

CLINICAL PSYCHIATRY TRACK



Adam Alghalith, MD, MS (he/him)

MD: David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

BA & MS: University of Pennsylvania

Adam grew up in rural Missouri, where his curiosity and creativity led him to diverse pursuits, from building a pinball machine to exploring virtual economies. He completed undergraduate degrees in Physics and Biochemistry, as well as a Master's in Chemistry, at the University of Pennsylvania. During this time, he conducted cutting-edge research in oncology and autoimmune diseases, with findings published in *Nature Communications*. Originally enrolled in the UCLA/CalTech MD/PhD program, Adam chose to focus more on clinical endeavors in medical school. While at UCLA, Adam co-founded a Special Olympics chapter, offering free sports physicals, health education, and integrative medicine workshops for athletes with disabilities. He also co-developed a longitudinal disability curriculum for the medical school. Adam's research interests have focused on the intersection of health, policy, and urban environments. As part of Streets for All, a Los Angeles-based organization, he contributed to the passage of key legislation in California, including Senate Bill 922 to expedite sustainable transportation projects and Assembly Bill 2147 to decriminalize jaywalking. He collaborated with the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge to study disparities in environmental exposures and their impact on community health, as well as the outcomes of New York City's Universal Access to Counsel law. He also authored case reports on kratom use disorder and social factors affecting care for underserved populations. In his free time, Adam enjoys playing intramural soccer, surfing, and karaoke.



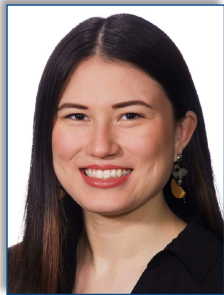
Eric Bean, MD, MA, MBE (he/him)

MD & MBE: Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania

MA: IE Business School, Madrid, Spain

BA: Claremont McKenna College

Born and raised on a farm in rural Iowa, where his family raised horses, alpacas, and goats, Eric's nontraditional path to psychiatry reflects his deep-seated curiosity about the natural world and the human experience within it. After studying economics and playing soccer at Claremont McKenna College, he worked in consulting in Los Angeles and later moved to Madrid to help launch a data analytics startup called Carto. Helping a close friend navigate a devastating mental illness inspired Eric to pursue a career in medicine. He returned to the US to attend medical school at the University of Pennsylvania, where he concurrently pursued a Master of Bioethics, exploring the ethical nuances of mental healthcare, including the ethics of involuntary treatment, AI psychotherapy, and the emerging field of psychedelic-assisted therapy. As a researcher, Eric has examined the efficacy of intravenous ketamine for severe bipolar depression and peer mentoring programs for postoperative depression. He also worked with the Penn Psychedelics Collaborative to help organize "Philadelic," a conference promoting interdisciplinary research on psychedelics as therapeutic tools. Eric looks forward to a multi-disciplinary career in psychiatry, where he can explore his passion for transforming mental healthcare delivery via innovative therapies and technologies. Outside the hospital, he is often found playing pickup basketball, exploring the vibrant NYC music scene, or pampering his two mischievous cats.



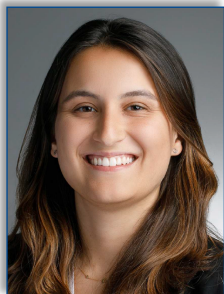
Isabella Cuan, MD, MSc (she/her)

