

# North America

## Immunopaedia Ambassadors – North America

Our Ambassadors from across Northern America.

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**What is your name?**

Zi Yan Chen



**What is your current position?**

PhD student

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

Department of Immunology, University of Toronto

**What is your home country?**

Canada

**What are your research interests?**

Autoimmunity, Myelopoiesis, Developmental biology

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

My PhD work broadly investigates tissue macrophage developmental and functional heterogeneity under homeostatic and autoimmune disease conditions.

**What are your online profiles?**

LinkedIn – [Zi Yan Chen](#)

X: [@zi\\_chen9](#)

**Immunology Keywords:**

Macrophage, Autoimmunity, Development

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**What is your name?**

Eugenio Contreras Castillo



**What is your current position?**

PhD student

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

Cell Physiology Institute, National Autonomous University of Mexico

**What is your home country?**

Mexico

**What are your research interests?**

Molecular mechanism regulation of T cell tolerance, biology of the thymus, neuroimmunology

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

I am a passionate student in Immunology, working with Treg and the mechanisms that govern its stability under inflammatory biology. I studied biology because I was very interested in understanding the mechanisms behind how cells work. Later I discovered Immunology and I found a field in biomedicine that required the integration of many areas of biology. I did my undergraduate thesis working with human monocytes and how they were affected by different oxygen conditions. Later I joined the Licona-Limon Lab at UNAM, to pursue my master's and PhD studies to study how T regulatory cells maintain their identity and suppress under inflammatory conditions. I firmly believe that through education we can transform our society and that young scientist need to be heard. During the pandemic, I was the co-founder of two projects that promoted scientific discussion while giving voices to people who did

the science: Public Journal Club and Open Box Sciences. Two initiatives that promoted scientific discussion free and open discussion for everyone. I am also the host of the Antibbudies podcast.

**What are your online profiles?**

LinkedIn – [Eugenio Contreras Castillo](#)

X – [@Eugecc](#)

**Immunology Keywords:**

T cell, Tolerance, Autoimmunity

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**What is your name?**

Gabriela Zamora Herrera



**What is your current position?**

MD Student, Physiological Sciences

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

Physiology Institute, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Oncoimmunology and Cytomics Lab for Childhood Cancer, CIBIOR-IMSS, Mexico

**What is your home country?**

Mexico

**What are your research interests?**

Leukemia microenvironment, Bone marrow niches, Immunecontexture

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

I became interested in biomedical research and entered into the Biomedicine program at the Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla; where I focused on scientific research in

biomedical sciences and biological phenomena. I then joined the Oncoimmunology and Cytomics Laboratory (CIBIOR IMSS), where my area of research focuses on leukemia tumor microenvironment, considering onco-hematological diseases as the sum of macro and micro environmental processes. As part of the necessary tools to address this problem, I am constantly training in area of cytometry, especially in the handling of flow cytometry, cell sorting and recently with mass cytometry. Currently, as a graduate student, I am working on predictive scores for pediatric Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia prognosis, based on bone marrow mesenchymal stromal immunophenotyping, tumor identity and immunecontexture. Our group's main focus is leukemia pediatric patients in Mexico.

**What are your online profiles?**

ResearchGate – [Gabriela Zamora-Herrera](#)

LinkedIn – [Gabriela Zamora](#)

**Immunology Keywords:**

Immunomodulation, Inflammation, Oncoimmunology

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**What is your name?**

Nour Ramadan



**What is your current position?**

Scientist

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

Abbott Point of Care / Adecco, Canada

**What is your home country?**

Canada

**What are your research interests?**

Mucosal immunity, immune-assay development, proteins

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

My research interest include innovative and product development (particularly I have experience in medical diagnostics and nanoparticle vaccines design and development). My interest also include the intertwining of immunology and microbiology and understand the host-pathogen interactions.

**What are your online profiles?**

ResearchGate – [Nour Ramadan](#)

LinkedIn – [Nour Ramadan](#)

**Immunology Keywords:**

Mucosal immunity, immuno-assay, vaccines

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**What is your name?**

Maria Berenice Martinez Salazar



**What is your current position?**

Advanced Postdoc

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

Department for BioMedical Research, University of Bern, Switzerland

**What is your home country?**

Mexico

**What are your research interests?**

Vascular inflammation, neutrophils, long-COVID

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

I started my research very early during my bachelor's. I

studied the immune response to Leishmania parasites. My thesis defense was about the TLR9 activation with DNA from Leishmania that leads to the production of inflammatory cytokines. My work was awarded the best bachelor's Thesis of 2015-2016 by the Faculty of Medicine of the UNAM (National University autonomous of Mexico). I did my PhD in the regulation of T cells through PD1 in mice infected with Leishmania Mexicana in an animal model to assess vaccine efficiency. Then, I was granted the Postdoctoral Fellowship Arturo Falaschi from the ICGEB and worked under the supervision of Prof. Frank Brombacher. I studied the immune response to Leishmania in mice that lack the IL-4 receptor alpha (IL-4Ra) and in specific cells that lack that receptor. I moved to Lausanne to work in the WHO-Immunology Research and Training Center (IRTC) under the supervision of Prof. Fabienne Tacchini-Cottier. During my time there, I analysed the response of Neutrophils to Leishmania assessing the microbicidal mechanisms activated. I am currently working as Advanced Postdoc in the University of Bern analysing the role of vascular inflammation in the development of Long COVID-19 under the supervision of Prof. Yvonne Döring.

