



**Boston
Children's
Hospital**

Until every child is wellSM

Postdoctoral Association Newsletter

June 2018

Postdoc Survey

Last summer, the PDA sent out a survey to ask postdocs about their time here at BCH. We had an outstanding response! When it was first launched in 2014 our annual survey prompted about 226 responses (25% of the fellows), 210 in 2015, 200 in 2016 (as part of the University of Chicago study), and an increase to 342 responses (38%) for 2017. In addition, you also rated your mentors in a separate survey in 2017. **Thanks to all of you who replied!** As you can imagine, the more responses we get, the better we feel the pulse of the BCH postdocs, and the more effectively we can communicate our needs to the research administration. The next survey will be sent out during the summer, so thanks in advance for taking a few minutes to participate!

The results from 2017 were discussed more in detail at our Townhall meeting on May 31, but if you are interested in the statistics, feel free to contact us at postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu. Here, we want to highlight a few interesting points, and provide resources to help you tackle some more or less common postdoc-issues.

Overall, the BCH postdocs report a good relationship with PI's, describing it as "excellent", "attentive", "supportive" and "providing a wonderful environment" (amongst many other com-

ments). More than 70% (and an average rating of >4.5/5) said that their PI's are "always" willingly sharing knowledge and skills, are open to new ideas, that they encourage teamwork and offer constructive feedback when appropriate. This finding reflects the open and encouraging environment that the researchers at all levels foster here at BCH.

On the flip side, a substantial fraction of postdocs, more than 15%, said that their PIs "never", "rarely", or "sometimes" admit their mistakes, effectively deal with conflict and disagreement or provide useful career advice. 7.5% of postdocs stated that their PIs "never" treat others with dignity and respect, or are considerate, approachable and polite. Such a demeanor is unacceptable and unprofessional, and the BCH postdoc association is actively involved in advocating for postdocs to improve the postdoc experience.

At BCH, it is required for every postdoc to have an **annual assessment with their PI**. Our annual postdoc surveys from 2015 and 2017 showed that 28% of post-docs have received an annual assessment in the past 12 months (see graph below). Annual assessments are used to advise post-docs of what steps to take to advance their research and career, so ask for it if it's not proposed by your PI.

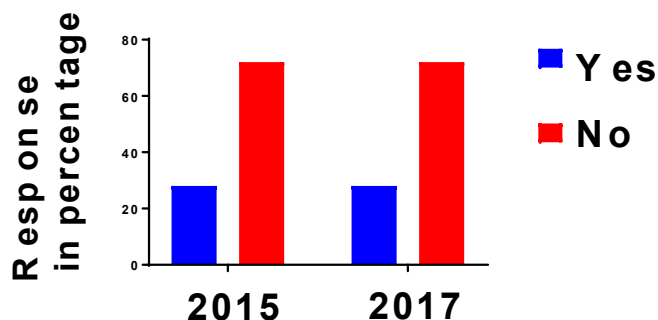
- Discuss with your PI to set up a yearly reminder for annual assessment.
- Fill out the form attached in the newsletter email or ask your admin to provide you with one!

Scientist^{Values} Students^{Latest} Meetings^{Accessible}
 Project^{Individuals} Research^{Writing} Lab^{Exceptional}
 Problem^{Nice} Support^{Career} Mentor^{Exceptional}
 Makes^{Faculty} Advice^{Plans} Lucky

Figure: wordcloud of the most frequently used terms to describe the interactions and mentoring experience with your PI.

If you do need more help learning about different career paths feel free to contact **Lu-Ann Pozzi** from the Office of Fellowship Training. Lu-Ann has extensive experience and can help

Annual Assessment in the past 12 months



with resume/cv preparation and setting up informational interviews with people from a particular field or career path. Also, the BCH-PDA provides seminars on career paths and skills.

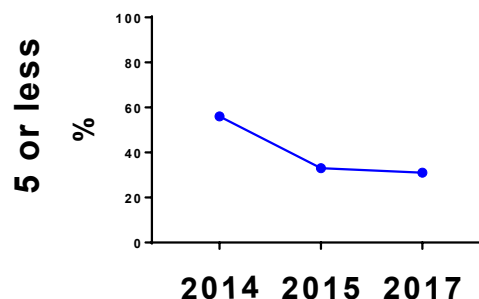
One of the survey questions was “**How appreciated do you feel in your position?**” This question was ranked from 1 (least) to 10 (most). In 2017, 31% of us answered with 5 or lower, which is an improvement compared to 2014, where 58% answered with 5 or less (see graph below). But of course, the goal is to decrease this percentage even more.

- Check out the books recommended by Melissa Broderick at the right
- In case of a conflict situation, contact Lu-Ann at OFT or the Ombudsoffice

If you have issues with your PI that you don't think can be solved with proper discussion. You can contact Lu-Ann to discuss the issue and she can try to help in identifying solutions. If it is a severe issue, then Ombuds office HMS can help in conflict resolution. It is better to start early than later.

Many postdocs also don't know that we have 5 days per year of **paid leave for professional/career development**. These days can be used to take professional classes on management, financing, entrepreneurship, and much more... so take advantage of them!

How appreciated do you feel at your post-doc job?



