Exploring the Application of Artificial Intelligence in Obesity Care: A Workshop

Committee

Ruth G. Bernheim

Member

Ruth Gaare Bernheim, J.D., M.P.H., a University of Virginia School of Medicine Professor of Public Health Sciences, teaches graduate public health law and policy courses. Her professional activities have included serving as chair of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Ethics Subcommittee; on the Council on Education for Public Health Education (CEPH); as a member of the CDC Board of Scientific Counselors, Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response (OPHPR), and as president of the Virginia Public Health Association. She also chaired the national Expert Panel on Population Health Across Professions for the ASPPH. Her research experience includes being a co-investigator on a Virginia Department of Health-led project titled, Excellence in State Public Health Law, funded by the Aspen Institute and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; and a Co-Principal Investigator on a project titled "Public Health Research Ethics," funded by the Office of Research Integrity (HHS), under a cooperative agreement with the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). She is the coauthor of two textbooks, Public Health Law, Ethics and Policy (Foundation Press, 2015, 2021) and Essentials of Public Health Ethics (Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2015). She is a member of the Gamma Pi Delta Omega Honorary Society.

Robin P. Blackstone

Member

Robin Leigh Pavlich Blackstone, MD, is a physician and healthcare systems innovator based in New York City. She is the founder of Blackstone Health, a life sciences, technology, and communications company focused on advancing next-generation healthcare models integrating artificial intelligence, governance, and clinical accountability. Dr. Blackstone previously served as President of the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery and was a co-architect of the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP), a national accreditation and quality improvement registry in bariatric surgery. Her work centers on obesity care, clinical quality measurement, and the ethical and operational integration of AI into healthcare delivery systems. She has written and spoken extensively on physician accountability, measurable outcomes, longitudinal care models, and the redesign of payment and delivery systems to support prevention-oriented care. Her research and writing explore how AI can augment clinical decision-making while preserving professional standards and patient trust. She is the author of Obesity: The Medical Practitioner's Essential Guide (Springer, 2016) and Doctor AI: Reimagining Health. Dr. Blackstone received her MD from the University of Texas at San Antonio and completed her training in General Surgery at the University of Colorado.

Allison Gertel-Rosenberg

Member

Allison Gertel-Rosenberg serves as Vice President and Chief Policy and Prevention Officer at Nemours Children's Health, leading the organization's National Office of Policy and Prevention. Her work focuses on advancing federal policy, advocacy, and innovative prevention strategies to improve population health and well-being for children. She has led nationally impactful initiatives such as Kindergarten Readiness, Moving Health Care Upstream, Let's Move! Child Care, Healthy Kids, Healthy Future, and the National Early Care and Education Learning Collaborative with the CDC. Widely recognized as a leader in population health, Ms. Gertel-Rosenberg regularly publishes and presents on child health, social drivers of health, and cross-sector partnerships. She earned a B.S. in public health from Rutgers University and an M.S. in health policy and management from the Harvard School of Public Health.

Katie Koecher

Member

Katie Koecher is a Principal Scientist in Nutrition Research at the General Mills Bell Institute of Health and Nutrition. Her current role is leadership of strategy and nutrition research for weight management. Her research has spanned dietary fiber, whole grains, glycemia, gut microbiome and precision nutrition. She is also involved in artificial intelligence exploration for nutrition research at General Mills. She is currently a member of the American Society for Nutrition and is on the leadership committee for the Carbohydrate Committee at the Institute for the Advancement of Food and Nutrition Sciences. She has contributed to 27 published research works in peer-reviewed journal and book chapters. She holds a PhD and B.S. in Food Science and Nutrition from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities.

David M. Liebovitz

Member

David M. Liebovitz, MD, is Professor of Medicine and Associate Vice Chair for Clinical Informatics in the Department of Medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, where he also co-directs the Center for Medical Education in Data Science and Digital Health within the Institute for Artificial Intelligence in Medicine. He previously served as Chief Medical Information Officer at both Northwestern Memorial Hospital and the University of Chicago Medicine. Dr. Liebovitz's research and professional expertise span clinical informatics, AI-enabled clinical decision support, and the application of large language models in healthcare. He has contributed to landmark studies on metabolic interventions for COVID-19, including the COVID-OUT trial published in the New England Journal of Medicine, which demonstrated efficacy of metformin in patients with overweight and obesity. He develops open-source AI tools for clinical and educational use and has presented on AI in clinical care to the ABIM Board of Directors and the ACGME. He is a Fellow of the American Medical Informatics Association and received the John X. Thomas, Jr. Best Teachers of Feinberg Award. Dr. Liebovitz holds an MD from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a BS in Electrical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with board certification in both Internal Medicine and Clinical Informatics.

