

Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Division of Neuropsychology and Rehabilitation Psychology

The Division of Neuropsychology and Rehabilitation Psychology is housed within the Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC). Our department is home to the UPMC Rehabilitation Institute, the region's largest network of rehabilitation services. The Department of PM&R at the University of Pittsburgh is the No. 2 recipient in research funding from the National Institute of Health (NIH) and UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh is ranked on US News & World Report Honor Roll. Composed of 12 faculty neuropsychologists (and growing), the Division of Neuropsychology & Rehabilitation Psychology provides inpatient and outpatient clinical services to children and adults, conducts externally-funded clinical research, and engages in teaching and training.

Our faculty participate in the training of clinical psychology doctoral students from many of the surrounding programs offering doctorates in psychology, and participate in didactic training of PM&R medical residents and fellows. The Division currently offers a two-year APPCN-accredited postdoctoral fellowship in Neuropsychology. This-2-year fellowship program provides advanced level of clinical, didactic, and academic training the recognized specialty practice of Clinical Neuropsychology, after completion of which fellows



are ready/eligible for the board certification process through the American Board of Professional Psychology.

The Dept. of PM&R also receives funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), the United States Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs (DoD), Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), and private foundations. Neuropsychology faculty currently serve as Principal Investigator and Site Principal

Investigator on NIH- and PCORI-funded projects and are research team members for various additional studies, including the Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems. Research within the PM&R Department spans basic science to clinical trials, including investigations in physiological and cognitive changes after brain and spinal cord injuries; mechanisms of regeneration; neuroprosthetics; molecular characteristics of musculoskeletal strain and aging; health care delivery in children with disabilities; and use of assistive devices and information technology to make daily living easier for people with disabilities. PM&R research faculty conduct research in collaboration with several University of Pittsburgh and cross-institutional research centers, including The Center for the Neural Basis of Cognition, The Human Engineering Research Laboratories (HERL), The Quality of Life Technology Center, the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, and The Safar Center for Resuscitation Research.

Adult Inpatient Rehabilitation Psychology and Neuropsychology Program

The Adult Inpatient Rehabilitation Psychology and Neuropsychology Program provides services the UPMC Rehabilitation Institute at UPMC Mercy. The Institute has 76 dedicated post-acute rehab beds divided into four units and holds the centers of excellence in stroke rehabilitation, brain injury rehabilitation, and spinal cord injury. Additional patient populations include burn survivors, amputees, oncology, and individuals with medical complexities. Services include brief neuropsychological assessments, patient and family education and counseling to address adjustment to disability, capacity evaluations, and consultation on the trauma/burn service.

We work along with the post-acute interdisciplinary team to maximize goals and address barriers to completing rehab. Furthermore, our faculty participate in ongoing program

development for the rehab units, participate in clinical research opportunities, provide regular education series to incoming rehab nursing staff and participate in UPMC Mercy's Ethics meetings. We also provide ongoing education to residents in the PM&R department, medical, and therapy students, rehab staff, and geriatric psychiatry fellows. Our goals include continued expansion of the division in order to provide a wider range of services to our patients and community, including expansion to outpatient, services to our other post-acute rehab units within the UPMC system, and post-doctoral rehabilitation psychology training opportunities.

Adult Outpatient Neuropsychology and Rehabilitation Psychology Program

The Adult Outpatient Neuropsychology and Rehabilitation Psychology Program includes adult outpatient neuropsychological testing at UPMC Mercy. Services include outpatient neuropsychological assessments for patients with



**UPMC Mercy ranked in Best Hospitals
for Rehabilitation 2024-2025 by
*U.S. News & World Report***

traumatic brain injury, stroke, epilepsy, neuro-degenerative disorders, and other neurological conditions. We assist physicians with rehabilitation goals and provide recommendations to help maximize rehabilitation success.

Pediatric Neuropsychology Program

The Pediatric Neuropsychology Program at the UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP) provides a variety of inpatient and outpatient clinical services.

On the outpatient side, we service the entire Children's Hospital, offering comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations to children with complex medical conditions that affect cognition. We work with children who have experienced brain injury, stroke, seizures/epilepsy, cerebral palsy, prematurity, spina bifida, congenital heart disease, brain tumors, solid tumors, leukemia and lymphoma, toxin exposure, genetic disorders, and transplants. We help with neurological procedures such as the Wada procedure and hope to expand our presence with intraoperative mapping. We also participate in a multitude of multidisciplinary clinics, providing consultation and screening services such as through CHP's Acquired Brain Injury Clinic, Epilepsy Surgery Clinic, and Single

Ventricle Clinic. Our providers support the ENT/Audiology Division with pre- and post-cochlear implant evaluations and screenings for more comprehensive assessment needs.

