

WCX Quarterly



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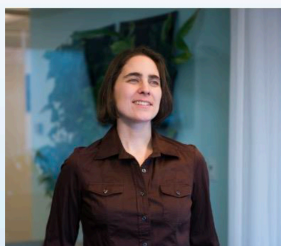
WCX initiative



Presents

**Stories & Science
with Dr. Sarah Kolitz**

January 20th, 2026
12pm EST
Via Zoom



Sarah Kolitz, PhD

Vice President of Translational Medicine at Immuneering

Join us in January as we welcome **Dr. Sarah Kolitz** for a *Stories & Science* seminar. Dr. Kolitz will chronicle her path to success and offer her unique perspective and experiences as a woman in biomedical industry.

Everyone is welcome to attend this seminar, and we encourage your support of Dr. Kolitz!
[Register to Attend.](#)

Meet the newest members of the WCX Leadership Team!



Dr. Francielly (Fran) Morena, PhD is an F32 Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Florida, where she investigates how molecular clocks influence the development of cachexia. Throughout her academic career, she has been deeply committed to inclusion in science, notably through her work with the Graduate Professional Student Congress at the University of Arkansas, and she is passionate about making science accessible through effective communication. Fran joins our team as Communication Coordinator, where she looks forward to elevating WCX's mission and celebrating the rich history and achievements of women in science.



Dr. Debasmitta Mukherjee, PhD is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Cambridge, where her work focuses on dissecting the critical role of malignant cell-fibroblast crosstalk in pancreatic cancer and how it influences cachexia. Having had the pleasure of meeting and communicating with the WCX committee at the 8th Cancer Cachexia Conference in Turin, she developed an appreciation for how supportive our community is. She is excited to step into the role of Community and Outreach Chair to contribute to WCX's vision, uplift each other as we build our research careers and collectively work towards abrogating cachexia.



Celebrating your recent achievements



Publications

- **Dr. Sarama Saha, a Professor at All India Institute of Medical Sciences**, and colleagues published a review article in *Cancers* titled, "*Cancer-induced cardiac dysfunction: Mechanisms, diagnostics and emerging therapeutics in the era of onco-cardiology*". Read it [here](#).
- **Ms. Sharzad Khajehzadehshoushtar**, a PhD student at York University, and coauthors published an article in the *Journal of Physiology* describing abrogation of skeletal muscle apoptotic signaling using the antioxidant SkQ1 during ovarian cancer. Read it [here](#).

Announcements

- **Dr. Paige Arneson-Wissink**, currently a postdoctoral researcher at Oregon Health Sciences University, has accepted a new position starting in March 2026 as Assistant Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in the Center for Genetic Diseases at Rosalind Franklin University. Congratulations, Paige!
- **Dr. Sarama Saha** is mentoring a new graduate student in her lab, Dr. Shlesh Singh, who will be pursuing a postgraduate Doctor of Medicine, specializing in metabolic medicine and studying GDF-15 in clinical cancer cachexia. Congratulations to Sarama and her new student!

WCX Spotlight: Dr. Naama Darzi, MD



Dr. Darzi is a PhD candidate in the Department of Molecular Cell Biology at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. Her research recently uncovered a critical connection between vagal dysfunction and liver metabolism in driving the cachectic phenotype – a discovery published in *Cell*. This work has already leveraged an ongoing clinical trial, an accomplishment that deeply motivated her.

As she reflects, "*Knowing that my contributions to basic science can move medical practice one step closer to helping patients gives my research a sense of purpose that I am truly grateful for*".

Dr. Darzi earned her medical degree from UPJS University in Slovakia in 2018, and she is now excited to bring together her medical training and basic science expertise as she prepares for a future residency in oncology.

Read more of Dr. Darzi's inspiring interview [here](#).

Women in Autophagy: setting the bar for gender minority-focused initiatives in biomedical science

Published in *Nature Cell Biology*, December 2024. [Read it here](#).

"Scientific questions are universal, but the scientific workforce remains skewed, with women and gender minorities still underrepresented. Initiatives such as the Women in Autophagy network **promote the careers of these underrepresented groups with a range of free, year-round scientific, mentoring and networking activities for all scientists.**"

Important Links & Resources

WCX members:
[Submit your recent achievements to be highlighted in our next newsletter](#)

Know someone with wisdom to share?
[Nominate a speaker for a WCX-sponsored event](#)

Not a part of the WCX community?
[Register here to join!](#)

Looking for a job or mentorship opportunity?
[Access the WCX network](#) (network members only; access request required)