Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (FPMRS) Fellowship Program at Cooper University Hospital. Our program is three years in length and accepts one fellow per year. The FPMRS fellowship functions as an integral component of the obstetrics and gynecology residency program and both programs are currently accredited by the ACGME.

The Division of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery is a component of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. The Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Cooper University Hospital (CUH) is comprised of 5 divisions and employs 34 full-time faculty members committed to delivering the finest care to patients as well as to providing the best education for our next generation of physicians. The FPMRS fellowship is designed to provide excellent research and clinical training in an academic environment. The program consists of three years of broad-based training in urogynecology with ample opportunities to participate in clinical and basic research. First and second year rotations consist of the FPMRS service, urology and colorectal and a month of plastics surgery. The third year typically consists of a more focused experience on these services with the opportunity for external electives if there is interest. Fellows participate in regular continuity clinic sessions, following their own panel of patients throughout the three years of training.

Research also is emphasized. The FPMRS program has an active conference schedule with weekly clinical conferences and at least a half a day of organized didactic conferences biweekly. In addition to a core curriculum, attention is paid to basic science and research. The strength of the Cooper program is teaching, and emphasis is placed on education and the promotion of collegial relationships between faculty and fellows. FPMRS faculty holds academic appointments at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University (CMSRU) and is actively involved in medical student education programs at the medical school. There is a high faculty-to-fellow ratio with 3 core and 8 non-core employed faculty involved in the education of 3 FPMRS fellows. The program offers access to faculty with expertise in vaginal, abdominal and endoscopic reconstructive surgery, pelvic floor anatomy, genitourinary and rectovaginal fistula repair, urodynamics and cystoscopy, multiple treatment modalities for urinary incontinence, urologic, colorectal and plastics procedures as it pertains to our field and clinical and basic science research in FPMRS.

The following pages provide specific information about the FPMRS training at Cooper. We invite you to take the time to explore our program.
General Information about Cooper

Cooper University Health Care, the clinical campus of Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, is the leading tertiary-level provider serving the Southern New Jersey region. Cooper has been a vital institution in Camden for over 125 years. It currently offers training programs for medical students, residents, fellows, nurses and allied health professionals in a variety of specialties. The Cooper network currently serves more than a half million patients per year.

Cooper University Health Care has more than 700 physicians in more than 75 specialties. Cooper offers a network of comprehensive services that include prevention and wellness, primary and specialty physician services, hospital care, ambulatory diagnostic and treatment services, and home health care within Southern New Jersey and the entire Delaware Valley.

Cooper University Physician, the teaching faculty of the medical school, maintains more than 100 offices at 38 locations throughout southern New Jersey. Cooper’s physicians are frequently recognized as “Top Doctors” in their field. These world-class physicians are the teachers with whom you will interact during your educational experience. Cooper physicians are involved in ongoing research and development as they keep abreast of changing modalities of medical care.

Cooper’s department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Cooper University Hospital offers women of all ages a full range of advanced medical programs and services through all stages of a woman’s life. From the management of pregnancy and delivery, to the prevention, detection and treatment of disorders of the reproductive system, our OB/GYN physicians, nurses and support personnel specialize in all areas of gynecological, maternal-fetal, reproductive, pelvic and sexual health. Cooper is distinguished as a state-designated Regional Perinatal Center. The Center serves the region’s highest-risk patients in need of the most serious care. In fact, other area hospitals transport their high-risk perinatal patients to Cooper. All of our OB/GYN subspecialists are board-certified and fellowship-trained, offering expert services and treatment options in vital areas of female, reproductive, and maternal-fetal health.

Introduction

As part of the Cooper Medical School of Rowan University (CMSRU) and The Cooper Health System, the division of FPMRS is committed to providing a comprehensive and state of the art education to our fellows. The division of FPMRS, the largest in Southern NJ, was established in 1996 and began to train fellows in 2000.

With over 5000 patient visits and 400 surgeries per year the FPMRS division is able to provide the fellows the experience and expertise to treat the full array of urogynecologic conditions.

The fellowship curriculum has been developed to maximize the exposure of the fellows to the full gamut of urogynecology topics. This is exemplified by the FPMRS Women’s Care Center continuity of care clinic where the fellows have their own patients who they follow throughout their care under the supervision of one the core faculty.