MD: New York University Grossman School of Medicine

MS: University of Manchester

BA: University of Pennsylvania

Isabella's journey in medicine integrates art, science, and social advocacy. As a Cuban-Filipina woman growing up in Sparta, New Jersey, her early fascination with identity and storytelling shaped her commitment to amplifying underrepresented voices. Majoring in Neuroscience and minoring in the History of Art, Isabella conducted research on decision-making processes, led patient interviews in nursing homes, and contributed to a multisite opioid risk reduction study. Her academic and humanitarian efforts earned her the prestigious Thouron Award, which funded her Master's in Medical Humanities in England. Her dissertation proposed photography as a medium to reduce physician burnout, strengthen clinical skills, and deepen professional identity. Following her graduate studies, she remained in the UK working for Refugee Action's Asylum Crisis Project. In medical school, Isabella's commitment to addressing social determinants of health and immigrant experiences continued to flourish. As a Summer Rudin Fellow, she designed and executed a qualitative study of the social history in immigrant health assessments, presenting her findings at the Health Humanities Consortium Conference. As Director of the NYU Asylum Clinic, Isabella oversaw all clinic operations, organized training for more than 50 healthcare professionals in collaboration with Physicians for Human Rights and developed a post-evaluation care team to connect asylum seekers with essential resources. She was also a member of the Physicians for Human Rights Student Advisory Board, serving on the Human Trafficking Committee to create an interdisciplinary educational series on labor and sex trafficking in healthcare. Her leadership at the EMPOWER Lab included directing a retrospective cohort study analyzing vulnerabilities to trafficking and designing evidence-based public health infographics. She has been inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society. Isabella has been a professional photographer since 2014, with work including portraiture, documentary projects, and collaborative exhibitions. One of her most meaningful projects is a documentary exploring her grandparents' immigrant narrative, documenting their experiences of fleeing Cuba during Fidel Castro's dictatorship. Isabella also applies her artistic sensibilities in medicine, using photography to teach observation skills and emotional resilience to medical students.

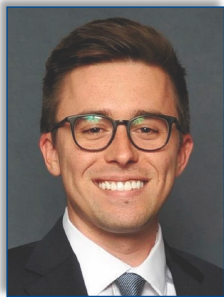


Gabriela de Queiroz Campos, MD, MS (she/her)

MD: Yale School of Medicine

BS & MS: Brown University

Gabriela was born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil, and moved to the United States at 18 to pursue her undergraduate studies at Brown University. At Brown she earned her undergraduate degree in Cognitive Neuroscience and a Master's in Psychology, receiving the Davids Prize in Clinical Psychology for her academic achievements and contributions to the field. During medical school at Yale School of Medicine, Gabriela served as both a mentor and as Executive Director of F-1 Doctors—a global mentorship organization supporting international students aspiring to pursue medical education in the U.S.—where she helped guide mentees in navigating the complex process of applying to medical school. She advocated for greater inclusivity in medical education, providing tailored mentorship on everything from crafting compelling personal narratives to navigating complex visa and financial barriers. During medical school, she was also involved in research through the Mood Disorders Research Program, where she published a systematic review on the rest-activity cycle in bipolar disorder, and through the Pediatric Gender Program, where she performed qualitative research on the lived experience of trans men with endometriosis. She was also involved in narrative medicine projects and was a student facilitator for the Healer's Art class. In her work with Yale's Addiction Medicine Collaborative, she co-designed a monthly podcast discussion series featuring expert panelists discussing harm reduction, stigma reduction, and evidence-based practices in addiction medicine. Her presentation at the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry demonstrated her skill in fostering interprofessional approaches to substance use disorders. Outside of medicine, Gabriela enjoys swimming, trying out new recipes, and road cycling.



Jakub Denkiewicz, MD (he/him)

MD: The University of Tennessee Health Science Center
BS: The University of Alabama

A first-generation college student and recipient of a full-tuition Presidential Scholarship, Jakub graduated from The University of Alabama *summa cum laude* with a degree in Psychology. His undergraduate research in the Embodied Learning Design and Educational Neuroscience Lab included using voxel-based morphometry to study structural brain differences in Alzheimer's Disease in comparison with mild cognitive impairment as well as running EEG studies on numerical cognition. During medical school he received a T35 National Research Service Award and worked on a multisite study examining pain sensitivity in patients with Alzheimer's Disease and cancer. As President of UTHSC's chapter of PsychSIGN, he spearheaded a partnership with the South Memphis Wellness and Stress Clinic to create a new psychiatric treatment space, funded by a Helping Hands Grant from the American Psychiatric Association. Jakub has also been consistently involved in leading student wellness initiatives. In college he was the Vice Chair of the Student Health and Wellbeing Advisory Board. In medical school he was a board member of UTHSC's Wellness Committee, through which he organized a campus-wide Suicide Awareness Week, reframing wellness initiatives to focus on students' basic needs, such as safety and belonging. He also co-authored a publication and presented on medical students' attitudes toward wellness programs. Jakub also served as COO and Vice President of Research and Development for Cope, a nonprofit organization based out of UTHSC that hopes to "...end burnout and create a culture of health in medical training." Jakub has been inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society. He is a marathon runner.



