

Bios of Speakers, Panelists and Moderators



Emmanuel Aladenika (University of Iowa)

Emmanuel Aladenika holds a Bachelor of Science in Physiology and a Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree from the University of Lagos, Nigeria. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Oral Sciences at the University of Iowa and conducts his research at the Butali Laboratory. His research interest is focused on identifying genetic determinants of orofacial clefts (OFC). Emmanuel actively contributes to scientific discourse by presenting his works at local (Iowa AADOCR, Iowa Pediatrics Research Day), national (AADOCR, SCGDB, ASHG) and international (IADR). With eight publications, several papers under review and numerous significant contributions to other papers, Emmanuel's dedication to advancing scientific knowledge is evident. Emmanuel will be sharing his ongoing research on the utilization of whole genome sequencing (WGS) data of Africans with OFC in the Butali laboratory, WGS data of individuals in the All of Us database, mice genomic data from Facebase (Axel Visel's group), mice genomic data from Eric Van Otterloo's group and human genomic data from Justin Cotney's group; to identify the contributions of non-coding variants to OFC development.



Alejandro Bugacov, PhD (University of Southern California)

Alejandro Bugacov is a Computer Scientist at the USC Information Sciences Institute (ISI) where he works as the Data Scientist for the NIDCR funded FaceBase Project in the ISI Informatics Systems Research Division.

Bugacov joined ISI in 1999. He obtained his PhD in Physics from USC and his Licenciatura en Fisica from the Universidad Nacional

de Rosario in Argentina.



Jeffrey Bush, PhD (University of California, San Francisco)

Dr. Bush is the Barber Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Cell and Tissue Biology and part of the Program in Craniofacial Biology at UCSF. He performed his Ph.D. training in mouse genetics and craniofacial biology in the lab of Rulang Jiang at the University of Rochester, where he focused on positional cloning of a mutation that causes cleft lip and palate in mice. He performed his postdoctoral work in the laboratory of Philippe Soriano at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and Mount Sinai School of Medicine where he interrogated the signaling mechanisms by which the EPHRIN-B1 signaling protein regulates axon guidance and craniofacial morphogenesis.

In 2011, Jeff began his independent lab focused on signaling control of mammalian morphogenesis. Understanding this control is of fundamental importance because birth defects are the leading cause of death for infants during the first year of life. The Bush lab has made discoveries on how the EPH/EPHRIN signaling family regulates cell position and tissue shape in craniofacial development, has uncovered cellular mechanisms of tissue fusion in lip and secondary palate development, and more recently, has also focused on early stages of trachea and esophagus morphogenesis. To do so, the Bush lab utilizes mouse genetics technologies, has developed novel live imaging approaches, and established the first human induced pluripotent stem cell model of a craniofacial structural syndrome, craniofrontonasal syndrome. The Bush lab combines these approaches with biophysical and genomic assays to better understand the cellular and molecular control of mammalian morphogenesis.



Yang Chai, DDS, PhD (University of Southern California)

Dr. Yang Chai is the University Professor and the George and MaryLou Boone Chair in Craniofacial Biology at the University of Southern California. He serves as the Director of the Center for Craniofacial Molecular Biology (CCMB) and Associate Dean of Research at the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC. Dr. Chai earned a DMD degree from Peking University School of Stomatology where he also did his residency in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery as well as DDS and PhD in Craniofacial Biology from the University of Southern California. He is most noted for his research on the molecular and cellular mechanisms of craniofacial development and birth defects, which has led to the successful rescue of cleft palate and suture regeneration in craniosynostosis in preclinical studies. He studies stem cells and is currently using

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innovative 3D-printed scaffolds seeded with stem cells to regenerate tissue for patients who have lost bone due to trauma, congenital defects, or disease.

Dr. Chai is a member of the National Academy of Medicine. He is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) and the National Academy of Inventors Senior Member. Dr. Chai has authored more than 180 scientific papers and numerous book chapters, and recently edited a book - *Craniofacial Development*. Dr. Chai has been continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health for more than 25 years. His work has earned him multiple awards including the 2011 IADR (International Association of Dental Research) Distinguished Scientist Award and 2023 Paul Goldhaber Award from Harvard University School of Dental Medicine.



