



# UM Hearing Experts Shine at Annual American Cochlear Implant Alliance Conference

The University of Miami Health System remains on the forefront of innovative research in cochlear implants – evidenced by a whole team of University experts presenting how these devices can improve academic, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for children and adults at the American Cochlear Implant Alliance (ACIA) conference. The conference was held in person and virtually in Washington, D.C., from May 18 to 22.

“The breadth and quality of the many UM presentations at the ACIA 2022 conference was remarkable,” said Dr. Fred Telischi, M.D., chair of the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery and professor of neurosurgery and biomedical engineering at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. “Our faculty, trainees, and researchers had one of the highest representations among academic cochlear implant programs at the conference.



Dr. Meredith Holcomb was recognized by the ACIA for her role as chair of its Board of Directors.

“We were particularly proud of our group’s many contributions to the success of the meeting, and enjoyed many favorable comments from other attendees,” added Dr. Telischi, who serves on the ACIA Board of Directors and the ACIA Research committee. “The many accomplishments of our diverse, multidimensional, and comprehensive cochlear implantation team highlight our commitment to the large patient population with hearing loss that we serve so well.”

ACIA 2022 also marked a milestone for Meredith Holcomb, Au.D., CCC-A, with acknowledgement of her two-year term as the first woman and first audiologist to serve as chair of the ACIA Board of Directors. Dr. Holcomb completed her six-year term on



the board at this year's meeting.

"The energy and depth of the UM hearing implant team is unmatched, and it truly is remarkable to see each of them shine at the conference. I have been part of this team for three years and they never cease to amaze me," said Dr. Holcomb, associate professor of otolaryngology at the Miller School and director of the UM Hearing Implant Program.

### **Wide Range of Contributions to Meeting**

The UM team engaged in the conference in multiple ways. "Those who were not presenting research still served as advocates, gained visibility by asking terrific questions in sessions, networked with national colleagues, and formed new relationships that will surely lead to collaboration in the future," Dr. Holcomb added.

Dr. Holcomb moderated a "Stump the Experts" panel at the meeting, which was one of the most popular sessions this year. Along with Dr. Telischi, Dr. Holcomb also served on the Liaison Committee to the Program Committee, helping to develop the conference.

Ivette Cejas, Ph.D., and Sandra Prentiss, Ph.D., CCC-A, were instrumental in planning the meeting as members of the Scientific Program Committee for the conference.



Dr. Ivette Cejas presenting at ACIA 2022 Conference

## Data on Outcomes

Dr. Cejas presented longitudinal language and academic achievement outcomes for pediatric cochlear implant users; data on the societal cost and burden of having severe or profound hearing loss, supported through a grant from ACIA; and information on the psychosocial implications of pediatric cochlear implants over the past two decades.

“Our data across the board really supports that identifying a child and performing implantation early continues to be a strong predictor of outcomes,” said Dr. Cejas, associate professor of otolaryngology and director of Family Support Services in the Children’s Hearing Program. “It’s really nice to see how our early intervention translates into predicting how well they will do in adulthood.”

Beyond her own research, Dr. Cejas moderated multiple sessions



at ACIA 2022 and participated on the “Childhood Development after Cochlear Implantation” panel.

“It was a busy and great meeting,” she added.

## Quality-of-Life Implications

Dr. Prentiss presented a novel study about how patients feel about getting a cochlear implant years later, “specifically looking at regret and if the implant met their expectations. There is a lot of quality-of-life research out there, but very little on how people feel about their decision.”



The Miller School's ENT team at the ACIA 2022 Conference

The research revealed about a 15% regret rate, “which is a little higher than we expected,” said Dr. Prentiss, associate professor of otolaryngology at the Miller School. “It raises questions about how we mitigate this, what are some of the risk factors, and what can we do to avoid this in the future?”

Dr. Prentiss also moderated the Women Advancing Treatment and Careers in Hearing (WATCH) panel. This panel highlighted

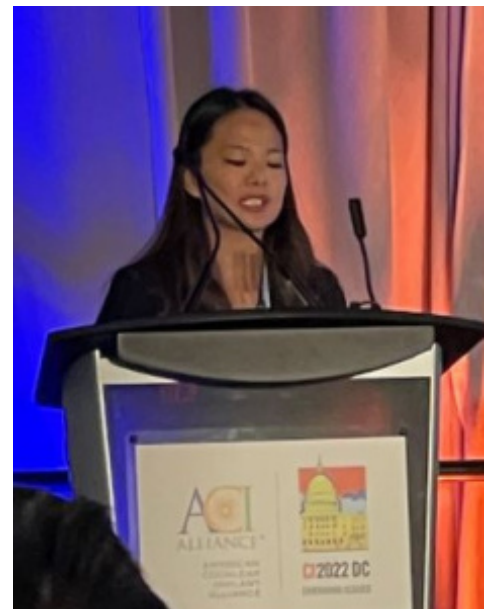


gender disparities in academic institutions and offered strategies to ensure that women are supported in their careers to break through glass ceilings.

### **'Powerhouse Group'**

UM's enhanced presence at ACIA 2022 did not go unnoticed by other attendees. "They called us the 'Powerhouse Group,'" Dr. Cejas said. "It was really nice to see we had representation on panels, on podiums, and on posters."

Jennifer Coto, Ph.D., an assistant professor of otolaryngology, was runner-up in the student poster competition for her "Effects of Remote Care on Family Burden and Well-being" research. She was selected for a poster highlight podium presentation, recognition that is reserved for the top poster presentations.



Dr. Christine Mei, otolaryngology T32 resident, presented on noise exposure in



veterans and cochlear  
implant outcomes.

## **Outstanding Presentations from Medical Students**

Medical students from the Miller School also had an opportunity to present their work and learn about advanced technologies in the market.

Christine Mei, M.D, a Miller School of Medicine resident who is mentored by Suhrud Rajguru, Ph.D., presented a preclinical model she is developing that will help address how a history of noise exposure in veterans may adversely impact their cochlear implant outcomes. Dr. Mei is a T32 resident belonging to one of only eight programs in the U.S. that receive the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award Institutional Research Training Grant for interdisciplinary research training in otolaryngology.

Jake Langlie, a medical student at the Miller School under the mentorship of Adrien A. Eshraghi, M.D., MSC, FACS, professor of otolaryngology, neurological surgery, pediatrics, and biomedical engineering, was also recognized for contributing one of the top student posters, titled “Usher Syndrome: The Impact of Visual Impairment on Hearing Outcomes after Cochlear Implantation in Children.”

Other presenters from the University of Miami Department of Otolaryngology included Molly Smeal, Au.D.; Chrisanda M. Sanchez, Au.D.; Tina Stern, Au.D.; Jordan McNair, Au.D.; Lindsey VanLooy, Au.D.; Rachele Sangeletti, Ph.D.; and Simon Angeli, M.D.

“This team is just getting started, and I am excited to see



what the future has in store for each of them,” Dr. Holcomb said. “We are already brainstorming about ACI 2023!”

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