Alexander Fang, MD (he/him)

MD: SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University College of Medicine
BS: University of Delaware

With a degree in Pre-Veterinary Medicine and Animal Biosciences, Alexander was initially accepted into veterinary school. However, his work with patients, particularly during his role working at a veterinary practice, shifted his focus to human medicine. As a Senior Research Associate and Keith London Research Fellow at SUNY Downstate and NYU Langone Health, Alexander led and contributed to numerous clinical studies. His work includes aggregating the largest adolescent varicocele database in known literature, investigating nocturia in patients with psychiatric medication use, and analyzing suicide risk assessment tools in diverse adolescent populations. He has authored multiple manuscripts and over 15 posters and oral presentations at national and international conferences, earning him the SUNY Downstate Alumni Association Research Scholarship. Alexander has served as CEPC Chair of the Medical Student Liaison Committee for the Class of 2024. He was a Near Peer Educator leading sessions on clinical reasoning, patient interviews, and physical examination techniques for junior medical students, while also developing innovative assessment tools for surgical resident evaluation, culminating in a presentation at the World Congress of Robotic Surgery. Alexander launched the SUNY Downstate Garden, providing fresh produce to students and the local community. He also organized wellness programs, speaker events, and published a cookbook focusing on simple, nutritious recipes to promote healthy living. He has been inducted into both the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society and the Gold Humanism Honor Society. Alexander is a skilled percussionist who has been inspired by his grandfather, a professional jazz pianist, and has played in alternative rock bands and recorded a jazz CD with his grandfather. He is fluent in Spanish.



Madeleine Granovetter, MD (she/her)

MD: Rutgers, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
BA: Harvard College

Growing up in Glen Ridge, New Jersey with a brother on the autism spectrum, Maddy was inspired early to study and champion the mental health needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. While obtaining her degree in Molecular and Cellular Biology, Maddy served as President of Harvard's Friday Night Club, organizing sensory-friendly social activities for Boston-area teens with autism. During a year-long fellowship at the NIH's Social and Behavioral Research Branch, she led a study addressing the psychological implications of caregiving among siblings of children with rare metabolic disorders and published her findings in the *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*. During medical school she conducted research at the Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, exploring how early intervention providers navigate making referrals for autism evaluations with families. Her findings, which highlighted inconsistencies in referral practices, were presented at the 2023 International Society for Autism Research conference in Stockholm, Sweden. She also engaged with the Director of Early Intervention Services at Children's Specialized Hospital to advocate for systemic improvements, reflecting her commitment to translating research into actionable change. Maddy has also worked to integrate the humanities into medical education, co-creating and leading the first Narrative Medicine course at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson, with the goal of teaching students how storytelling fosters empathetic patient-physician relationships. Her course helped prompt the creation of the school's Distinction in Medical Humanities (DIMH) program, which Maddy graduated with in recognition of her contributions. During her fourth year of medical school, she continued to mentor students by creating a didactic series that used short stories and creative essays to teach concepts in psychiatry, which she taught to undergraduates. She also co-developed an OSCE assessing COVID-19 vaccine counseling, utilized across multiple specialties, to evaluate and improve this competency among medical students. Maddy has been inducted into the AOA Honor Society.



Jackie Lawson, MD (she/they)

