



# *International Day of Women and Girls in Science*



*Akshaya  
Radhakrishnan*

(Postdoc in Hematology /  
Oncology)

Research: Translational research in  
immunotherapies for cancer

“I love to do research. I did my PhD (Biotechnology) from India, and I got an opportunity to work with Dr. Reshmi Parameswaran as a Postdoctoral researcher. Our lab focuses on Immunotherapy for various hematologic cancers and solid tumors. I am inspired to work with my mentor. She encouraged me a lot. Our lab mainly focuses on translational research from bench to bedside. The research which we do in our lab motivated me to do something which will be for the betterment of the patients. When we came here my daughter was 1.5 years old. I was new to this place, and I had to face many challenges. The research field was new to me, and the beginning was tough for me but keeping my confidence level high, I was able to explore and learn more every day. I always keep saying a Quote to myself “Try, Try, Try until you succeed”.

My parents motivated me throughout my life. They always used to say, “Do anything which you love but do the best and it will lead you to success”. I have a very supportive husband and it all helped me to pursue my dreams.

I personally think that women should have the freedom to pursue their dreams and exploring in STEM could give them a higher level of confidence and it motivates each day to do something better. My daughter is three-year-old, I would tell her “Dream big and achieve big”.



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*Pinunta  
Nittayacharn*

(Postdoc in Radiology)

Research: Use of gas-filled lipid nanoparticles, or nanobubbles, as a theranostic agent for precise drug and gene delivery, integrating therapy and diagnostics in a single platform

“Promoting STEM is crucial for shaping our world through innovation and technological advancements. I think encouraging individuals from diverse backgrounds, including women/young girls, to pursue STEM careers fosters inclusivity for more robust solutions. I am driven by the vision to build excellence in the medical field in Thailand (my home country), inspiring my pursuit of a being a biomedical engineer. I have my PI (Prof. Agata Exner) as a invaluable role model, providing valuable insights and unwavering encouragement throughout my scientific journey. Additionally, having the opportunity to meet women Nobel Laureates like Emmanuelle Charpentier and Frances Arnold at the 72<sup>nd</sup> Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting has offered a unique and inspiring perspective. It highlights the outstanding accomplishments of women in the field of science, emphasizing the notion that gender should never be a barrier to success in the field. I wish I could inspire others through my meaningful contributions to the scientific community as well.

For young girls aspiring to pursue science careers, I would say to embrace your curiosity and passion, believe in your abilities, and surround yourself with inspiring mentors. Your small contribution may change the world in one day. Don't let stereotypes deter you!”



*Nisha  
Bhattarai*

(Postdoc in Physiology)

Research: Utilizing bioinformatics and computational methods to understand molecular mechanisms and structural dynamics of various proteins, viruses, and membranes

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“I reflect on the incredible women who inspire me daily, particularly my mother, a guiding force in instilling the values of patience, discipline, and the importance of education for girls. Hailing from Nepal, where the path to education for girls, especially in science, remains challenging. I vividly recall being one of only two female students in a cohort of 120 during my master’s in physics. This disparity underscores the urgent need to champion STEM for young girls. Despite prevailing stereotypes suggesting that Physics and Math are not fields for women, I persevered. Now a postdoc in Computational Biophysics, I explore how various proteins behave in our bodies using computational models. To aspiring young girls in science, I encourage you to nurture your curiosity, overcome challenges with resilience, and have unwavering belief in your capabilities. Celebrate your victories, big or small, as they not only fuel your journey but also inspire others, underscoring the pivotal role of diversity in science and technology.”



# *International Day of Women and Girls in Science*



*Sreelakshmi  
Vasudevan*

(Postdoc in Ophthalmology)  
Research: Characterization of retinal  
receptor mutations

“Pursuing a science career is about making a positive impact on people's lives and creating a better world. Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) are innovators and game-changers in various fields, breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations. From pioneers like Marie Curie, Rosalind Franklin, Barbara McClintock, Grace Hopper to contemporary scientists like Katalin Kariko, Jennifer Doudna and Angela Saini, women have made significant contributions to scientific developments and innovation. But effort still needs to be done to address the gender disparities and create policies that promote equal opportunities for women in STEM. Let's celebrate the achievements of women and let's work together to promote an inclusive STEM ecosystem!”