Additionally, we offer streamlined baseline assessments for children newly diagnosed with brain tumors and leukemia. We also provide clinical services on the 12-bed CARF-accredited inpatient Children's Hospital Rehabilitation Unit (CHRU). As part of this transdisciplinary team, we provide psychoeducation, school planning, treatment planning, and brief inpatient assessment for children, adolescents, and their families. Our services assist with recovery monitoring and the transition back into the community, home, and school.

Those interested in opportunities to work with the Department should contact:

Melissa Sutcliffe, PhD, ABPP

Assistant Professor, Vice
Chair of Neuropsychology &
Rehabilitation Psychology
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Melissa Sutcliffe, PhD, ABPP

Assistant Professor, Vice Chair of Neuropsychology & Rehabilitation Psychology



Dr. Sutcliffe obtained her PhD at the University of Florida and completed her fellowship at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. She is board certified in clinical neuro-

psychology and is a board-certified subspecialist in pediatric neuropsychology. Dr. Sutcliffe joined UPMC in 2013, helping to develop and open the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Rehabilitation Unit, designing and implementing neuropsychological care in this setting. Dr. Sutcliffe became the Clinical Director of Pediatric Neuropsychology at CHP in 2015, helping to reshape the nature of neuropsychological care at this institution. She was then promoted to Vice Chair of the Division of Neuropsychology and Rehabilitation Psychology in 2024. In both these roles, she has recruited a growing faculty, support staff including technicians, and developed or supported creation of many additional clinical streams, ensuring that neuropsychology reaches a wider swath of individuals in need in western Pennsylvania and beyond. This includes helping to rebuild pre and postsurgical assessment processes for children with epilepsy surgery and innovate new ways in which care is delivered.

Clinically, Dr. Sutcliffe specializes in providing services to children, adolescents, and young adults with acquired brain injury, intractable epilepsy, cerebral palsy, and spina bifida. With respect to research, Dr. Sutcliffe is the site Lead Neuropsychologist for several outcomes studies in epilepsy surgery patients and participates in a variety of other studies looking at neuro-cognitive outcomes in children with complex medical conditions. She works with a variety of trainees, including undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral level trainees, including serving as an associate Co-Director of the Division's Fellowship in Lifespan Neuropsychology,

providing a variety of experiences to help train the new generation of neuropsychologists. At the national level, Dr. Sutcliffe is an active participant in the AACN mentorship program, working with trainees at varying stages of their career and guiding them towards achieving goals of becoming a board-certified neuropsychologist.

Ted Allaire Barrios, PhD

Assistant Professor



Dr. Ted Allaire Barrios is an Assistant Professor of PM&R at the University of Pittsburgh and rehabilitation neuropsychologist at UPMC Mercy. He specializes in the neuro-

psychological evaluation and management of adults living with neurobehavioral conditions, like congenital hydrocephalus, traumatic brain injury (TBI), stroke, and dementia. His clinical interests span the rehabilitation continuum - At Mercy, he provides care to patients participating in both acute (inpatient) rehabilitation, as well as in his outpatient neuropsychology clinic at Mercy Community Care. He is also the primary neuropsychologist within the UPMC Adult Spina Bifida Clinic at the Mercy Pavilion. Dr. Barrios is a clinician-scientist. His research interests focus broadly on identifying how best to measure (e.g., psychometrics) and intervene upon (e.g., treatment outcomes) constructs of interest, with emphasis on addressing the needs of people with disabilities. Dr. Barrios previously assisted with the Southeastern Michigan TBI Model System at the Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan and was co-investigator of the Michigan Spinal Cord Injury Model System during his time at the University of Michigan. He was continuously funded by the U.S. Social Security Administration from 2019 to 2023 (as principal investigator) to study employment outcomes among adults who had sustained traumatic brain, spinal cord, and burn injury. Dr. Barrios

is currently leading research focused on boosting functional independence and enhancing quality of life for adults living with spina bifida.

