

Newsletter

JULY 2023



In this issue:

1 Postdoctoral
Spotlight:
Brian Douthit

2 Student
Spotlight:
Alexander Chang

Save the date:

**AMIA Annual
Symposium**

November 11-15
New Orleans, LA

Call for Trainees to participate in the

AMIA 2023 Annual Symposium Year in Review

If interested, contact Dr. James Cimino directly at:
ciminoj@uab.edu

JAMIA Call for papers for the Special Focus Issue on ChatGPT and Large Language Models in Biomedicine and Health

Authors can submit research and applications articles, perspectives, brief communications, case studies, or reviews. More information can be found [here](#). Deadline: December 1

AMIA Events Calendar

For upcoming conferences, webinars, working group meetings, and courses offered by AMIA, check out the AMIA Events Calendar [here](#)

If you have any opportunities for students that you would like to share, please let us know via the Google Form (Link Below)!

<https://forms.gle/NUebtKGFxCGwkSPz8>



AMIASTUDENTWG.SLACK.COM



@AMIASTWG

POSTDOCTORAL SPOTLIGHT

Brian Douthit

PHD, RN-BC

VA POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW IN

MEDICAL INFORMATICS AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER



Please tell us about your research interests.

The reason why I love informatics so much is how varied your day-to-day can be – however, this can also make it difficult to succinctly state one’s research foci. I love clinical decision support, supporting AI implementation in practice, and data and messaging standards development (especially FHIR). Lately, I have been focusing my effort on reducing documentation burden by examining changes in documentation templates and patterns for associations to patient and clinician outcomes.

How did you become interested in informatics?

When I first began nursing school, the hospital where I trained and was subsequently employed used paper charts for everything – documentation, orders, and care planning. I was able to participate directly in the planning and implementation of a full-scale EHR, where I saw many opportunities for EHR optimization. As more of my work transitioned to a nursing informatics role, I began to see opportunities for new ways to deliver care, improve health, and augment the daily workflow of nurses and other clinicians. It was immediately addicting!

How does your clinical nursing experience influence your research?

My start in informatics was a natural extension of my floor nurse duties which happened to snowball into my career today. The drive forward has always been to improve the lives of patients and clinicians through the data and technologies available to us. My time as a floor nurse was invaluable for many different reasons, and those experiences inform nearly every decision I make as an informaticist.

How do you envision the future of nursing informatics?

Nursing informatics, to me, has always been about supporting nurses and patients in a holistic manner using data and technology. I also believe that every nurse is an informatician, and as time progresses, I see nurses becoming owners of their data and leveraging information to develop new tools, methods, and interfaces. I think that over time, nursing practice, operations, and research will become more of a blended role.

What advice would you offer students starting in informatics?

Don’t be intimidated – working in “informatics” is like working in “sales; it’s a big, esoteric term with many facets, roles, and areas of specialty. In other words, if you feel overwhelmed, it’s normal. Explore your options and participate in different projects; you’ll eventually find something that clicks.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Alexander Chang

**MD-PHD STUDENT,
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH -
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY**



What are your main research interests and goals?

My main research interests lie in medicine and computational biology. I am particularly fascinated by the potential of machine learning and data integration to enhance laboratory research and clinical care, especially in cancer and precision medicine. My overarching goal is to develop and leverage computational tools and models to understand disease mechanisms better and optimize patient treatment plans. My current projects include examining how to use AI to pair patients with clinical trials and mapping cancer metastasis through the body using computational models.

How does your research advance the field and what impact do you hope it will have?

I believe my research has the potential to advance the field by bridging the gap between theoretical, computational models and practical clinical applications. We can better understand diseases, particularly cancer, by integrating multiple data modalities, such as genomic data, clinical records, and imaging data. This integrated approach can provide valuable insights into the biological processes underlying disease progression and response to treatment. I hope my work will lead to more accurate diagnoses, personalized treatment strategies, and better patient outcomes.

What tips do you have for others who want to pursue research in your area?

My inspiration to pursue a dual career in medicine and research stems from my desire to make tangible contributions to improving patient care. As a clinician, I can directly interact with patients, understand their needs, and apply the most current medical knowledge to help them. On the other hand, as a researcher, I can work on developing that knowledge further, finding new ways to diagnose and treat diseases. These two roles complement each other beautifully. The insights I gain from clinical practice inform my research questions and motivate me to find solutions, and the results of my research can, in turn, be applied back into the clinic to improve patient care.

Do you have any suggestions on how students can prepare or apply for the LEAD Fund Trainee Award program?

I recommend starting early for students interested in applying for the LEAD Fund Trainee Award program. Prepare a clear and concise outline of your experience and goals that aligns with the purposes of the LEAD fund. Emphasize how your research could potentially lead to significant disease understanding or treatment advancements. It would also be beneficial to showcase any previous research experiences or accomplishments demonstrating your research potential. Reach out early to mentors or advisors for their advice and feedback on your application, and don't hesitate to seek help from those who have successfully applied for the award in the past.