MD: New York University Grossman School of Medicine
BA: Columbia University

Born and raised in Tampa, Florida in a Mexican-American household, Jackie worked multiple jobs throughout high school, graduated as valedictorian, and earned a full scholarship to Columbia University, where she majored in Psychology. At Columbia, Jackie pursued research on mouse models of schizophrenia, drug addiction, and Parkinson's disease, co-authoring multiple publications (including in *Nature Communications*) and presenting at national conferences. At NYU, she was awarded the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) Summer Medical Student Fellowship and conducted research on an open-label phase II trial investigating cannabidiol as a treatment for autism spectrum disorder in children. Her work led to poster presentations at AACAP and the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology. Jackie's passion for community advocacy is reflected in her role as Continuing Care Coordinator at NYU's Asylum Clinic. In addition, as an advocate with Mount Sinai's Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention program, Jackie provided emotional and logistical support to survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence. Jackie has served as co-leader of NYU's LGBTQ+ Med, where she expanded the Queer Mentor Advising Program to connect students with physician mentors and created a gender-inclusive language checklist for faculty. She also organized training sessions on LGBTQIA+ care for volunteers at the NYC Free Clinic. As treasurer of the Latino Medical Student Association, Jackie managed the chapter's finances and organized cultural and educational events, including panels on Latino health disparities and networking programs for underrepresented students in medicine. As a founding member of the Student Wellness Committee at NYU, she organized initiatives to address the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on her classmates. Jackie has been inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society.



Benjamin Ogedegbe, MD (he/him)

MD: New York University Grossman School of Medicine
BS: George Washington University

A first-generation Nigerian-American, Ben was awarded a full cost of attendance scholarship to play soccer at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), where he received multiple distinctions, including the Summit League Distinguished Scholar, Summit League Academic Honor Roll, and election into the Alpha Lambda Delta and Phi Eta Sigma honor societies. He also cofounded and was public relations officer for the school's chapter of the National Organization for the Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers.

After a few years, he transferred to GWU, again with scholarship support, and was recognized as an Arthur Ashe Junior Sports Scholar as he continued in Division 1 soccer, spending summers training with a variety of teams, including Nigeria's Olympic team and DC United's professional team. He unfortunately sustained a career-defining injury requiring bilateral hip surgery, which spurred his interest in the psychological aspects of recovery. After graduation, Ben spent two years as a postbaccalaureate research assistant at the NIH's National Institute of Aging, participating in several projects investigating DNA repair in diseases associated with aging, leading to a peer-reviewed publication and presentations at the NIH Postbaccalaureate Research Symposium. While in Baltimore, Ben volunteered for two years as an assistant coach for Soccer Without Borders, a nonprofit soccer program for refugee children. In medical school Ben liaised for the Student Diversity Initiative, working to integrate topics on health equity, structural racism, and diverse identities into the curriculum. His efforts contributed to the restructuring of NYU's social determinants of health block and the integration of health disparities into tested content. Additionally, as a member of the LCME student committee, Ben helped design and analyze surveys to improve the student experience during NYU's reaccreditation process. Ben is an avid DJ, finding joy in bringing people together through music, performing at events, bars, and clubs in New York City.



Tonia Ogundipe, MD (she/her)

MD: Columbia University
BA: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

As an early witness to how mental illness is often misunderstood, stigmatized, and exacerbated by intergenerational trauma, Tonia has long been passionate about service and advocacy. Originally from Maryland, Tonia graduated Columbia University with a degree in Earth Science, while leading programs geared toward student wellness. After college she began her journey as an assistant at a Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinic in Washington, D.C., where she frequently encountered clients who had endured food and

housing insecurity, domestic violence, gun violence, and other forms of trauma. She soon determined that a career in medicine would be a realization and a driver of her social action. In medical school Tonia was the Clinic Manager for the Mount Sinai Human Rights Program, and she coordinated evaluations and assisted in the creation of medical affidavits for those seeking asylum. She also worked as a Chronic Care Senior and Mental Health Clinic Senior in the East Harlem Health Outreach Partnership, Mount Sinai's student-run free clinic. Tonia has contributed to various research projects including one evaluating the racial and ethnic biases of the Vaginal Birth After Cesarean Calculator, contributing to a publication in *Reproductive Sciences* and co-developing a successful presentation for hospital leadership that advocated for eliminating race-based variables in obstetric care. She also contributed to studies examining the resilience of individuals with inflammatory bowel disease and social cognition in pregnancy and postpartum. Lastly, as a co-leader of IcahnBeWell, she collaborated with administration to create a comprehensive wellness resource guide for students and organized wellness events during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Charlotte Pierce, MD (she/her)