General Information about FPMRS

Cooper’s division of Female Pelvic Medicine & Reconstructive Surgery was started back in the late 1990’s. Our fellowship was first accredited in 2000 when we accepted our first fellow. The current division consists of three fellowship-trained Urogynecologists and an Advanced Practice Nurse. The division has trained fellows that have gone on to practice in many Universities around the country. After a brief period of reorganization in 2010-2012 we regained our fellowship accreditation under the ACGME in 2012.

Our division works closely with the divisions of Urology, Colorectal Surgery, Plastic Surgery and Physical Therapy in order to provide a breadth of services to help our patients. The department of Obstetrics and Gynecology has specialists in Minimally Invasive Gynecology and Vulvar Disorders that greatly enhance our services and help provide a well-rounded educational experience.

Although Cooper University Healthcare is the core teaching campus where we see our patients and perform surgeries, we provide urogynecologic care at many of the surrounding community hospitals from Central to Southern New Jersey. Our outpatient facilities are located in the suburbs of New Jersey. We have two offices in Voorhees and Hamilton New Jersey in addition to our fellow run office in Camden. Our offices consist of the most up-to-date diagnostic and treatment modalities in our field.

Our division’s faculty is well respected nationally for their skills in vaginal reconstructive surgery and they are considered key opinion leaders in their field. They are all founders of international mission organizations that provide much needed care to women around the world and these numerous unique opportunities continue to enhance our program.

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About the Faculty

Karolynn Echols, M.D., FACOG

Dr. Echols is the Fellowship Program Director for the FPMRS fellowship and Associate Professor of Ob/Gyn at CMSRU. She received her medical degree from Temple University School of Medicine and completed her Ob/Gyn residency at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital. Dr. Echols received her FPMRS fellowship training from Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. She also received her ABOG board certification in FPMRS as part of the first class of senior applicants in 2013. She is most interested in the diagnosis and management of genitourinary fistulas, and the use of endoscopy and integrative/alternative medicine in FPMRS. She is a founding member of the Global Medicine Special Interest Group for the American Urogynecologic Society. Dr. Echols has been chosen to be a principal investigator for the FDA-required and industry sponsored research project on the Restorelle graft versus native tissue repair utilization in pelvic reconstructive surgery. She has received numerous teaching awards and has been frequently awarded “Top Doc” in SJ and South Jersey Magazine.

Adam Holzberg, DO, FACOG

Dr. Holzberg is an Associate Professor and serves as the Division Head for FPMRS. He received his medical degree from New York College of Osteopathic Medicine and his OB/GYN residency and FPMRS fellowship at Cooper University Hospital. He is one of the four original fellowship co-directors and is the current chair of the Fellowship Program. His area of interest is mesh use in reconstructive surgery where he is widely published. He is a founding member of the Mesh Special Interest Group for the American Urogynecologic Society. He serves as the Cooper principal investigator for an FDA required and industry sponsored research project on the Uphold lite synthetic mesh kit.

Allen Seftel, M.D., FACS

Dr. Seftel is Professor and Chair of Urology in the Department of Surgery at Cooper University Hospital, Camden, NJ since 2009. He completed his medical training at State University of New York, Brooklyn, NY and his residency at North Shore University Hospital, Manhasset, NY, State University of New York, Brooklyn, NY, and Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH. He also completed a fellowship in Urologic Disease-Imotence. Dr. Seftel has served on multiple editorial boards and is currently Chief of the Educational Council for the American Urological Association Foundation Council. He is widely published and internationally renowned and specializes in erectile function/dysfunction. He is an integral part of the teaching faculty for the FPMRS fellows during their urology rotation.

Manoj Patel, M.D., FACS

Dr. Patel is Associate Professor of Urology, co-director of the Urologic Oncology Program and the program director for the urology residency program. A graduate of St. George’s University School of Medicine, Dr. Patel completed his residency at Brown University Hospital and robotic fellowship in Celebration Florida. He is also an integral part of the teaching faculty for the FPMRS fellows during their urology rotation and serves as the clerkship director for the fellows’ urology rotations.