Alicia Chou, M.S. (NIDCR)

Alicia Chou, M.S., is the Director of the Translational Genetics and Genomics Program at the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research at NIH. In addition to this role, she is actively involved in implementing the Genomic Data Sharing Policy and Data Management and Sharing Policy at the institute and serves as NIDCR's Genomic Program Administrator and Co-Chair of the NIDCR Data Access Committee. Prior to joining NIDCR, Alicia supported the Critical Path to Tuberculosis Drug Regimens initiative for seven years in her role as

Project Manager at two nonprofit organizations, Critical Path Institute and Reagan-Udall Foundation for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), where she provided oversight for several projects that entailed coordination of biomarker discovery efforts, sequencing data submission, regulatory engagement with FDA, budget management, and community engagement. Before moving into project management, Alicia was a research technician in the Laboratory of Mycobacterial Diseases and Cellular Immunity at FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER). She holds a B.A. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Clark University and an M.S. in Biohazardous Threat Agents and Emerging Infectious Diseases from Georgetown University.



Devin Feigelson (Operation Smile)

Devin Feigelson has served as the Project Manager for the International Family Study at Operation Smile for the past five years. She completed her Bachelor of Science at Brandeis University with a double major in Psychology and Health: Science, Society, & Policy, receiving honors. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Public Health in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Johns Hopkins with a concentration in global health, expecting to graduate this winter.

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She is passionate about combining modern scientific methods with cultural understanding and international collaboration to implement sustainable, effective health interventions that can reduce global health disparities.



Jesse A. Goldstein, MD, FAAP, FACS (Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh)

Dr. Jesse A Goldstein is Professor of Plastic Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Endowed Chair for Pediatric Plastic Surgery Research and Chief of the Division of Plastic Surgery at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. He trained in Plastic Surgery at Georgetown University Hospital and Craniofacial Surgery at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. He was recruited to Pitt shortly after finishing training 11 years ago. At Pitt, he serves as the Program Director for the Pediatric Plastic and Craniofacial Surgery Fellowship, Director of the Cleft and

Craniofacial Center, and Associate Program Director of the Department of Plastic Surgery Residency Program.

Dr. Goldstein has authored over 130 peer-reviewed articles and 20 book chapters. He has served on several study sections for the NIH and currently co-chairs the Plastic Surgery Foundation clinical grants review committee. His research focuses on diagnostic machine learning and imaging for craniosynostosis, as well as outcomes of craniofacial surgery, surgical education and health services. He has had continuous federal grant support for his research since 2018.

Dr. Goldstein's life at home is just as full as his professional life, with a supportive wife and three boys and a girl ranging in age from 8 to 8 months.



Derk Joester, PhD (Northwestern)

Derk Joester is originally from Munich (Bavaria, Germany) and studied Chemistry in Tübingen. He traveled to the US on a Fulbright Scholarship to study Chemistry and Biochemistry, and then went on to get his Diploma in Organic Chemistry at ETH Zurich, Switzerland, in 1998. He received his Ph.D. for work carried out in organic supramolecular chemistry with Prof. François Diederich at ETH Zurich in 2003, and in the same year became a Postdoctoral Fellow at Weizmann Institute of Science in the lab of Prof. Lia Addadi in the

Department of Structural Biology. From 2005-2007 he continued his research at the Weizmann Institute as a Minerva Fellow. In September 2007 he accepted a position at the Materials Science & Engineering Department at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, where he currently is an

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Associate Professor. His research interests include biological mechanisms of crystal growth, the role of organic/inorganic interfaces and confinement in phase transformations, metastable precursor phases, and the structure and properties of mineralized tissues with hierarchical architectures. His lab pioneered the application of atom probe tomography to biomineralized tissues and has contributed to the fundamental understanding of structure and composition of dental enamel.

Carrie Heike, MD, MS (Seattle Children's Hospital)

Carrie Heike, MD, MS, is a pediatrician at Seattle Children's Hospital, Professor in the University of Washington School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics and Interim co-Director of the Center for Clinical and Translational Research at Seattle Children's Research Institute. She conducts clinical research focused on the epidemiology and etiology of craniofacial conditions, along with outcomes of craniofacial care. Her research includes partnerships with interdisciplinary stakeholders and relies on fundamental concepts of team science.



