



Profoundly changing the study, treatment and prevention of HIV throughout the world.

Since the 1980s, HIV/AIDS research at UC San Diego has been at the forefront of discoveries that shape care and treatment standards on a global scale. We are internationally recognized as a place that combines the art of healing with the science of medicine and serves not only San Diego, but communities around the world.

For 22 years [The HIV Institute](#) has served as an umbrella organization to UC San Diego's many HIV-related activities. We work within and across departments, in multidisciplinary programs and with many other collaborators to translate new discoveries from our laboratories to patient care.



Celebrating Our Endowed Chairs

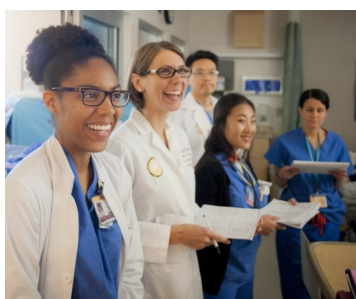
On May 21st, as part of UC San Diego School of Medicine's 50th anniversary, the accomplishments of our inspiring and innovative endowed professors were honored. For five decades, our faculty have defined who we are and what we can achieve. An endowed chair is the highest honor bestowed on our faculty members — it represents an investment in our talent and our future, fueling our revolutionary pursuit to understand, treat, and eventually cure devastating diseases.

The HIV Institute proudly celebrated five of our faculty who are leading the charge toward a new era in health care. Drs. Douglas Richman, Joshua Fierer, Steffanie Strathdee, Anita Raj and Igor Grant, pictured above (from left to right), were recognized with a special endowed chair medal from the Chancellor. We thank these renowned scientists for their passionate pursuit of groundbreaking innovation, life-changing care, and exceptional education of the next generation of medical professionals.



San Diego's Premier HIV Care Clinic Expanding Fall 2018

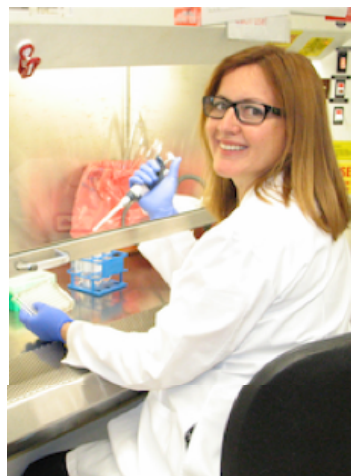
Established in 1982, the HIV Medicine (Owen) Clinic at UC San Diego is the largest, most comprehensive primary care center in San Diego, serving more than 3,000 individuals living with HIV. We are pleased to announce that Owen Clinic will undergo a significant expansion.



This much-needed expansion will improve clinic operations and patient experience, while adding electronic check-in, women's HIV services, an HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) clinic, and other specialty clinics. Stay tuned for more details about how UC San Diego is strengthening the growing reputation of Owen Clinic as a nationally recognized center for excellence in HIV care!

Investigator Spotlight

The HIV Institute greatly appreciates UC San Diego's hardworking, dedicated research scientists accelerating the field. The Investigator Spotlight gives us an opportunity to acknowledge our leading investigators and to share with the community how they are pursuing life-changing discoveries.



Sara Gianella, MD

Assistant Professor of Medicine

San Diego Center for AIDS Research – Director, Translational Virology Core

Tell us a little about yourself.

I am an infectious disease physician and translational virologist. As part of my job, I try to answer clinically relevant questions using my laboratory skills. I am a very engaged mom of three and have learned the art of multitasking. I am also very passionate about politics and about human rights! When I am not working, I am either spending time with my family, volunteering at the kid's school, or advocating for social justice somewhere. I also love teaching medical students and mentoring junior people in the lab.

What attracted you to this field?

I am fascinated by viruses and intrigued with how they co-evolve with humans (or other species) over millions of years, in many cases taking advantage of, or hijacking, the host for their own survival and reproduction. HIV is also a global disease that is rooted at the intersections of many social inequalities. There is a very strong and engaged community aspect to this field that I love.

How did you land in San Diego and/or start working at UC San Diego?

My husband and I are originally from Switzerland. He is a computer scientist and was looking for post-doctoral work abroad in the United States. I told him the only place I would live in the U.S. was California, since I never liked the cold Swiss weather. He was offered a position at UC San Diego, and I then began to inquire about research possibilities at the university for myself. Interestingly, Dr. Huldrych Günthard, from the University of Zurich in Switzerland and a colleague of mine, was a former postdoctoral fellow of Dr. Douglas Richman at UC San Diego, and he helped connect me to Doug. So, Nadir and I moved to San Diego in 2009, where I began to work as a postdoctoral fellow with Drs. Doug Richman and Davey Smith. I then joined the faculty of the Department of Medicine in 2013.