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*Deepitha  
Nelson*

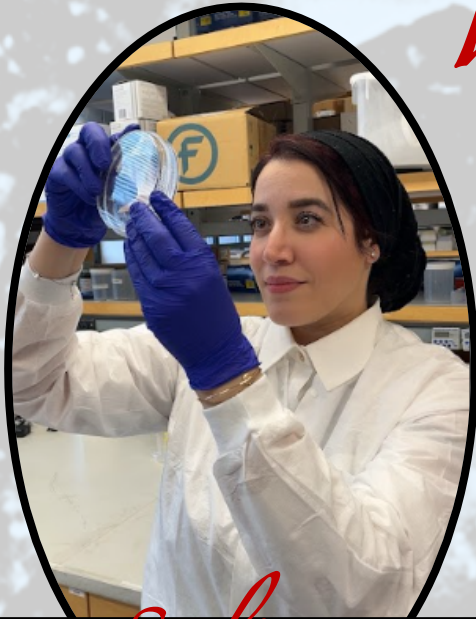
(Postdoc in Pathology)  
Research: Isolation and purification  
of markers of cardiovascular  
disease in diabetes and aging

“Promoting and investing in STEM education leads to scientific and socio-economic advancements. STEM education fosters innovation, diversity, economic development by creating job opportunities and societal progress on a global scale.

It is crucial to perceive and commend the contributions of women in STEM, empowering an inclusive environment where excellence has no gender boundaries. As a postdoctoral scholar, I believe that the journey of me and my fellow women researchers itself serves as motivation for aspiring young girls. My tip for them would be to “be inquisitive, irrepressible when faced with setbacks and try to surround yourself with mentors and role models”. Being a woman in a traditionally male-populated field has its own challenges along with life-changing experiences. Overcoming challenges in such an environment fosters personal growth and strive towards progress in any field, including scientific endeavors. Every small achievement plays a vital role towards the success of women in science. Each victory contributes towards breaking barriers and preconceived notions about gender roles. These accomplishments demonstrate the capability of women in science and help inspire young girls to pursue their passion and overcome any obstacles they may face.”



# *International Day of Women and Girls in Science*



*Salima  
El Yakhlifi*

(Postdoc in Radiology)

Research: development of catatonic nanobubbles tailored for efficient gene delivery, particularly within the scope of addressing type 1 diabetes

"I founded a program called Syst'M by TessLab in France (the country where I came from) to help girls in disadvantaged areas get into STEM. I believe that to tackle future challenges, we need everyone's strength. As a researcher, I am all about the positive impact of scientific innovation. I am focused on spreading awareness and inspiring the next generation of innovators who care about making a difference in society and the environment.

Inspired by Marie Curie, who once said, "Don't fear life; understand it," I want to tell young girls: "You matter! Stand up, speak out, and claim your spot in this world - it's yours for the taking!"

I faced a tough challenge called imposter syndrome - feeling like I wasn't good enough. To get past it, I had to realize my success came from hard work, ambition, and my vision. Knowing my potential helped me push away negative thoughts and focus on my dreams. There are lots of achievements ahead, and I am determined to keep making a positive impact in science and in the world. Want to join me?"



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# *International Day of Women and Girls in Science*



*Sidra  
Islam*

(Postdoc in Pathology)

Research: Investigating the differentiation process, spatial distribution, and interrelations among different subset of CD8+ T cells and other immune markers within tumor microenvironment