Michitaka Kawata, M.D., FACS

Dr. Kawata is an Assistant Professor of Surgery and the director of Anal Physiology at CMSRU. He graduated from Temple University School of Medicine and completed his Colon and Rectal Surgery fellowship at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. As a member of the Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery with special interest in pelvic floor dysfunction he is an integral part of the FPMRS fellowship as the fellows gain the majority portion of their colorectal experience with him. He serves as the clerkship director for the fellows’ colorectal rotations.

Michael DiSanto, PhD

Dr. DiSanto is an Associate Professor of Surgery and Biomedical Sciences and the Director of Urology Research. He received his Bachelors Degree in Biochemistry from Albright College and his PhD from Drew University in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. A prolific researcher, he has been awarded multiple federal grants. He is part of our research team and serves as the mentor to our basic science projects.
About the Faculty (continued)

Martha Mathews, M.D., FACS
Dr. Mathews is an Associate Professor of Surgery, Head of the Division of Plastic Surgery and program director for the plastic surgery residency program. She is a graduate of Jefferson Medical College and completed her residency in plastic surgery at Eastern Virginia Graduate School of Medicine. She serves as the FPMRS fellowship clerkship director for the fellows' plastic surgery rotation.

Saifuddin T. Mama M.D., MPH, FACOG
Dr. Saifuddin T. Mama M.D. MPH is Associate Professor and Head, Section of Minimally Invasive Gynecology and Robotics at Cooper University Hospital. A graduate of Yale University with a Master of Public Health degree, Dr. Mama completed his medical degree at Thomas Jefferson College and his Ob/Gyn residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. He has received numerous teaching awards. Dr. Mama’s specialties include pediatric and adolescent gynecology, pelvic reconstructive surgery, and minimally invasive gynecologic surgery. Dr. Mama has ten years of experience in multiple medical missions volunteering abroad in Africa and Asia as a teaching attending and surgeon.

Robert P. Siefring, M.D., FACOG
Dr. Siefring is Assistant Professor of OB/GYN and Medical Director of the Center for Vulvovaginal Disease at Cooper Hospital. He is a graduate of the University of Guadalajara and completed his Ob/GYN residency at Cooper Hospital. He has received multiple teaching awards and has been selected as a “Top Doc” in South Jersey Magazine. The fellows gain most of their experience in vulvar diseases with Dr. Siefring during his monthly vulvovaginitis clinic.

Gunda Simpkins, MSN, MPH
Gunda Simpkins is Coordinator of clinical research for the Ob/Gyn department and has over 20 years of experience in Perinatal and Women’s Health nursing. She was educated at the University of Delaware (BSN, Sigma Theta Tau) and Villanova University (MSN) and has recently earned a Master’s degree in Public Health from UMDNJ-Stratford (Delta Omega). She participates in coordinating all aspects of FPMRS research including our sponsored research.

Krystal Hunter, MBA
Krystal Hunter serves as the lead statistician for the Cooper Research Institute. She received her BA in Economics from Spelman College in Atlanta, GA and her MBA from Rutgers University Graduate School of Management, New Brunswick, NJ. She is an integral part of the FPMRS research committee and contributes to all research projects from their inception to publication. She also actively participates in all Journal Clubs for the division. She has authored numerous peer reviewed papers and instructs the fellows and faculty in statistical analysis.