Akanksha M. Bean, PsyD

Clinical Assistant Professor



Dr. Bean is a Pediatric Neuropsychologist at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. She provides comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations on an outpatient

and inpatient basis to children with neurodevelopmental and acquired medical conditions that affect brain development and supports multidisciplinary specialty services. Dr. Bean utilizes evaluation results to provide families and care teams recommendations to support a child's unique neurocognitive, behavioral, and social-emotional strengths and challenges. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are core principles of Dr. Bean's professional and personal philosophy and are integrated into her clinical care approach. She believes that in order to affect change across the broader community, it is important to begin with appreciating, understanding, and committing to advocating for the most vulnerable populations at the individual and institutional level.

Tad T. Gorske, PhD

Assistant Professor, Director of Adult Outpatient Neuropsychology



Dr. Gorske conducts neuropsychological evaluations with patients who have brain injuries, strokes, dementia, and other neurological diseases.

Dr. Gorske's prior clinical work included adult and adolescent patients with severe addiction and psychiatric illness in community health centers, hospitals, and

residential programs. He was the primary investigator on the federally funded Effects of Cognitive Test Feedback on Patient Adherence (DA017273-01A1). Additionally, he was a project coordinator and senior research psychologist on other federally funded studies examining treatment strategies with dual diagnosis patients. He is the primary author of Collaborative Therapeutic Neuropsychological Assessment, published in 2009 with Dr. Steven Smith from UC Santa Barbara. He has authored and co-authored peer reviewed empirical articles and book chapters on topics related to collaborative assessment, neuropsychology, addiction, mental health, children and adolescents, and neuropsychological test reviews. Dr. Gorske has provided lectures and workshops at national and international conferences on topics related to neuropsychology, addiction, and mental health.

Kathleen Hassara, PsyD

Assistant Professor



Dr. Hassara is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and The Clinical Director of Pediatric Neuropsychology at CHP.

She provides comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations for children with medical conditions that affect brain development on an outpatient basis and supports the neurofibromatosis and hematology/oncology multidisciplinary clinics. In addition, she participates in comprehensive evaluation of patients being evaluated for epilepsy surgery. Dr. Hassara also teaches and supervises students at various levels of training including externs and postdoctoral fellows. She regularly teaches in fellowship didactics and is an integral part of day-to-day functioning and operations for pediatric neuropsychology at CHP.

Renée Lajiness-O'Neill, PhD

Professor

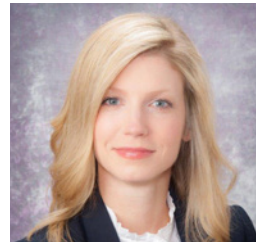


Dr. Lajiness-O'Neill is a professor, pediatric neuropsychologist, and neuroscientist. She specializes in the assessment and treatment of neurodevelopmental

conditions (e.g., learning and language disorders, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder) and social/emotional concerns arising from a host of developmental and medical etiologies. She has specific interest in prematurity, HIE, genetic disorders, spina bifida, hydrocephalus, epilepsy, and traumatic brain injury. Dr. Lajiness-O'Neill is also a clinician-scientist whose research is focused on the development of screening/surveillance methods and early risk detection in infancy and toddlerhood. Her work has been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Science Foundation (NSF). She has been leading a R01 multisite, longitudinal study for which her team is developing and validating a web-based, caregiver-report tool to track infant/toddler developmental status and risk trajectories for neurodevelopmental conditions (e.g., language disorders, autism) and complex medical etiologies (e.g., congenital heart disease, craniofacial disorders). Using item response theory (IRT) test construction methods, her team hopes to advance personalized medicine approaches to assessment and methods to track response to intervention in children. She is also Project Director/Principal Investigator of a NSF Major Research Instrumentation grant for which her team is developing electroencephalography (EEG) methods for infancy and toddlerhood studies. Her long-term goal is to develop and validate bio-behavioral methods of assessing childhood conditions to advance early detection. She has over 70 peer-reviewed publications, books and book chapters as well as over 200 presentations.

Sarah F. Laughlin, PhD

Assistant Professor



Sarah F. Laughlin is a clinical and developmental psychologist with specialized training in clinical neuropsychology. She holds a primary faculty appointment within