MD: Wesleyan University

BA: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Raised in Manhattan, Charlotte attended Wesleyan, double majoring in Neuroscience and Studio Art. Her senior thesis, a series of illusionistic oil paintings inspired by biological material, redefined perception by presenting everyday objects in unfamiliar scales and contexts. This work was awarded a place in Wesleyan's permanent collection. She also created a 60-page, hand-made book exploring the stigma surrounding mental health, combining interviews with college students and original artwork. Incorporating art in her medical education, Charlotte created and taught a Nexus course exploring mental health narratives through film, literature, and visual art, inviting students to engage deeply with the intangible aspects of mental illness, while examining trauma, psychosis, memory, and identity through a multidisciplinary lens. Her research on the course's impact, published in *Academic Psychiatry*, noted significant improvements in participants' empathy, resilience, and reflective capacities. Prior to medical school, Charlotte was a Clinical Research Coordinator at the Depression and Anxiety Center for Discovery and Treatment, working on clinical trials in treatment-resistant depression and publishing in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology*. Her role progressed to Program Coordinator, in which she conducted screening intakes for patients seeking interventions such as ketamine, TMS, ECT, and DBS. She oversaw esketamine and ketamine treatments and conducted TMS sessions as a certified TMS operator. Building on this experience, she became involved in psychedelic medicine, co-hosting talks with prominent leaders in the field, co-authoring a comprehensive review on psychedelics for PTSD, and contributing to cutting-edge studies on the therapeutic potential of these compounds. She also served as a Clinic Manager for the Mount Sinai Human Rights Program, where she coordinated trauma-informed forensic evaluations for asylum seekers and worked closely with physicians and attorneys to produce medical-legal affidavits for survivors of persecution and violence. Additionally, as the Director of CBT at the East Harlem Health Outreach Partnership Mental Health Clinic, she oversaw a comprehensive CBT curriculum for trainees and recruited and mentored new providers to expand the clinic's capacity.

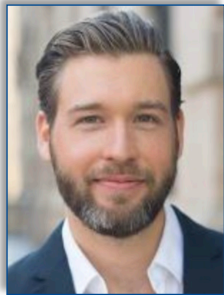


Austin Su, MD (he/him)

MD: Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons

BS: Stanford University

Raised in Poway, California, Austin earned his degree in Molecular and Cellular Biology, publishing his research in *Molecular Cancer Therapeutics*, while also receiving the Stanford Department of Music Award for Chamber Music. In medical school he co-chaired the Columbia Behavioral Health Free Clinic, implementing a psychiatric referral service for all other student-run free clinics, expanding services for undocumented immigrants, LGBTQ+, and the undomiciled, and ultimately more than doubling the clinic capacity. In recognition of his achievements, he received the CoSMO Free Clinic Service Award. Austin's passion for community mental health extended to his work with the Columbia Psychiatry Mental Wellness Equity Center, where through implementation research, he developed pilot programs training community health workers to deliver Interpersonal Counseling in under-resourced areas of New York and South Africa, informed by similar programs in Brazil and Mozambique, effectively adapting global mental health strategies to underserved U.S. communities. This work was published in *BMJ Global Health*. His additional work spans diverse areas, including disparities in survival outcomes for patients undergoing pulmonary thromboendarterectomy, the integration of depression treatment into tuberculosis care in Brazil, and the impact of COVID-19 on healthcare burnout in Mozambique. He has published in *Frontiers in Public Health*, *European Journal of Cardiothoracic Surgery*, and *Health Promotion Practice*, and presented findings at international conferences. As an advocate for Asian American mental health, Austin co-founded "Mental Matcha," a podcast addressing stigma and mental health literacy in the Asian American community, with a goal of demystifying psychiatric care and fostering open conversations. As Co-President of Music at the Bedside, he organized virtual and live concerts during the COVID-19 pandemic, and he performed saxophone and vocals with the Columbia University Musicians' Guild.