Jan Hu, BDS, PhD (University of Michigan)

Dr. Jan Hu received her BDS from National Taiwan University in 1985. She joined the University of Southern California (USC) where she received a specialty certificate in pediatric dentistry in 1988 and earned her Ph.D. in craniofacial biology in 1990. She was a postdoc fellow at the Center for Craniofacial Molecular Biology mentored by Dr. Harold Slavkin. Currently, she is professor of the Biologic and Molecular Biology & Prosthodontics at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry.

Dr. Hu's research concentrates on determining the underlying genetic etiology of inherited disorders affecting human dentitions. From molecular cloning, recombinant protein expression to targeted gene knockout and gene editing, her group has discovered and systematically characterized many genes critical for dental enamel and dentin formation.



Junichi Iwata (University of Texas Health)

Dr. Iwata is a Professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Dentistry. His research is focused on craniofacial biology; especially he is interested in membrane trafficking systems regulated by cellular metabolism, cell signaling, and non-coding RNAs in craniofacial development and diseases (e.g. cleft lip with/without cleft palate, tooth developmental defects, Sjögren's disease, craniofacial skeletal defects).

His ultimate research goal is to develop new diagnostic tools and therapeutic interventions for the care and cure of these craniofacial and dental disorders.



Ethylin Wang Jabs, M.D. (Mayo Clinic)

Ethylin Wang Jabs is the Enterprise Chair of the Department of Clinical Genomics for Mayo Clinic. She is an adjunct Professor of the Department of Genetics and Genomic Sciences at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. At Johns Hopkins University, she is an adjunct Professor of Genetic Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics and served as the Director of the Center for Craniofacial Development and Disorders. Dr. Jabs was a member of the NIDCR Board of Scientific Councilors and is currently a member of the NIH National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council. She served as President of the Society of Craniofacial Genetics. She is an advisory board member of The Smile Train, Moebius Syndrome Foundation, and Born a Hero – Research Foundation. She is an editor of the book, *Genomics in the Clinic*. She has been on the editorial board for *Genetics in Medicine* and *Pediatric Research*. Dr. Jabs is a practicing clinical geneticist, board certified in clinical genetics, cytogenetics, molecular genetics, and pediatrics.

Her research group has published on more than 50 human disorders and identified the disease genes for more than 20 genetic syndromes in homeobox and helix-loop-helix transcription factors, fibroblast growth factor receptors, and connexins. Her research focus has been on the developmental genomics of craniofacial disorders. Current experimentation used includes high throughput sequencing technology along with RNA expression and protein interaction studies in animal, organoid, biochemical, and iPSC cellular systems. Large data studies deposited into FaceBase are elucidating the pathogenetic mechanisms of mutations, signaling pathways and networks involved in abnormal processes as well as phenotype-genotype correlations. Her group has been collaborating in population association studies on non-syndromic oral clefting and craniosynostosis. Therapeutic strategies are being tested in mouse models to ameliorate craniofacial dysmorphologies.



Carl Kesselman, PhD (University of Southern California)

Dr. Kesselman leads ISI's Informatics Systems Research division. Created to understand how to build informatics systems that can help tackle the hardest problems of great societal impact, the work of the division spans grid computing, information security, service-oriented architectures, and sociotechnical systems and reproducibility.

Kesselman is an ISI Fellow, the Institute's highest honor. One of the fathers of grid computing and the GLOBUS open-source toolbox, now the de facto grid computing standard, he has received numerous honors for his pioneering research including the Lovelace Medal from the British Computer Society and the Goode Memorial Award from the IEEE Computer Society. He is a Fellow of the British Computer Society and the Association for Computing Machinery.

Kesselman joined ISI in 1997 as a USC Computer Science Department research associate professor. Kesselman received his PhD in Computer Science from the University of California at Los Angeles, an MS in Electrical Engineering from the University of Southern California and a BS in Electrical Engineering from the State University of New York at Buffalo.



Stephanie Kraft, JD (University of Washington)

Stephanie Kraft, JD, is an Assistant Professor in the University of Washington School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics and Director of Research at the Treuman Katz Center for Pediatric Bioethics and Palliative Care at Seattle Children's Research Institute. She conducts conceptual and empirical research on issues related to ethics and equity in the conduct of clinical research and the implementation of emerging biomedical technologies. Her research aims to promote trustworthy research that reflects participant and community values.