Fellowship Program

Our fellowship is designed to provide the fellow the education and training necessary to function as a consultant in the field of FPMRS. The fellows are given a well rounded experience in Urology, Colorectal Surgery, Plastic Surgery, and Research. They are also given the opportunity to explore their interests further in FPMRS during their Clinical Elective rotation in the 3rd year. The educational curriculum has been designed to meet the objectives set forth in the Proposed ACGME Program Requirements for Residency Education in FPMRS. The didactic conference schedule is designed to cover all aspects of FPMRS. However, it is recognized that it would be impossible to provide a specific conference on every single aspect of the curriculum, or for the fellow to be exposed to patients with every possible diagnosis and problem in FPMRS. As a result we have also incorporated quarterly lectures on atypical topics encountered in FPMRS. Also as an adult learner, the fellow is expected to refer to the educational curriculum to direct his or her learning activities, and to recognize areas of weakness or lack of experience or exposure and bring them to the attention of the program director in order to personalize their curriculum to strengthen those areas. An example of the educational monthly schedule is shown below.
Research
During the FPMRS fellowship, the fellows participate fully in the theoretical and technical aspects of clinical and/or basic science research. Fellows are required to take Statistical Methods for Data Analysis, a graduate level course at Thomas Jefferson University during the first fellowship year. During this course they learn to apply the principles and techniques of basic statistical analysis to research. They are expected to actively conduct research during time away from clinical care responsibilities. The annual didactic sessions include research design, grant writing, research methodology, and scientific writing and presentation skills. They obtain an understanding for how to conduct FPMRS research and learn to work as part of a research team and develop skills and experience needed to critically review others’ research. The FPMRS fellow is required to complete and publish one thesis project by the end of the fellowship. This thesis should make a meaningful contribution to the FPMRS literature. Monthly research meetings are scheduled to help with this endeavor. Quarterly meetings are expected to take place between the fellow and the faculty advisor with continuous oversight and direction provided by the director of FPMRS research, the research nurse and the biostatistician.

QI Projects
With the newest policy revision of the ACGME, the fellows are required to describe one learning activity to identify strengths, deficiencies and limits in their knowledge and expertise (self-reflection and self-assessment); set learning improvement goals and identify and perform appropriate learning activities to achieve self-identified goals. One such goal instituted was to improve the efficiency of our fellow-run clinic. This included all aspects of health care i.e. patient wait times, improving accessibility of clinic resources, patient education and billing and coding.

International Opportunities
There are several opportunities for international exposure and experience for the fellows. The entire core faculty in FPMRS as well as many faculty in the OB/GYN department and Cooper University Hospital are extensively involved globally and this is translated into the curriculum. The division of FPMRS believes that in order to develop globally sensitive physicians, it is essential for those in training to participate in healthcare in other regions of the world. Thus the division of FPMRS offers the fellows ample opportunity to become active internationally. Such places include but are not limited to the Jamaica, Ghana, Rwanda or Vietnam. Additionally to enhance our fellows’ education in the repair of fistula, our division in conjunction with the International Organization of Women and Development and International Healthcare Volunteers send, on a voluntary basis, a fellow along with at least one member of the faculty to either Ghana, West Africa or Rwanda, East Africa for a period of two weeks during their senior year. The fellows can also develop contacts outside of Cooper and make their own arrangements if desired.

The Jaffe Family Women’s Care Center
The Jaffe Family Women’s Care Center at Cooper University Hospital provides obstetrics and gynecologic care for patients with financial burdens. The two primary goals of this clinic are to provide services for resource poor patients who otherwise cannot afford obstetrical medical care and to provide education for the residents and fellows. All subspecialty services for obstetrics and gynecology are provided including gynecology, reproductive endocrinology, maternal fetal medicine and female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery/urogynecology. This is one of few clinics that provide such services to resource poor patients in the entire country. The Urogynecology clinic is run by the fellow(s) one half-day session a week for 3 weeks in a month with attending supervision. The 4th week is dedicated to the The Jaffe Family Women’s Care Center OR. It is a great opportunity for the fellow to work as a supervisor and clinical instructor. There is always at least one resident assigned to this clinic that evaluates the patients and presents the cases to the fellow than subsequently the attending. The fellows have the opportunity to make independent clinical decisions and teach residents under faculty supervision.

Required Courses
Statistical Methods for Data Analysis
Usually taken during the 1st year of training, this 4-month course is given weekly at Thomas Jefferson University in the early evening. The fellow learns to apply the principles and techniques of basic statistical analysis and by the completion of the course be able to critique the literature more objectively. Lectures and workshop sessions are used to familiarize the fellow with issues relating to both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The fellow has the opportunity to use a computer package for analysis.