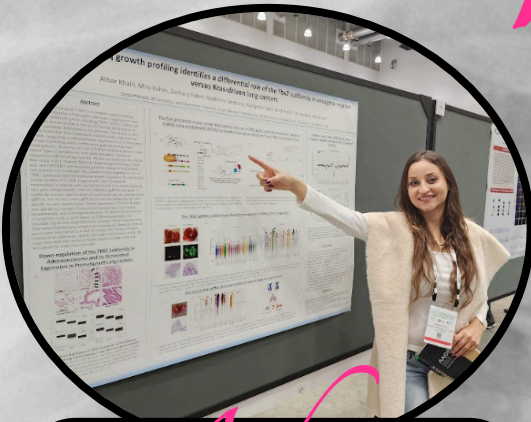
“Throughout history, women and girls have played pivotal roles in the field of science, despite encountering numerous obstacles and barriers. Supporting their endeavors is imperative for propelling scientific advancement and fostering gender equality across all sectors of society. A multitude of societal, economic, educational, and humanitarian factors serve as driving forces for individuals and institutions to champion STEM and allocate resources towards its progression. Promoting STEM education and professions stands as a cornerstone for personal achievement, societal advancement, and global prosperity in the modern era.

For aspiring girls in pursuit of scientific careers, encouragement is paramount. They must trust in their abilities, seek guidance and mentorship, confront challenges head-on, nurture their inquisitiveness and creativity, advocate for inclusivity and diversity, and commemorate their achievements. In navigating the path of a science career, notable hurdles such as overcoming gender biases and achieving a harmonious work-life balance may emerge. However, triumphs abound, including breaking down stereotypes, surmounting barriers, and contributing significantly to the betterment of society through meaningful scientific endeavors.”



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*Athar  
Khalil*

(Postdoc in Genetics)

Research: Developing a lung cancer KRAS mouse model, using the novel Tumor Barcoding with Ultradeep Sequencing technology (TuBa-seq), to further understand the role of the TBX2 subfamily in vivo

“In the face of formidable financial and social challenges throughout my academic journey in Lebanon, marked by economic struggles and societal barriers, I've exemplified unyielding resilience and determination. My upbringing in a small Lebanese village exposed me to the hurdles women encountered in pursuing higher education. Yet, my mother, who earned her PhD at the age of 50, stands as a poignant testament to the transformative power of determination, triumphing over gender biases and financial constraints. Against the backdrop of a conservative and restricted cultural setting, my intent is clear: to break every rule that hinders women like me from achieving success and radiance. With steadfast support from my parents, I pursued and attained a PhD in biomedical sciences and molecular oncology from the American University of Beirut in 2018. During my doctoral studies, I made a significant breakthrough in oncology, uncovering that the TBX2 subfamily of transcription factors acts as tumor suppressors in lung adenocarcinoma. This pivotal discovery, combined with my commitment to advancing biomedical knowledge, paved the way to my current role as a postdoctoral scholar at Case Western Reserve University.

My motivation stems from witnessing the transformative impact of education on breaking gender barriers, exemplified by my mother's late but remarkable academic journey. It is crucial to promote STEM fields for women and girls, not only for the sake of gender equality but also for the diverse perspectives they bring to scientific innovation. To young girls aspiring to pursue science careers, I would say, "Embrace your passion, persevere through challenges, and believe in your ability to make significant contributions. Your unique perspective and determination are invaluable in advancing scientific knowledge and breaking down barriers for future generations." The triumphs I've experienced, such as my breakthrough in oncology research, highlight the potential for women to excel in STEM despite societal constraints. Challenges have been numerous, yet each obstacle has fueled my determination to push boundaries and contribute meaningfully to the scientific community.”





# *International Day of Women and Girls in Science*



*Vidya  
Gopakumar*

(Postdoc in Pharmacology)

Research: Explore the role of carotenoids for the function and maintenance of the retinal pigment epithelium, particularly in relation to ocular diseases such as age related macular degeneration

“Supporting women and girls in science doesn’t just help them grow personally and professionally; it also makes research more interesting by bringing in different viewpoints. It goes beyond achieving equality; it’s necessary for our society to move forward. I love science because I’m really curious about the natural world and want to understand how things work. Even when things are tough, it’s a chance to learn and improve.

What I would like to tell young girls who want to pursue a career in science is: don’t be scared to ask questions, challenge the usual way of doing things, and find people who can guide you. Your presence in science isn’t just important, it’s needed to make science more varied and interesting.”