Mary L. Marazita, PhD, FACMG (University of Pittsburgh)

Dr. Marazita received her Ph.D. in Genetics from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in 1980. After a postdoc at the University of Southern California, she held faculty positions at UCLA then the Medical College of Virginia (Virginia Commonwealth University). She joined the University of Pittsburgh in 1993. Currently she is a Distinguished Professor and Vice Chair of the Department of Oral and Craniofacial Sciences, University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine, with secondary appointments in Human Genetics (School of Public Health) and in Clinical and Translational Sciences (School of Medicine). She is the Founder and Co-Director of the Pitt Center for Craniofacial and Dental Genetics (a University Center of Excellence)

and is a Founding Fellow of the American College of Medical Genetics.

Dr. Marazita's research program applies the techniques of genomics, statistical genetics and genetic epidemiology to multiple complex human traits including craniofacial birth defects, oral health traits, normal facial development, behavioral traits, premature birth, and others. She has had many years of experience in research with more than 480 publications to date, and continuous NIH funding as a PD/PI (primarily in craniofacial and dental genetics) since 1985.

The overriding themes of her research program to date include: emphasis on dental/oral/craniofacial primary phenotypes, emphasis on disparities in oral health and disease, emphasis on children's health conditions (e.g. dental caries and birth defects) in the context of their families, and emphasis on deep phenotyping to better understand our genetic findings. Dr. Marazita's major research contributions include ground-breaking studies of genetics/genomics and phenotypes in nonsyndromic orofacial cleft (OFC) families from many ethnicities; pioneering genetic studies of oral and dental diseases; and multidisciplinary studies of oral health disparities incorporating the metagenome, host genome, behaviors, and environment. Her studies have led to collaborations with colleagues across the USA, and in more than 15 other countries, representing all continents except Antarctica.



Christy M. McKinney, Ph.D., M.P.H. (University of Washington)

Christy McKinney, PhD, MPH is an Associate Professor of Craniofacial Medicine in Pediatrics in the School of Medicine at the University of Washington (UW). She is an epidemiologist and translational scientist focused on generating new knowledge and tools that directly translate into improved care and better health in young children with oral and craniofacial conditions. Her research interests include nutrition and growth, early feeding, and environmental exposures in young children in high- and limited-resource settings. She has a passion for team science and for training the next generation of translational health researchers.



Noffisat Oki, PhD (NIDCR)

Dr. Oki is the Program Director for the Data Science, Computational Biology, and Bioinformatics Program at the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), Division of Extramural Research, Translational Genomics Research Branch. Dr. Oki also serves as the Project Scientist for the FaceBase Program. Prior to joining NIDCR, Dr. Oki was at the Center for Scientific Review (CSR) of NIH, where she served as a Scientific Review Officer managing application reviews in the area of biomodelling and data analysis.

Prior to moving to CSR, she was an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Science and Technology Policy Fellow, in the Office of Data Science and Emerging Technologies at the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). There she contributed to establishing data science policy and the office's initial data science portfolio. Before joining NIH, she held several industry positions, including working as a bioinformatics scientist in research and product development, product marketing, community building, and publishing primarily in the computational toxicology field. Dr. Oki earned her PhD in bioinformatics from North Carolina State University where she worked on developing computational methods for detecting genetic susceptibility to disease. As a postdoctoral fellow at the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Lab of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NC, her research focused on computational approaches to predicting adverse outcome pathways of relevance to human and environmental health outcomes.

Jay Patel, BDS, MS, PhD (Temple University)



Dr. Patel is Director of the Center for Dental Informatics and Artificial Intelligence at Temple University School of Dentistry. Dr. Patel is a dentist, informaticist, and clinical scientist, and he holds a Master's and PhD in Informatics. Dr. Patel's research endeavors revolve around the strategic utilization of vast electronic health record data (EHR) and the application of advanced artificial intelligence (AI) methods to improve patient care and outcomes. His primary focus is developing prediction models that accurately assess the risk of initiation and progression of dental diseases. By identifying high-risk patients, Dr. Patel aims to enhance preventive measures and promote proactive dental healthcare practices. In addition to his expertise in EHR analysis, Dr. Patel also has expertise in phenotyping dental diagnoses through state-of-the-art informatics methods such as natural language processing and machine learning models through EHR data. This proficiency enables him to extract invaluable insights from EHR data, facilitating precise characterization of various dental conditions.