**What are your online profiles?**

ResearchGate – [Berenice Martinez](#)

LinkedIn – [Berenice Martinez Salazar](#)

**Immunology Keywords:**

Neutrophils, Inflammation, Cytokine storm

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**What is your name?**

Yanet Valdez Tejeira



**What is your current position?**

Immunologist

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

Independent Consultant

**What is your home country?**

Canada

**What are your research interests?**

Mucosal Immunology, mechanisms of disease and infectious diseases

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

After obtaining my PhD, my career path continued in the area of immunology. After post- doctoral training, I accepted a position as Senior Scientist at StemCell Technologies Inc. and become a Team lead for the Innate Immunology group in the Cell Separation team, designing reagents for the isolation of human and murine cells from blood and other organs.

1. Scientific Communication. I had the opportunity to travel to Benin, West Africa, to teach immunology together with the “Immunology Without Borders” faculty chapter of the IUIS. This was an extraordinary experience for me and reinforced my passion for communicating concepts in Immunology to trainees. I recently founded @ImmunolatinXs (<https://twitter.com/ImmunoLatinXs>) a platform aimed at bringing together immunologists from Latin America and collaborating with other immunologists around the world.

2. Teaching. I became an invited faculty member at my alma mater Cayetano Heredia Peruvian University (Lima-Peru). There I teach immunology virtually to graduate student and MD’s seeking a formal education in immunology.

3. Advocacy. Three years ago, I nearly lost my daughter to an autoimmune disease (anti-NMDA Receptor autoimmune encephalitis or “brain on fire” disease). This rare disease was very difficult to diagnose, however my family and I had the privilege of being well-educated biomedical researchers and, fortunately, could diagnose my daughter’s disease rapidly,

seek immediate treatment and see her through her road to complete recovery. As such, we gained a first-hand appreciation for how patient education and understanding of immunology can save lives. Now, I serve as part of the Board of Directors for the NMDAE Foundation: <https://www.antinmdafoundation.org/who-we-are/scientific-advisory-board>. I am also an active volunteer for the American Association for Immunologists, where I served on panels to mentor immunologists in industry.

**What are your online profiles?**

LinkedIn – [Yanet Valdez Tejeira](#)

**Immunology Keywords:** Mucosal Immunology, Innate immunology and Dendritic cells

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**What is your name?**

Avid Mohammadi



**What is your current position?**

PhD candidate

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

University of Toronto

**What is your home country?**

Canada

**What are your research interests?**

Mucosal immunology, HIV, The role of microbiota in modulating immune responses

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

I hold a Master degree in Virology from Iran University of



Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran. I have worked for two years in the field of HIV in Keyvan virology lab which is the reference virology lab in Tehran. During this period, I had the opportunity to understand the burdens of reducing HIV transmission in Iran. As a graduate student involved with HIV/AIDS issues, I was always concerned about finding prevention strategies to reduce HIV transmission. In Iran, drug injection and sexual transmission are two main routes of HIV transmission. However, it was difficult to study how HIV-sexual transmission could be reduced, since sex and HIV sexual transmission is a stigma in the Iranian community. This was the main reason that I joined Dr. Kaul's lab, University of Toronto as a PhD student in 2015, where the main focus is the genital immune correlates of HIV-transmission and susceptibility. Dr. Kaul has extensive experience on HIV transmission and immune correlates of HIV susceptibility, studying for more than 20 years in Canada, Uganda and Kenya. Since joining his lab, I enhanced my knowledge on HIV, Immunology, how to perform clinical trials, the ethics in research and new techniques such as flow cytometry.

**What are your online profiles?**

[ResearchGate](#)

**Immunology Keywords:** Inflammation, Th17 cells, neutrophils

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**What is your name?**

Sohail Hassan Mahmood



**What is your current position?**

Director & CEO, Living In Silico Inc.

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

Sheridan College, Canada

**What is your home country?**

Canada

**What are your research interests?**

Simulations, drug discovery, ILCs

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

We (Living in Silico Inc.) are interested in determining novel drugs using protein-protein simulation. We are building an immunological identity with drug production that allows for specific immunotherapies based on specific immune cell behaviour in disease states. One aspect would be polarization of cells, based on various stimuli, innate immune cells can orchestrate later adaptive responses. If a specific APC becomes differentiated to prevent influx of cells it would be anti-inflammatory and if promoting inflammation it would be inflammatory.

