

# BRC Newsletter

**News, Events, and More!**

Be sure to check out the entire newsletter to see upcoming events, seminars, and conferences.



---

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
Blood Research  
Center

---

**Issue 16,  
May 2026**

---



# Awards, Publications and more...



**Wolfgang Bergmeier, PhD**, and his lab are uncovering how platelet dysfunction affects bleeding and clotting in patients

The Bergmeier Lab researchers are shaping more effective transfusion strategies and new combination therapies to improve patient care. Platelets are the body's first responders. By studying how platelets function in both health and disease, researchers are uncovering new approaches to treat complex conditions and save lives.



[Watch YouTube Video](#)



**Nirupama Ramadas, PhD and Erica Sparkenbaugh, PhD**  
published in 'Blood Advances'



Recently published their study "Targeting PAR1 Biased Signaling with Parmodulin Reduces Thromboinflammation and Acute Lung Injury in Sickle Cell Disease" in Blood Advances. UNC BRC undergraduate alumni Joshua Dutton and Kailyn Lowder are co-authors. Drs Rani Sellers and Claire Kazen performed veterinary histopathology. Drs. Jacob DeRousse and Chris Dockendorff provided reagents.



[Link to publication](#)

# Awards, Publications and more...



**Steven Hur, PhD and Matthew Flick, PhD,** article has been chosen as one of the two “Featured” articles in the March 2026 issue of ATVB

Published work: “Urokinase Plasminogen Activator Deficiency Delays the Development of Obesity and Metabolic Sequelae” published in Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology (ATVB).

[Read more here](#)



**Steve Hur, PhD,** receives AHA Career Development Award

**Steve Hur, PhD** was selected to receive a Career Development Award from the American Heart Association totaling \$77,000 every year for the next three years.

# Awards, Publications and more...

**Mofiyin Obadina, MD and Erica Sparkenbaugh, PhD** received funding from NC TRaCS



Funding awarded for their TTSA proposal entitled “Hypoxemia-Induced Platelet Activation in Sickle Cell Disease Pregnancy: Mechanisms and Therapeutic Targets.” This award supports the development of new interdisciplinary collaborations and projects.

Dr. Obadina and Dr. Sparkenbaugh will explore the effect of nocturnal hypoxemia on aberrant platelet activation and adverse pregnancy outcomes in women with sickle cell disease.

---

## **Erica Sparkenbaugh, PhD** receives TTSA Award

Awarded the UNC School of Medicine Office of Research Translational Team Science Award (TTSA) pilot grant for her application titled “Hypoxemia-Induced Platelet Activation in Sickle Cell Disease Pregnancy: Mechanisms and Therapeutic Targets”. The team includes Erica Sparkenbaugh, PhD and Mofiyin Obadina, MD from the Department of Medicine.

# Awards, Publications and more...



**Robert H. Lee, PhD, Wolfgang Bergmeier, PhD, Matthew J. Flick, PhD, and Steve Hur, PhD** wrote an article featured in Blood online publication titled "The fibrinogen  $\alpha$ C region promotes arterial thrombosis in the context of hypofibrinogenemia"

Published collaborative paper in Blood, 1st author is Robert Lee - senior author is Steve Hur (Pathology). Paper describes new findings on the role of fibrinogen  $\alpha$ C-region in arterial thrombosis in hypofibrinogenemic conditions, establishing a link to platelets via the glycoprotein VI receptor. "The fibrinogen  $\alpha$ C region promotes arterial thrombosis in the context of hypofibrinogenemia"

[Link to publication](#)

**Kadri Kangro, PhD** of the Flick Lab first authored in ATVB

Kadri Kangro, Samer Issa, Alisa Wolberg and Matthew Flick authored "SARS-CoV-2 spike protein can bind fibrin(ogen), but does not alter plasma fibrin formation, clot structure, or lysis"

[Link to publication](#)



# Awards, Publications and more...

**Stephan Moll, MD**, UNC BRC member, and **Steven Grover, PhD**, former BRC member, are coinvestigators on a 5-year NASA study called ‘Venous Flow’ that studies the risk of venous thromboembolism (VTE) in zero gravity.

The past finding of a jugular deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in an astronaut on the International Space Station (ISS) [ref 2] led NASA to focus their medical research on the study of venous thromboembolism (VTE) – risk factors, etiology, diagnosis, prevention and treatment.