Chirag Patel

Member

Chirag Patel, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Biomedical Informatics at Harvard Medical School, where he previously served as an Assistant Professor and Research Associate. His professional background includes significant experience as a Senior Software Engineer at Applied Biosystems, where he developed computational methods for genomic surveillance and DNA sequence detection. Dr. Patel’s research expertise centers on the development of computational data science and artificial intelligence methods to disentangle environmental and genetic drivers of human disease. He pioneered the "exposome-wide association study" (ExWAS) for systematic environmental discovery and established the "vibration of effects" framework to evaluate how analytic choices influence the robustness of observational research. His current work leverages large-scale datasets, including insurance claims and biobanks, to address impacts of genetic and environmental exposures on chronic disease risk, with an emphasis on diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and dementia. Recognized as a 2015 Kavli Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, Dr. Patel currently serves as a member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) Standing Committee on Evidence Synthesis. He earned his MS and PhD in Biomedical Informatics from Stanford University and completed postdoctoral training in informatics at the same institution. His prior NRC service includes contributing to several NASEM committees focused on emerging environmental health decisions, diet and chronic disease, and human health effects assessments.

Chris Pernell

Member

Chris T. Pernell is a dynamic physician leader and social change agent. In her practice, she focuses on health justice, community-based advocacy, and population-wide health promotion and disease prevention. A celebrated visionary and apostle of public health, Dr. Pernell serves as the director of the NAACP Center for Health Equity. The Center is charged with driving equitable health outcomes and transforming healthcare systems while valuing the whole person. Prior to joining the NAACP, she launched The Esther Group, a public health consulting and health equity strategy firm. Previously, she served as the first chief strategic integration and health equity officer at University Hospital in Newark, New Jersey. Prior to joining University Hospital, she led the 1199SEIU/League Labor Management Initiatives (LMI) Workplace and Community Health Program. Dr. Pernell is a fellow and regent-at-large for the American College of Preventive Medicine. She holds an appointment as a clinical assistant professor at the Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. Dr. Pernell graduated cum laude from Princeton University before attending Duke University School of Medicine in 2003. She received her M.P.H. from the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health in 2011 and completed the Johns Hopkins General Preventive Medicine Residency.

Bruce Y. Lee

Chair

Bruce Y. Lee, MD, MBA is a writer, journalist, professor, systems modeler, AI/computational and digital health expert, and entrepreneur. He has over two-and-a-half decades of experience in industry and academia developing artificial intelligence (AI), mathematical and computational modeling, and other computer-aided methods, approaches, and tools to assist a wide range of decision makers in health, medicine, and public health. Currently, he is a Professor of Health Policy and Management at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate School of Public Health where he is the Founder and Executive Director of both the Center for Advanced Technology and Communication in Health (CATCH) at CUNY, which aims to develop and implement new technologies and approaches to help decision making and communication in health and public health, and the Artificial Intelligence, Modeling, and Informatics for Nutrition Guidance and Systems (AIMINGS) Center, which serves as the AI center for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Nutrition for Precision Health (NPH) consortium. He has served as a systems science, AI, and computer modeling expert and advisor for a range of different entities. This has included serving on advisory boards and committees for the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), the World Health Organization (WHO), the NIH, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), and a number of other organizations. For example, he Chairs the Evidence Synthesis and Communications in Diet and Chronic Disease Relationships standing committee and serves on the Food and Nutrition Board (FNB) and Roundtable on Obesity Solutions (ROOS) for NASEM. Dr. Lee has written extensively for the general media. He is a Senior Contributor for Forbes, covering a wide range of health-related topics including medicine, wellness, digital health, and the business of health and having written over 2,000 articles with many of them having been selected as Editors Choices. His articles in Forbes have been read over 90 million times since January 2019. He is a regular contributor for Psychology Today, where he has a regular blog called "A Funny Bone to Pick" that has been read over 4.5 million times since 2021, and maintains the “Minded by Science” newsletter on Substack. Dr. Lee received his B.A. from Harvard University, M.D. from Harvard Medical School, and M.B.A. from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. He completed his internal medicine residency training at the University of California, San Diego.