac and Cognitive Disorders.

Working and shadowing with Dr. Volgman in her cardiology clinic I learned about the unique sex and gender differences in presentation and treatment differences facing women with cardiovascular disease. We discussed in detailed the growing literature that investigates changes that heart centers for women are making in communities and the clinic and hospital settings.

Rotating through the Cardio-Cognitive clinic with Dr. Aggarwal, I learned about cognitive and memory issues specific to women and the aging population. Women over the age of 65 have a 1 in 6 chance of developing Alzheimer's compared to 1 in 11 chance in men due differences in medical, social, and possibly genetic risk factors. Given that women perform the majority of caregiving, stress and the manifestation of stress to cognitive functioning was also discussed.

I rotated through the Cardio-Oncology clinic with Dr. Tochukwu (Tochi) Okwuosa, at Rush Main Campus, in addition to a satellite Rush Clinic in Oak Park, Illinois. This unique clinic allowed me to help assess how cardiovascular disease and cancer intersect within diverse patient populations from Chicagoland. I also learned about the bridge between cardio-oncology and cognitive care for cancer patients.

Learn more at <https://www.rush.edu/services/rush-heart-center-women-womens-heart-care>

In the month of October, I completed the first AMWA Clinical Research Elective in Chicago at Rush University Medical Center. This multifaceted rotation allowed me to develop a clinical research project with a uniquely vulnerable population in Chicago, shadow female physicians in their clinics, participate in clinical experiences with physicians and their teams, mentor pre-medical students and participate in various community outreach programs.



### Walk with a Doc at A Safe Haven

A Safe Haven Foundation is a social services organization located on Chicago's west side. The program offers shelter, rehabilitation, and educational services to its clients as a holistic approach to aiding the homeless.

Walk with a Doc (WWAD) is a national walking program that connects a physician and the community. The program begins with a 5-10 minute health education topic followed by 45 minutes of walking in a community setting, such as a park or local inside gym.

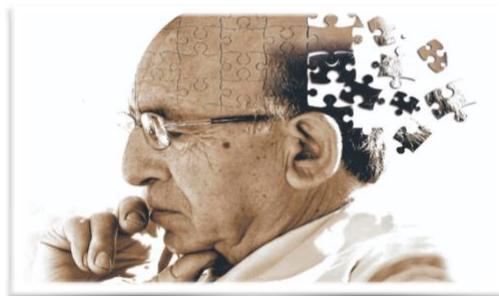
The ASH clients face unique risks to poor health care and outcomes. I worked to engage with the clients and understand their interests and motivation for a walking program to improve their overall health and modify their cardiovascular risk factors. Members of the ASH community were an integral community partner with the CEERIAS ([www.cerrias.org](http://www.cerrias.org)) - a PCORI funded grant to raise awareness in underserved communities about stroke and calling 911

As part of developing this program, I worked with a University of Illinois at Chicago pre-medical student to hand out a Stroke Awareness Survey to see how much information our population knew about stroke. We will use this information to develop educational programming for the WWAD activity at A Safe Haven. We plan to have student interns rotate through A Safe Haven in the development of the Walk with a Doc program.

I have applied for the Walk with a Future Doc Dr. AnneMarie Sommer Scholarship, which supports student led walks to develop a WWAFD series at A Safe Haven. We hope to encourage the clients at A Safe Haven to promote their future goals by adding health education and physical activity to their rehabilitation.

Learn more at <http://www.asafehaven.org> & <https://walkwithadoc.org/our-locations/chicago-illinois-2/>

**Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center (RADC)**



The RADC provides Chicagoland's diverse community with unique educational programs. This month, I joined Karen Graham, Manager of Community Relations, to Compassion Baptist Church in Chicago's south side to deliver a presentation on healthy aging and modifiable risk factors in the development of Alzheimer's Disease. The event focused on education of 10 modifiable risk factors for developing Alzheimer's Dementia, including healthy diet and exercise and management of chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and obesity

The 16 participants were African American adults over the age of 65 and their care takers. This presentation highlighted the need for care-takers wellness and preventing care-giver fatigue. We offered numerous pamphlets with information of relevant health topics and resources for further care.

The attendees asked questions about adjusting their diets to be healthier. They also asked about signs and symptoms of cognitive impairment and when to seek help for themselves or a loved one.

In addition to all the community work the RADC does, it also shares all of its data from its epidemiological studies on this site: <http://www.radc.rush.edu/>

Check it out and if you have any questions, contact Dr. Aggarwal.



Students interested in an away Cardiology/Cognitive and Neurology rotation in their third or fourth year in clinical research experience and community engagement projects can contact [Dr. Neelum Aggarwal](#). Please provide a CV and one page description of why you are interested in coming to Rush and the Rush Heart Center for Women in Chicago. For more information on the Diversity and Inclusion Section of AMWA visit our website: <https://www.amwa-doc.org/our-work/initiatives/diversity-and-inclusion/>

# DIVERSITY DIALOGUES

During my rotation, I interviewed two women who are diversifying the conversation of what it means to be a woman in medicine. I sat down with Dr. Vivian Pinn after she presented the "Sex and Gender Differences in Medicine" webinar with the American Medical Association's-Women Physician Section along with Dr. Neelum Aggarwal during September's Women in Medicine Month. I later met Emily Phelps, a second-year medical student at Rush Medical College, who has developed a research interest in empathy and understanding of patients with Alzheimer's Disease by exploring participant responses to virtual reality programming.

## Dr. Vivian Pinn

**MJL:** What advice do you have to young physicians who would like leadership roles as a part of their career?

**VP:** Know where you want to go. You need to be self-assured and confident but not arrogant. You can't do it on your own. And you need to have a sponsor, mentor, counselor, plural – have more than one. They will help you understand your institution and those you're working with for advice for forks in the road. But the decision is ultimately yours. Not everyone has the same leadership style or interests. Recognize what will make you happy. Mainly, take advantage of new opportunities and follow your heart knowing that if you have a failure you can learn from it. Learn from those experiences and move forward. Apply for positions you're not ready for. You never know if you don't try, but you need to be prepared that you will overcome it.



Learn more at <https://www.ama-assn.org/about/women-physicians-section-wps-governing-council>

## Emily Phelps



**MJL:** Alzheimer's Disease is affecting a growing population of patients, particularly women. How have sex and gender differences shaped your outlook?

What has this research project taught you regarding Alzheimer's Disease that you have not been taught in your medical education to date?

**EP:** Our data actually reflect a curiosity about gender roles and sex differences in both patients and caregivers. Among our surveys is an inventory of sex and gender differences in medicine, and it is clear that this content is new to most of our participants. We also notice that Beatriz and her daughter are the main care partner – care giver team. Students often ask: how would this relationship be different among a father and son? What is also new for students are sensory deficits and issues with speech in Alzheimer's disease. We focus mainly on memory loss. So to experience hallucinations as well as distortions in your own speech (as it is played back to you), it is quite unexpected.

Learn more about virtual reality programs at <https://embodiedlabs.com/labs>