What are the major issues facing HIV researchers today?

I think that the change in the U.S. administration and politics, which are fueling attempts at dismantling our work towards equality and inclusiveness, is a

challenge for the HIV field in particular. Human rights are a big issue for HIV-impacted community members. The fact that key populations who are impacted by HIV (the LGBTQ community, people of color, undocumented immigrants, sex workers and other vulnerable groups) are now living in fear in this country, and this is a very big problem. People need to feel secure and good about themselves to be able to participate in research. When they fear for their lives and well-being, when they lose access to healthcare and/or get deported, participating in research understandably becomes less of a priority to them.

What are some of your research interests and/or what are you working on right now?

I have a very broad research portfolio at the intersection between clinical and basic research (it is called translational research). My interests range from investigating HIV transmission dynamics in the genital tract to their interactions with co-infecting viruses (in particular herpes viruses). I am keen on trying to characterize the establishment of the latent viral reservoir during primary HIV infection and in various tissues and anatomic compartments. I am also investigating drivers and clinical complications of persistent immune activation in the setting of HIV. Finally, I am interested in aging-related issues, sex differences in HIV infection, and transgender health (I am part of the ACTG Women's Health Inter-Network Scientific Committee). I am also passionate about ethics and human subjects-related issues, and I have been serving on the UC San Diego Human Research Protection Program for three years.

What are some of your favorite or most important projects?

The Last Gift Study, without any doubt! This is one of our newest research studies at UC San Diego focused on understanding the behavior of HIV in the human body by studying participants who are terminally ill and who are willing donate their bodies for a rapid autopsy. One of the primary aims of this study is to identify where HIV hides in an infected individual. The study is especially unique because it gives us the rare opportunity to learn from organs, such as the brain, which are not possible to study otherwise. What I also like about this study is how research participants leave their legacy through gifting their body, which will allow researchers to study HIV for years after a participant's death. Because they are gracious enough to give back to science at the end of their lives, their efforts are considered their Last Gift to the world. This study truly gives new meaning to the human qualities of kindness and altruism. To learn more or make a gift to support this cure-focused research, please visit

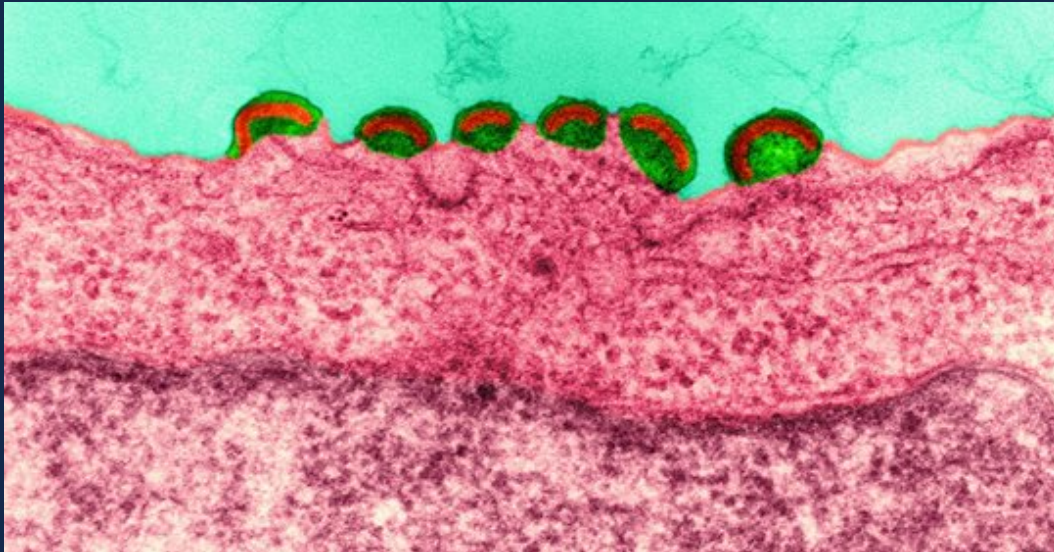
<http://lastgift.ucsd.edu>.

What is the most important lesson you have learned during your tenure at UC San Diego?

Almost everything I have learned is thanks to Dr. Davey Smith, my friend, mentor and inspiration. He has taught me that, as a researcher, you need to be inclusive and listen to the community. I have learned that it is important to widely share research, ideas and knowledge. This is the best way to move the field forward and build bridges between groups. Unfortunately, many investigators do not do this. I think some hide their projects because they are afraid another researcher will steal them. But the truth is that 99% of the time if you share your ideas with others, this will make your own work better! And even if somebody does steal an idea once in a while, then that's quite flattering. It means the idea was a good one and you can move on to the next one.