Dr. Patel has also developed numerous clinical decision support and learning health systems. These cutting-edge tools are designed to foster data-driven practices, empowering healthcare professionals to make informed decisions and significantly elevate the quality of patient care. Dr. Patel's visionary approach has proven instrumental in bridging the gap between medical and dental care, improving health information exchange between providers, and facilitating the utilization of harmonized datasets for clinical research, patient care and quality improvement.



Laura Pearlman, Computer Scientist (University of Southern California)

Laura Pearlman is a Computer Scientist at USC's Information Sciences Institute and a member of the FaceBase Hub, the craniofacial research data hub for NIH/NIDCR and the Analysis, Technology, Leadership, Administration, and Science - Data to Knowledge (ATLAS-D2K) Center, a research hub devoted to mouse and human data for the kidney and lower urinary tract for NIH/NIDDK. She has worked with a number of large-scale grid computing projects, including the Biomedical Informatics Research Network (NIH/NCRR) and NEESgrid, the system integration component of the Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation (NSF). She received her BS in Mathematics from MIT.



Antonio R. Porras, PhD (University of Colorado Denver and Children's Hospital Colorado)

Dr. Antonio Porras is an assistant professor at the Department of Biostatistics and Informatics of the University of Colorado | Anschutz Medical Campus, and Research Director of Pediatric Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Children's Hospital Colorado. After obtaining his PhD in medical image computing in 2015 in Barcelona, Spain, he moved to Children's National Hospital in Washington, DC, to work on diverse pediatric imaging research projects. After realizing that most existing computational models and tools to study craniofacial disorders were designed for adult populations and were inadequate to study pediatric pathology, he obtained a K99 Pathway to Independence award by NIDCR to build specific methods to study craniofacial development. This award also supported his formal, clinical and mentored training in medical genetics, embryology, developmental biology and craniofacial surgery between NHGRI, NIDCR and Children's National Hospital. In 2020, Dr. Porras founded the Medical Image Phenotyping lab at the University of Colorado and Children's Hospital Colorado. Since then, his team has received multiple research awards to investigate developmental disorders, with special interest on craniosynostosis.



Thankam Thyvalikakath, D.M.D., M.D.S., Ph.D. (Indiana University)

Dr. Thankam Thyvalikakath is the founding director of dental informatics in the Department of Dental Public Health and Dental Informatics, associate dean of the Office of Dental Informatics and Digital Health, and professor at IU School of Dentistry. As associate dean, Dr. Thyvalikakath provides strategic leadership for dental informatics and digital health, which spans the dental school's education, research, and patient care missions. She also is the founding director of the joint dental informatics program at Regenstrief Institute, Inc. and IUSD, a research scientist at the Center for Biomedical Informatics at Regenstrief Institute, Inc., and adjunct professor in the IUPUI Luddy School of Informatics, Computing and Engineering. She is an elected fellow of the American College of Medical Informatics.

Dr. Thyvalikakath earned her PhD degree in Biomedical Informatics from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. She also holds a dental degree and certificate in clinical research from the University of Pittsburgh, a dental degree from the University of Kerala, India, and a master's degree in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery from the University of Calicut, India. At IUSD, she teaches in the Comprehensive Care Clinics and dental informatics courses in the graduate program. She mentors student researchers as well as faculty.

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Dr. Thyvalikakath is an international leader in dental and health informatics and holds numerous federal grants to support her research. Her research focuses on integrating different data sources such as electronic dental and health record data for clinical research; evaluating and implementing human centered artificial intelligence applications to enhance clinicians' and patients' treatment decisions; and facilitating health information exchange to promote coordinated care between medical and dental care providers.



Robert Schuler, PhD (University of Southern California)

Dr. Schuler is a Senior Computer Scientist, Research Lead at the USC Information Sciences Institute (ISI). Currently, he is the technical lead for the FaceBase Data Hub (www.facebase.org), the craniofacial research data hub for the NIH/NIDCR. Prior to FaceBase, he was a member of the leadership team of the Biomedical Informatics Research Network (NIH/NCRR) and led the development and deployment of large-scale research data Grids including a multi-site collaborative functional neuroimaging grid and a veterinary pathology network for the national primate research centers.

Prior to BIRN, he was a senior developer of the open source Globus project (NSF, DOE), developing Grid computing technology used widely throughout the "Big Sciences" of high energy physics, earth and climate research, serving the likes of Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO). During that time, he was also a member of the architecture team for the Earth System Grid (DOE); the data hub that supported the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). He earned his B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Southern California.