Media Recommendations

Melissa Brodrick leads the ombuds office at HMS, she is a professional at solving conflicts and navigating tricky situations. The office's website, <http://www.hms.harvard.edu/ombuds/>, is full of great links and resources, check it out! In addition, Melissa recommends the following books that may be helpful in solving conflicts within your group or with your PI:

Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most (Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen)

The Bully at Work: What You Can Do to Stop the Hurt and Reclaim Your Dignity on the Job (Gary Namie, Ruth Namie)

BIFF: Quick Responses to High-conflict People, Their Personal Attacks, Hostile E-mail and Social Media Meltdowns (Bill Eddy)

How to Fight (Thich Nhat Hanh)

Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In (Roger Fisher, William Ury)

Spotlight on PDA co-presidents

Get to know [Alessandro DiGioia](#) and [Colette Bichsel](#), the co-presidents of Boston Children's Postdoc Association 2018-2019!



What is your main goal as president of the BCH PDA, where do you really want to make an impact for postdocs?

AD: As current and future president of BCH PDA my goal is to improve communication and quality of life for postdoc, and to make BCH a great place to work. During this mandate we have obtained so much in terms of benefits improvements and acknowledgement of postdoc importance within BCH leadership and community and it will be my main goal to continue toward this goal.

CB: My goal is to make the postdoc experience at BCH enjoyable for everyone! Jess and Ale have done a great job this past year to get our voices heard with the BCH leadership, and I want to build on this. It's also very important to provide opportunities for postdocs to develop skills to prepare for the next career steps, with workshops on negotiation and communication for example.

What are you already super happy with that has changed for postdocs thanks to the PDA?

AD: I am happy that after many years of advocacy by PDA we have now finally obtained two of our long standing major goals: health benefit

for associated personnel and retirement benefits for postdocs. I am also super happy that now postdoc voice can be heard since we have gained a permanent seat at the Research Executive Council, the major executive body of BCH.

Which is your favorite BCH PDA event?

CB: The panel discussions and workshops organized by the career development committee are super helpful!

AD: As former co-chair of the mentoring committee I am bit biased: All star mentoring is definitely the best.

Can you give us a little background on yourself, your lab, your work?

CB: I'm in my second year of postdoc in the Vascular Biology Program, and I study vascular malformations using genetic, molecular and microfluidic tools. I'm originally from Switzerland, where I completed my studies (at EPFL) and PhD (at ETHZ and the University of Bern).

AD: Originally, I am Italian from a region called Puglia, in the beautiful south of Italy. I did my PhD at University of Lausanne, Switzerland, and I am doing my postdoc (4th year) in the lab of Dr. Engle, Kirby Neurobiology department. My major goal is using genetic and genomic tools to identify the causative genes involved in severe child disorder characterized by facial or ocular movement defects.

What is your favorite thing to do in Boston?

AD: I love to make long walks and getting lost in this beautiful city. Only in summer though :). I try to not think that winter exists, really!

CB: At the risk of sounding like an old botanist fanatic, I think that the glass flower collection of the Harvard Museum of Natural history is one of the most amazing things to see in Boston!

Favorite Boston Bar/Restaurant?

CB: The Saltie Girl is great for seafood!

AD: Well again, I am biased: Eataly, what else ;)

BCH Postdoc Achievements!

Fellows, to increase your visibility and to highlight your achievements, we decided to publish them in our quarterly newsletter and on social media. Congrats to the authors and awardees!

Publications from BCH Postdocs

Hadi Amiri, Natural Language Processing lab, "Spotting Spurious Data with Neural Networks" NAACL 2018.

Peng Du, Gregory lab, "An Intermediate Pluripotent State Controlled by MicroRNAs Is Required for the Naive-to-Primed Stem Cell Transition", Cell Stem Cell 2018.

Linda Solstrand Dahlberg, Linnman lab, "Brain changes after spinal cord injury, a quantitative meta-analysis and review", Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews 2018.

Awards to BCH Postdocs

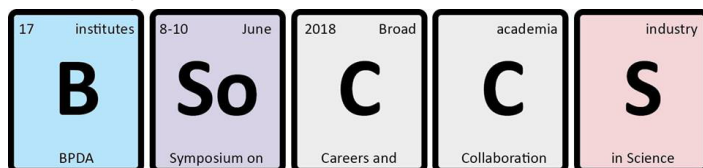
Yuxuan Guo, Pu lab, American Heart Association Postdoctoral Fellowship – 2018 summer

Mir Hossain, Bauer lab, American Heart Association Postdoctoral Fellowship – 2018 summer

If you recently published or won an award and want to share it with us, contact us at postdoc-publicaffairs@childrens.harvard.edu (provide your full name, lab, title and journal for publications and information on sponsor for awards).

Upcoming Events

BSoCCS, June 8-10



The art of phone interview, June 27, 3-4.30pm, CLS12 Conference Room with Lauren Celano, Career Strategist, Co-founder and CEO of Propel Careers RSVP at <https://phone-interview.eventbrite.com>

Recent Events

Pub night at the Puddingstone Tavern, May 22



Negotiation Workshop with Andrew Chan and Ben Hoogheem from Stratacuity, May 17



Postdoc Breakfast, April 26

Harvard Catalyst Panel with Gary Gray and Brian Clancy, April 25

Grant writing Panel with Roslyn W. Orkin, Andrew Kruse, Christian Dibble, Theresa Applegate, March 29

Follow us to find out more about our great events!



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