Public Speaking
This 3-month course is given weekly by Camden County Community College at Cooper University Hospital. The fellow is taught and has the opportunity to practice the skills and methods that will ease stage anxiety and allow the fellow to present confidently and effectively. The fellow learns to utilize verbal and non-verbal cues successfully and prepare visual aids to catch and maintain the audience’s attention. The class consists of a small number of students that allows the fellow to apply all learned skills in a relatively stress-free environment.
How to Apply

The Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery Fellowship Program at Cooper University Hospital/Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, participates in the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) and all information is processed through this system without exception. Information regarding the ERAS application process and timeline is available on the Websites listed below:

Association of American Medical Colleges
www.aamc.org/eras

ERAS Fellowship Document Office
www.erasfellowshipdocuments.org

ERAS applications must contain the following information in order for your application to be considered:

- Common application form
- Curriculum vitae
- Medical school transcript
- Three original letters of recommendation, one of which must be from your current or most recent training director
- Personal statement describing your training goals and future career plans
- ECFMG certification (IMG only)
- USLME reports (1, 2 and 3).

The program director and two additional faculty members will review applicant files. Invitation for interview will be based upon their recommendations.

Program Eligibility

Eligibility for the Urogynecology Fellowship requires a minimum of three years of ACGME medical training in internal medicine or emergency medicine. Individuals accepted for a position in the fellowship program must be U.S. citizen, classified as a resident alien, or hold a J-1 visa.

The application deadline for the 2014-15 academic year is August 31, 2014.

The Cooper Campus and Surrounding Area

Cooper’s commitment to clinical and research excellence will continue to fuel growth in the coming years. Cooper recently broke ground on a new state-of-the-art four story, 103,000 square foot Cooper Cancer Institute (opening Fall 2013), and our new four-year allopathic medical school CMSRU opened its doors to the first class of medical students in August 2012. These endeavors will be supported by the success and recognition that Cooper has earned for the growth of its many Centers of Excellence, including: the Cooper Heart Institute, Cooper Cancer Institute, Cooper Critical Care, Cooper Neurological Institute, Cooper Bone and Joint Institute and Cooper Radiosurgery Program, and the Cooper Trauma Center.

The campus is located in the heart of the Camden’s business district. The academic medical center campus is easily accessible by car or public transportation—the commuter high-speed line and bus terminal are located a half-block from the campus.

Your fellowship is intense, but satisfying work. At the end of the day you will have numerous occasions and opportunities to relax and pursue your favorite interests. The surrounding areas of Cooper University Hospital are very affable and welcoming for newcomers. You can choose between a quiet, convenient and cozy life in such quaint towns as Collingswood, Cherry Hill, Voorhees or Haddonfield, which are just 10 minutes away from Cooper or you can enjoy the hustle and bustle of Philadelphia, the city of Brotherly Love, which is just a mile long drive over the Ben Franklin Bridge or a ferry boat ride. Whether you are single, partnered or married, with or without children, you will find living arrangements, cultural and entertainment options to fit every lifestyle.

Philadelphia has the big city, small town feel that combines a vibrant downtown with the outdoor activities and wildlife of Fairmount Park, which traverses the city with its trails, streams, riverside and noble architecture. It has something for every taste: cool art galleries, and vintage shops of South street, food trucks peddling delicious Philly’s cheesesteaks, and a wide range of exquisite restaurants. You can get a glorious view of Philadelphia after climbing the famous “Rocky” steps at its amazing Art Museum, and begin your exploring from there. There are numerous venues for sports fans as Philadelphia is the host to professional baseball, basketball, football and hockey teams.

If you have an adventurous spirit, and like to travel, South Jersey is the perfect location. Not only does Philadelphia have an international airport for domestic and international travel, you can also take a day or weekend trip to NYC, Baltimore or Washington DC, visit the popular beaches of the Jersey Shore or organize a trip to one of its many fabulous vineyards. Atlantic City, with its many casinos, concert venues and restaurants is also only an hour away.

Closer to home, within a short walk or drive from Camden’s waterfront on the scenic Delaware River boasts the world famous Adventure Aquarium with 8,000 aquatic species including over two dozen sharks. There is also Campbell Field where you can enjoy the River Sharks minor league baseball games and Saturday night fireworks, the Battleship USS New Jersey, and the Susquehanna Bank Center where you can catch all the latest and greatest acts. No matter how you choose to enjoy your free time, you are guaranteed to make the right choice.
Cooper Campus Map

The most up-to-date directions to Cooper University Hospital are available at cooperhealth.org/directions.