Zubaida Saifudeen, Ph.D. (NIH/NIDCR)

Zubaida Saifudeen, Ph.D., is Program Director of the Developmental Biology and Genetics Program in the Translational Genomics Research Branch of the Division of Extramural Research at NIDCR. The Program supports basic and clinical research to understand developmental processes within the craniofacial complex. Dr. Saifudeen comes to NIDCR from the Center for Scientific Review at the NIH where she was a Scientific Review Officer. In this role she managed the review of Research Grant applications under various mechanisms mostly pertaining to developmental

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biology and regeneration. Prior to joining CSR and NIH, Dr. Saifudeen was Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Tulane University in New Orleans where in her role as a principal investigator she conducted research in developmental nephrology, specifically on metabolic and transcriptional regulation of progenitor cell fate during kidney development using mouse embryos and iPSC-derived kidney organoids as model systems.

Dr. Saifudeen received her Bachelor of Science degree from St. Xavier's College, University of Bombay, India. She went on to receive a MS degree in Molecular Biology from Northeastern University, Boston, and earned her Ph.D. from Tulane University in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology studying DNA methylation and transcription regulation by methylated DNA binding proteins.



Aki Ushiki, PhD (University of California, San Francisco)

Dr. Ushiki earned her PhD from the University of Tsukuba, Japan, and subsequently pursued postdoctoral research in Dr. Nadav Ahituv's lab at UCSF. Her research interests lie in the field of skeletal development and diseases, with a primary focus on enhancers. Additionally, she is involved in the development of high-throughput enhancer assay technology in mice. Currently, her research is supported by NHGRI K99 funding.



Vidhya Venkateswaran, B.D.S., M.P.H., Ph.D. (NIH/NIDCR)

Dr. Venkateswaran is NIDCR's first Data and Technology Advancement (DATA) National Service Scholar. In this role, she works closely with Dr. Lu Wang, Senior Advisor of Data Science, and NIDCR leadership in developing and curating resources to advance data science-driven research in oral and craniofacial diseases. Dr. Venkateswaran holds a B.D.S. and specialty training in Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology from University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She also earned an M.P.H. in Epidemiology from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and a Ph.D. in oral biology and bioinformatics from UCLA. Her doctoral thesis and resultant publications focused on leveraging big data and electronic health records in the study of oral and craniofacial diseases and risk factors.



**Jennifer Webster-Cyriaque, D.D.S., Ph.D.,
Acting Director, National Institute of Dental and
Craniofacial Research**

Dr. Jennifer Webster-Cyriaque is the acting director of National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health. An accomplished clinician, researcher, and leader, Dr. Webster-Cyriaque had previously served as a faculty member at the University of North Carolina (UNC) schools of dentistry and medicine for more than two decades. As a tenured full professor at UNC, Dr. Webster-Cyriaque also served as the attending on clinical service at the UNC Hospital's dental clinic. While there, she led research into a potential etiologic agent for salivary gland disease in patients living with HIV, assessed the oral microbiome and its implications for cancer-causing viruses, and studied the impact of the oral microbiome and oral health on HIV outcomes.

In addition to her research, Dr. Webster-Cyriaque has held leadership roles as the chair/vice chair of the Oral HIV/AIDS Research Alliance, as research director at the National Dental Association Foundation, as director of postdoctoral CTSA training, along with multiple roles within the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research and the International Association for Dental Research. Since 2004, she has led the UNC Malawi project and provided assistance in founding Malawi's first dental school in 2019.

Dr. Webster-Cyriaque earned her Ph.D. in microbiology/immunology from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 1998, her D.D.S. from SUNY Buffalo in 1992, and her B.A. in biology and interdisciplinary social science from SUNY Buffalo in 1988.



Kenneth Yamada, M.D., PhD (NIDCR)

Dr. Yamada is an NIH Distinguished Investigator. His research focuses on the dynamics and mechanisms of cell-cell and cell-matrix interactions during cell migration and embryonic development. Ken received MD and PhD degrees from Stanford. He was an NCI Section Chief for 10 years and has been Chief of the NIDCR Cell Biology Section since 1990. Ken has published more than 450 papers cited more than 60,000 times on topics ranging from salivary gland development to cell adhesion, migration, and cancer invasion.