the University of Pittsburgh's (Pitt) School of Medicine, Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PMR) and secondary appointments within the School of Arts & Sciences, Department of Psychology and School of Health & Rehabilitation Science (SHRS), Department of Community Health and Rehabilitation Science. Clinically, Dr. Laughlin provides neuropsychology services within CHP's inpatient rehabilitation, multidisciplinary specialty clinics (e.g. Epilepsy Service), and outpatient settings. Through clinical service, she supports youth with genetic conditions, neurodevelopmental disorders, and epilepsy. She partners with hospital and community leaders, self-advocates, and families to advocate for and expand accessibility and inclusive services for CHP patients with intellectual disability. Dr. Laughlin is also the Division's Director of Predoctoral Training in Pediatric Neuropsychology, coordinating clinical training experiences for clinical psychology externs and interns. The neuropsychology externship program is now an inaugural member of North American Association of Practicum Sites in Neuropsychology). Dr. Laughlin is also the Director of Experiential Learning and the Outcomes Study Principal Investigator in the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities and Related Disorders program at Pitt. She is leadership faculty for Pitt's School of Public Health Maternal Child Health (MCH) Center of Excellence (CoE) and co-leader of the CoE's Disability and Special Health Care Needs Advocacy Academy. She also teaches a lifespan human development course for the SHRS Rehabilitation Science undergraduate program.

Amy Letteri, PhD

Assistant Professor



Dr. Letteri completed her doctoral degree in clinical psychology at Gallaudet University where she became fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and

specialized in working with deaf and hard of hearing individuals. She completed her clinical internship at the Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota and neuropsychological post-doctoral fellowship at the Indiana University School of Medicine and Riley Hospital for Children. She supports CHP with generalist outpatient evaluations and inpatient services on the CHRU. Additionally, in conjunction with the audiology and otolaryngology division she has established a clinic for deaf and hard of hearing children. In this role, she conducts brief neuropsychological consultations, bilingual ASL and English outpatient neuropsychological evaluations, and is a member of the cochlear implant team. Dr. Letteri has also worked closely with hematology/oncology to establish a pre-treatment/pre-surgical triage clinic to provide brief neuropsychological to all new neuro-oncology patients. Dr. Letteri also serves as the Director of the Division's Lifespan Neuropsychology Program, working not only with fellows but trainees of all stages.

Loren Pease, PsyD

Assistant Professor

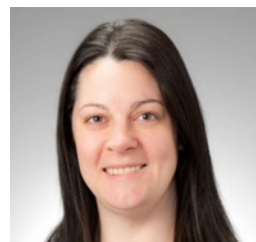


Dr. Pease is a Pediatric Neuropsychologist at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and

Rehabilitation at the University of Pittsburgh. She completed her doctoral training at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia and post-doctoral training at Nemours Children's Hospital, Delaware in Wilmington. Since joining the faculty at CHP after fellowship, She has been providing comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation for children with neurodevelopmental and acquired medical conditions that affect brain development. She was named the Associate Program Director of the Cardiac Neurodevelopmental Program at CHP, helping to design and implement a multidisciplinary clinic for children with single ventricle cardiac conditions. In addition to her work within the cardiac space, Dr. Pease provides outpatient neuropsychology services to a wider variety of patients with medical conditions affecting the neuroaxis. She is actively involved in the education and training of neuropsychologists, serving as both a clinical supervisor and professional development mentor. She participates in didactic programming for the neuropsychology fellowship. Dr. Pease is also the director of psychometry training, helping to onboard new psychometrists, elevate their skills, and provide professional development opportunities.

Jessica Rusbatch, PsyD

Clinical Assistant Professor



Dr. Rusbatch is an Adult Neuropsychologist at UPMC Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. She provides

comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations and services for adults and older adults with various medical and central nervous system conditions that can impact brain functioning. Dr. Rusbatch provides services on an outpatient and inpatient basis.

Amery Treble-Barna, PhD

Associate Professor



Dr. Treble-Barna completed her doctoral training at the University of Houston, clinical internship at Nationwide Children's Hospital, and postdoctoral fellowship at Cincinnati

Children's Hospital Medical Center. She also completed an NIH T32 postdoctoral fellowship in the Safar Center for Resuscitation Research at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Treble-Barna directs a clinical research laboratory focused on developing a comprehensive understanding of the various factors influencing neurobehavioral recovery following pediatric traumatic brain injury (TBI). Dr. Treble-Barna is Principal Investigator of the Epigenetic Effects on pediatric Traumatic Brain Injury (EETR) study, which has been enrolling since 2017 and consistently funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) since 2019 (K01HD097030; R01NS135492). The aims of the project are to examine DNA methylation (a major epigenetic regulator of gene expression) in association with acute TBI occurrence, long-term neurobehavioral outcomes, and psychosocial adversity. Clinically, Dr. Treble-Barna provides outpatient neuropsychological evaluation services at CHP.