

Colorectal Research Center

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

Colorectal Research Newsletter – WINTER 2025

LEADERSHIP	This January, after 7 years, the Colorectal Research Center will have new leadership. Aimal Khan will be taking over as Director of the Center. Alexander Hawkins will stay on in an advisory role. We are excited to see where Dr. Khan will take the center!
FELLOWSHIP	In August, we welcomed Philip Williams as our 2024/25 Colorectal Fellow. We also had the great fortune of matching Raha AlMarzooqi from the Cleveland Clinic as our 2025/26 Fellow. She will start in the summer of 2025.
GRANT	Aimal Khan and Danish Ali were awarded \$108,000 grant from FujiFilm for their Investigator Initiated Study on the "Objective measurement and Impact of mucosal oxygen tension on anastomotic leaks"
AWARDS	Thomas Ueland led an author group that won 1st Place at the Tennessee ACS meeting with their study, "Moving beyond area indices: Unmet social needs and outcomes in a general surgical cohort." Daniel Habib (Mentors Aimal Khan and Alexander Hawkins) was awarded the ASCRS Medical Student Research Award for his project titled "Impact of neoadjuvant immunotherapy on postoperative complications after surgery for rectal cancer". The Clinical Informatics Core recognized Megan Shroder and Alexander Hawkins as the Outstanding Data Project for 2023 for their project, "Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) in Diverticulitis." This project identified higher overall PROMs scores related to quality of life in patients who chose to pursue elective colectomy after consultation for recurrent diverticulitis.
CURRENT RESEARCH	Dr. Ford continue her work on a preoperative weight loss program for our patients suffering from morbid obesity. Dr. Younan is working on a project to assess decisional conflict in patients considering colectomy for diverticulitis. Adam Fahey is a third-year medical student working with Dr. Hawkins on "Identifying Barriers and Facilitators for De-implementation of Prescribing Antibiotics for Acute Uncomplicated Diverticulitis"
PAPERS	The group had 18 papers published in the second half of 2025. They follow on the next page.
PRESENTATIONS	The section had five separate research abstracts accepted for presentation at the 2025 <i>American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons</i> meeting. Abstracts were authored by Drs. Williams, Younan, and Ali along with multiple faculty members. Aimal Khan and Alexander Hawkins gave Grand Rounds on Anastomotic Leaks at VUMC.
BOARDS	Drs. Ford, Beck and Hawkins served as examiners for the 2024 ABCRS Oral Examinations. In unrelated news, our former fellow Sal Parascandola successfully passed his boards.
DEADLINES	The deadline for abstract submission for the 2025 ACS Clinical Congress is March 3, 2025 at 1:00 pm CT.
SUPPORT	The Center received generous gifts from JC McNight, Monty Criswell and John Vitucci. These gifts will support numerous programs within our center. Please consider supporting our work.
WEBPAGE	Visit our webpage! https://www.vumc.org/vcrg/homepage
COMMENTS, CORRECTIONS, COLLABORATION	Contact Alexander Hawkins at alex.hawkins@vumc.org or +1.617.480.9014.

Published papers:

Keller SR, Rosen A, Lewis MA, Park HK, Babyak R, Feldman J, Ye F, Agarwal R, Ciombor KK, Geiger TM, Eng C, Hunzinger KJ, Viskochil , Roach MK, Velez, Edwards DR, Cote ML, Holowatyj AN. Patient-Reported Discussions on Fertility Preservation Before Early-Onset Cancer Treatment. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2024 Nov 4;7(11):e2444540. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.44540. PMID: 39531236; PMCID: PMC11558471.

Bauer PS, Gamboa AC, Otegbeye EE, Chapman WC Jr, Rivard S, Regenbogen S, Hrebinko KA, Holder-Murray J, Wiseman JT, Ejaz A, Edwards-Hollingsworth K, Hawkins AT, Hunt SR, Balch GC, Wise PE. Short-Course TNT Improves Rectal Tumor Downstaging in a Retrospective Study of the US Rectal Cancer Consortium. *J Surg Oncol*. 2024 Oct 13. doi: 10.1002/jso.27908. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 39400312.

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Altman-Merino A, Bonnet K, Schlundt D, Wrenn J, Self WH, Gordon EJ, Hawkins AT. Patient Perspectives on Evolving Diverticulitis Treatment: An Assessment of Patient Willingness to Enroll in a Randomized Controlled Trial. *Ann Surg Open*. 2024 Sep 5;5(3):e476. doi: 10.1097/AS9.0000000000000476. PMID: 39310344; PMCID: PMC11415118.

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Ewing JK, Cassling KE, Hanneman MA, Broucek JR, Raymond BL, Pierce RA, Geiger TM, Bradley JF 3rd. Development of an Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Program in Ventral Hernia. *Am Surg*. 2024 Sep;90(9):2258-2264. doi: 10.1177/00031348241268330. Epub 2024 Aug 3. PMID: 39096287.

Muldoon RL, Bethurum AJ, Gamboa AC, Zhang K, Ye F, Regenbogen SE, Abdel- Misih S, Ejaz A, Wise PE, Silveira M, Holder-Murray J, Balch GC, Hawkins AT. Comparison of outcomes of abdominoperineal resection vs low anterior resection in very-low rectal cancer. *J Gastrointest Surg*. 2024 Sep;28(9):1450-1455. doi: 10.1016/j.gassur.2024.06.008. Epub 2024 Jun 17. PMID: 38897287.

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