In the News

HIV+ volunteers are bequeathing their organs to a new project



The Last Gift study was recently featured in [The Economist](#). This study is committed to understanding the behavior of HIV in the human body, which is essential in our work to cure HIV. The study tackles these aims by studying people with HIV who are terminally ill due to a disease other than HIV, like cancer, ALS, or heart disease. People at the end of their lives often have a

unique perspective on life, death and altruism, and may hold the keys to curing HIV. This legacy will inform cure research and help to end HIV once and for all. If you are interested in learning more about this end-of-life HIV cure program, click [here](#) for more info.

#HIVTestingDay

Raise your voice on June 27th, [National HIV Testing Day](#), to fight HIV stigma and encourage HIV testing. Join us in helping to ensure people get tested for HIV, know their status, and get linked to care and treatment services.



In the San Diego area, check out the HIV testing services offered through UC San Diego. Lead the Way San Diego (LTWSD) is the world's first all-inclusive HIV test-and-treat campaign. One of LTWSD's unique programs is the Early Test, a specialized test that can detect HIV as early as one week after exposure to the virus. Learn more about this pioneering program [here](#).



Dr. Jamila Stockman Receives Prestigious Tribute to Women & Industry Award

In celebration of the strength, courage, and spirit of women and their extraordinary achievements, we proudly announce that [Jamila K. Stockman, PhD, MPH](#), was honored at the YWCA of San Diego County's 20th Annual *In the Company of Women* luncheon featuring the distinguished [Tribute to Women & Industry Awards](#) (TWIN) on May 4, 2018. Dr. Stockman (first row, second from right) is Vice Chief and Associate Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Global Public Health, and Director of the Disparities Core, San Diego Center for AIDS Research.

This award honors Dr. Stockman's leadership and research career, which is dedicated towards improving the lives of women who have experienced intimate partner and sexual violence. An epidemiologist by training, her research focuses on the intersecting epidemics of intimate partner violence and sexual violence, HIV acquisition and transmission, and substance abuse among marginalized populations. She is working to advance understanding of the underlying immunological and physiological mechanisms linking these epidemics and to develop interventions that provide maximal reductions in HIV, substance abuse, and violence against women. In addition to her research, Dr. Stockman actively collaborates with local public health departments and community-based organizations to ensure ethical and cultural appropriateness of her research among members of the community. She also serves on various domestic-violence prevention steering committees and community-based organizations working to address the deleterious effects of violence and HIV in families and relationships.



Addressing Health Disparities

The [UC San Diego CFAR Disparities Core](#) collaborates with academic researchers, community-based organizations, the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency, and people affected by HIV/AIDS. These individuals and agencies work together to reduce disparities related to HIV care, treatment and prevention in San Diego County. With input from their Community Advisory Board, the core focuses on improving outreach and HIV care for underserved populations. The core also mentors young investigators who are developing better ways to connect with and serve marginalized communities.

The Disparities Core currently manages two scientific initiatives: “iC-Change” and “EmPower Women.” “iC-Change” collaborates with Family Health Centers of San Diego on a two-way text messaging system to improve medication adherence in Black HIV-infected men and women. In partnership with Christie’s Place, “EmPower Women” implements a peer navigation support system in which HIV-positive women help other women access and remain in HIV care and treatment.



Would your agency like to partner with the Disparities Core? Find out about the Community Partner Registry. The Registry will serve as a two-way connecting source: UC San Diego researchers will be able to identify community partners for scientific initiatives, and partners will be able to access HIV research guidance and assistance. The core is seeking partners and conducting a needs assessment now. They

would happy to hear from you. Email disp@ucsd.edu today!

Upcoming Events

STAHR Summer Institute Workshop - July 2018

[Sustained Training on Aging & HIV Research \(STAHR\) workshop](#) will offer presentations by leaders in the field of HIV and aging, an opportunity to present and obtain feedback on ongoing projects and other training catered specifically to scholars of various years. The workshop will take place on July 12th & 13th.



Seminar Series - Fall 2018

The HIV Institute hosts a variety of seminars throughout the year featuring local, national, and international experts in basic, clinical, behavioral, and translational HIV research. Dr. Elinza Zuniga will present "Immune Adaptation During Chronic Viral Infections" from 4pm - 5pm on September 19, 2018. To register and/or learn more about our seminars click [here](#).



Annual Research Day - December 2018

Mark your calendars, the San Diego Center for AIDS Research (SD CFAR) Annual HIV Research Day is coming in December 2018! This informative one-day symposium will highlight HIV/AIDS science, with an emphasis on research supported by the SD CFAR. Read more about past events [here](#).



Support The HIV Institute

HIV will never cure itself but, with your help, we just might!

Learn about ways to support The HIV Institute by clicking [here](#).



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