We would like to extend the idea further of APC polarization and the behavioural changes leading to massive changes in immune responses to alter responses to stimuli such as in tumour microenvironment where vascular changes diminishing can lead to tumour size decreases. We hope to achieve these goals by understanding the mechanisms of the microenvironment to maintain growth and cancerous growth and target specific behaviours rather than general chemo and immunotherapies.

**What are your online profiles?**

LinkedIn: [Sohail Hassan Mahmood](#)

**Immunology Keywords:** Immunotherapies, Simulations, ILCs

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**What is your name?**

Lucinda del Carmen Puebla Clark



**What is your current position?**

PhD student

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

I am currently a student at Universidad de Sonora in Mexico in the program « Doctorado en Ciencias (Químico Biológicas y de la Salud) »

**What is your home country?**

Mexico

**What are your research interests?**

Dendritic cells, Innate response to viruses, Veterinary immunology

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

I am currently working with porcine dendritic cells and their response to the Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome Virus. During the time we have been working with porcine dendritic cells, we have learned that porcine and human immune cells are quite alike, a personal interest for me is to actually search for similarities between species and see if porcine dendritic cells could be used in cell therapy treatments.

**What are your online profiles?**

LinkedIn – [Lucinda Puebla Clark](#)

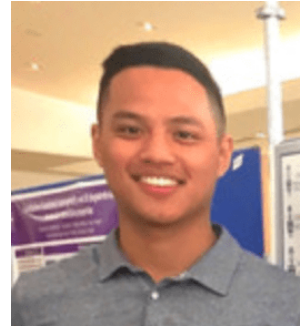
ResearchGate- [Lucinda Puebla-Clark](#)

**Immunology Keywords:** Dendritic cells, Virus, Swine

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**What is your name?**

Bryan Gascon



**What is your current position?**

Undergraduate Researcher

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

University of Toronto, Canada

**What is your home country?**

Philippines and Canada

**What are your research interests?**

Medical Microbiology, Cancer Immunotherapy, Health Services Research

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

I just finished my Honours Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Toronto, in which I double majored in Immunology and Global Health and minored in Cell and Systems Biology. Through the academic rigors of my program, I gained a deep appreciation for how the human body keeps us alive everyday. As a result, I pursued opportunities in a variety of labs related to key cornerstones of immunology – from medical microbiology to cancer research – throughout my undergraduate career. Similar to an undifferentiated stem cell, my research interests are very broad, but translation in nature: HIV immunology, gut microbiome, the detection of antibiotic resistance, cancer immunotherapy, and health services research. Currently, as a Queen Elizabeth Scholar in the Clive Lab, we're looking at the immune mechanisms underlying adverse birth outcomes of HIV-positive women. Outside of academia, I

enjoy going to the gym and spending time outdoors.

**What are your online profiles?**

LinkedIn – [Bryan Gascon](#)

**Immunology Keywords:** HIV, Regulatory T Cells, Flow Cytometry

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**What is your name?**

Jinal Nomathemba Bhiman



**What is your current position?**

Postdoctoral Research Associate

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

The Scripps Research Institute, La Jolla, USA

**What is your home country?**

South Africa

**What are your research interests?**

HIV vaccine research, host-pathogen interactions, B cell development

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

I began my scientific career as a student at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases in Johannesburg, South Africa. This was the first time I was exposed to “real” research with aims that were both descriptive and hypothesis-driven and with outcomes that were unknown and intriguing. This foray into host-pathogens interactions in the context of HIV-1 infection, initiated my interest in HIV vaccine design. Since then I completed my MSc and PhD degrees in South Africa

and am currently a postdoc at The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, USA.

My PhD research investigated how viral evolution during HIV infection can lead to the initiation and maturation of broadly neutralizing antibodies, which are the antibodies likely needed for a preventative HIV vaccine. My postdoctoral research is translating the basic immunology hypotheses generated from my PhD through immunogen design and development of immunization strategies. In addition, I am also keen on defining the sites of immunodominance on the soluble HIV envelope trimer constructs that we are using as immunogens. Upon completion of my postdoctoral training, I hope to return to my home country to continue my academic career and to pay it forward by training the next generation of African scientists.

**What are your online profiles?**

LinkedIn – [Jinal Bhiman](#)

ResearchGate – [Jinal Bhiman](#)

**Immunology Keywords:** HIV, immunogens, vaccines

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**What is your name?**

Sergey Yegorov



**What is your current position?**

Post-doctoral fellow

**Which institute and country do you work in?**

Institute for Infectious Diseases Research, Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences, McMaster University

**What is your home country?**

Canada

**What are your research interests?**

Immunological correlates of infectious disease

**Tell us about yourself and your research interests:**

I'm a Post-doctoral researcher in Dr. Matthew Miller's laboratory at McMaster University. My current research explores the immunological correlates of viral infections and vaccine-elicited responses. Outside of academia, I have a passion for martial arts and love spending time in nature with friends and family.

**What are your online profiles?**

ResearchGate – [Sergey Yegorov](#)

LinkedIn – [Sergey Yegorov](#)

Impactstory –