## References

1. [NASA’s SpaceX Crew-12 to Study Adaptation to Altered Gravity – NASA](#)

2. Auñón-Chancellor S et al. Venous Thrombosis during Spaceflight. *N Engl J Med* 2020; Jan 2;382(1):89-90. [Link to publication](#)

3. [Link to NASA publication](#)



**Matthew Vander Ploeg**, a graduate student in BCBP and a member of the BRC in Dr. Bergmeier’s lab, published his first author manuscript in *Blood Advances*.

The study describes the development of high-throughput platelet migration assay, facilitated by novel deep learning-based image analysis pipeline. Using this new platform, Matt was able to show that platelet migration depends on precise regulation of integrin signaling and results in release of bioactive microvesicles.

# Awards, Publications and more...

**Wolfgang Bergmeier, PhD** receives NIH/NHLBI R35 Outstanding Investigator Award.

The award is intended to “promote scientific productivity and innovation by providing long-term support and increased flexibility to experienced Principal Investigators ... whose outstanding record of research demonstrate their ability to make major contributions to the heart, lung, blood and sleep (HLBS) research.”

Proposal Title: Novel pathways and mechanisms underlying disorders of platelet count and/or function.



**Matthew Flick, PhD**, receives Award from Glycos Biomedical



Award from Glycos Biomedical Ltd. for his work entitled "GBM-1511 as Adjunctive Sepsis Therapeutic for Staphylococcus Aureus and Streptococcus Pneumonia”.

# Awards, Publications and more...

**Abigail Ballard-Kordeliski, PhD**, former graduate student and member of the Bergmeier Lab, published paper in *Haematologica*.

Published paper in *Haematologica*. Paper describes new mechanistic findings on role of small G proteins in platelet pro-coagulant response.

[Link to publication](#)



**David Paul, PhD** and **David Rocco** from the Bergmeier Lab publish co-first author paper in *Blood*



Bergmeier lab members published and co-first authored paper in *Blood* describing a new signaling pathway critical for platelet adhesion under arterial shear conditions. The findings of this study markedly improve our understanding of G protein signaling and integrin function in platelets, with potential implications for the development of improved platelet-targeted therapies for cardiovascular disease.

[Link to publication](#)

# Awards, Publications and more...

Key Lab publishes study demonstrating the utility of a novel assay of fibrinolytic activation in post-partum hemorrhage

**Anton Ilich, MD and Nigel Key, MD**



In a study collaboration with colleagues from the Universities of Cardiff and Aberdeen in the UK, Anton Ilich and Nigel Key authored a study demonstrating the ability of their novel in-house fibrinolytic activation screening test ('FAST') to detect the severe and potentially lethal form of PPH, known as acute obstetric coagulopathy. The paper was published in 'Blood Advances'.

[Link to publication](#)

**Yohei Hisada, PhD** delivered an invited talk at the International Conference on Thrombosis and Hemostasis Issues in Cancer [13th Thrombosis & Hemostasis Issues in Cancer](#)

The title of the presentation was "Tissue Factor-Driven Coagulopathy and Bleeding in Acute Leukemia: Clinical and Preclinical Insights."



# 12th Symposium on Hemostasis Recap

12<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Hemostasis - April 21-23, 2026  
Carolina Inn, Chapel Hill



**SOLD OUT**

The symposium had over 198 participants and received several educational grants to support this event. Well done!



Congratulations to Erica Sparkenbaugh, PhD, Karin Leidmerman, PhD and Robert Campbell, PhD on a successful and sold out event!



# 12th Symposium Recap



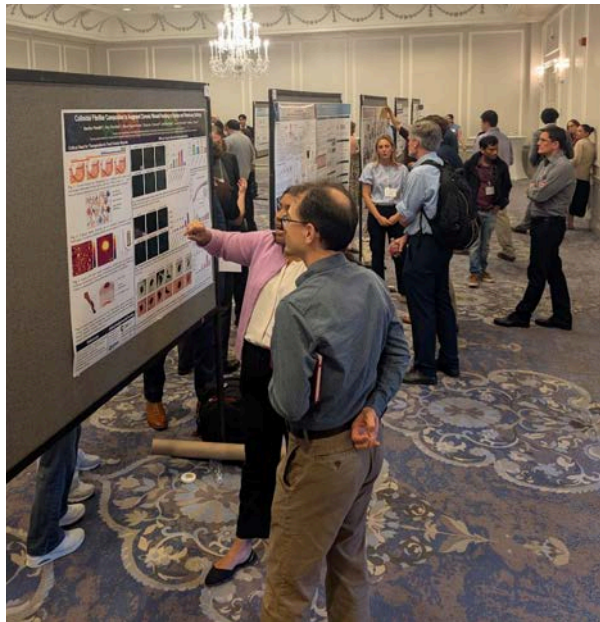
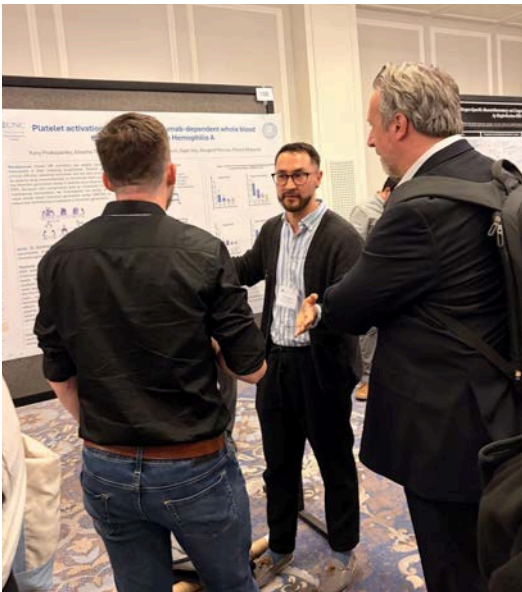
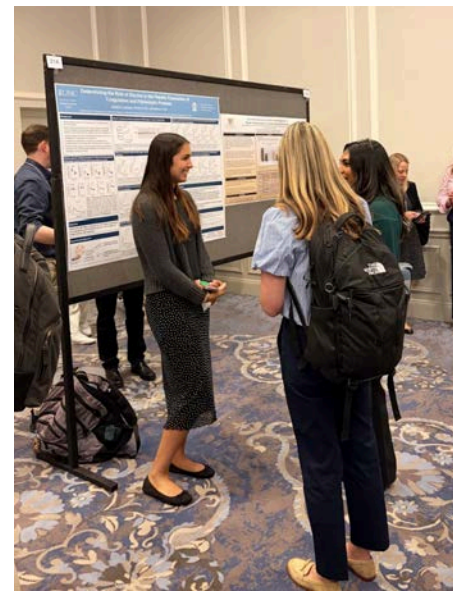
# 12th Symposium Recap



Congratulations to our winners!  
Katherine DeFoe/Leanna Dover, Izabella  
Andrianova, Joanna Miklosz, Matt Vander Ploeg,  
Ana Shendan-Munana and Leyi Zhang



# 12th Symposium Recap



Enjoy more photos from this event!

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/dv1mWVzqYkqTAhqH9>

# Events - Seminars - FYIs

## BRC Seminar Series- UPDATE

Stay tuned for upcoming speakers!

Spring Seminar Series in process~  
additional speakers coming soon...

**May 15<sup>th</sup>**

Michele Lambert

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Host: Alexandra Borst

**May 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Satheesh Chonat

Emory University

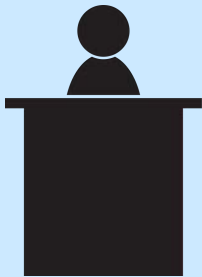
Host: Rafal Pawlinski

**May 29<sup>th</sup>**

Jing-Fei Dong

Bloodworks Northwest

Host: Wolfgang Bergmeier



Seminar Coordinator: [micah\\_martin@med.unc.edu](mailto:micah_martin@med.unc.edu)

# Odds & Ends

Now posting on [Blue Sky!](#)



We want your good news (publications, grants, awards, etc.) to be shared to our followers~

Username: [is@unc-brc.bsky.social](#)

Send to your info to [micah\\_martin@med.unc.edu](mailto:micah_martin@med.unc.edu) for social media posting!

---



**BRC Wellbeing Hub in MEJ!**

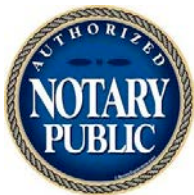
Space created to help quiet your mind and reconnect to find your Zen!

More resources on the DOM Wellness page~



[DOM Wellness information](#)

---



Need something notarized?

Send an email to:  
[megan\\_noble@med.unc.edu](mailto:megan_noble@med.unc.edu)

Send any events, seminars, news items, etc. to Micah Martin, Megan Noble or Christine if you'd like them to be featured in the next quarterly newsletter!