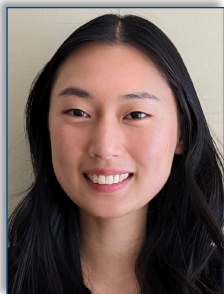


Matthew Wilson, MD (he/him)

MD: SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University College of Medicine
BA: The New School

After earning his degree in Psychology, Matthew spent a decade as an entrepreneur before pursuing medicine. As the co-founder of eParel, LLC, he disrupted the hospitality uniform industry by developing a web-based platform backed by Columbia University and angel investors. He successfully built a supply chain from scratch, launched an in-house apparel brand, led business development and sales strategy, and cultivated partnerships with major organizations across New York City. He also co-founded the Brooklyn Yoga Collective, a community hub offering accessible yoga and meditation classes on a sliding payment scale in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. In medical school Matthew was Director of Psychiatry at the Brooklyn Free Clinic, where he expanded psychiatric services for uninsured patients, increasing capacity by over 100%, and implemented a new referral system. Under his leadership, the Clinic secured an APA Helping Hands grant to develop credit-bearing coursework teaching senior medical students how to provide supportive psychotherapy. He was also lead organizer for an APA Helping Hands grant that administered an established DOORS (Digital Outreach for Obtaining Resources and Skills) curriculum to geriatric psychiatry patients. As President of his medical school's Psychiatry Student Interest Group, Matthew organized panel discussions with nationally leading speakers on topics such as psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy and applications of digital therapeutics. Outside of medical school, Matthew had an ongoing role as consultant for Mindwell Labs, Inc., a mental health start-up that employs wearables for real-time autonomic nervous system measurement. Combining three of his deep interests—autonomics, tech, and mindfulness—the application utilizes a model of biofeedback with mindfulness-based interventions for regulation of stress and attention.

PGY-2 ENTRY

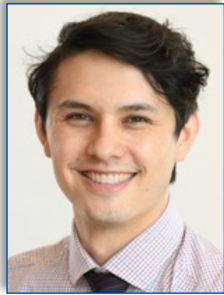


Yanglu (Lulu) Chen, MD (she/her)

MD: Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons
BA: Princeton University
PRIOR RESIDENCY: Mount Sinai Pediatrics

Born in Japan and raised in New Jersey, Lulu developed a passion for creative writing and the arts, which led her to work as a writing tutor and perform in slam poetry during her undergraduate years at Princeton University. She graduated with a degree in Chemistry, where she used ultrafast lasers to research the quantum-mechanical underpinnings by which nanoparticles can be used for cancer imaging and therapies. Her work has been published in high impact journals such as *Chemical Society Reviews*, *Drug Discovery Today*, and *Molecular Biomedicine*. She was awarded a Princeton in Asia fellowship to teach English in Yakage, Japan, during which time she started a volunteer initiative to revitalize tourism in the surrounding rural areas. In medical school at Columbia, Lulu served as a behavioral health clinician for a student-run clinic for uninsured patients and drafted medical affidavits for asylum seekers. She has a demonstrated passion for global health, having previously worked at the Hospital Infantil Dr. Robert Reid Cabral in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and at the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy in Kolkata, India. Outside of medicine, she enjoys learning American Sign Language and dancing as part of the Social Justice Movement Lab by jill sigman/thinkdance in New York City.

PHYSICIAN-SCIENTIST RESEARCH TRACK



John Tuddenham, MD, PhD (he/him)

MD/PhD: Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons
BA: Columbia University

Originally from Los Angeles, John studied Neuroscience and Behavior as an undergraduate at Columbia and returned for his MD and PhD in Systems Biology. Prior to medical school, he worked with the Tisch Multiple Sclerosis research center, studying mechanisms and biomarkers associated with stem cell therapies in multiple sclerosis. In his PhD work, co-mentored by Drs. Philip L. De Jager and Peter Sims, John leveraged high-dimensional omics technologies to explore heterogeneity of immune cells in the human central nervous system across a wide variety of neurological disorders and aging. He leveraged this data to link transcriptomic phenotypes to functional outcomes to identify functional contributions of distinct microglial phenotypes to neurodegenerative disease. This enabled the exploration of genetic and chemical modulators that modulate microglial function, and ultimately led to the discovery of topoisomerase-I inhibitors as compounds that specifically upregulate an HLA-enriched microglial phenotype depleted in Alzheimer's disease and downregulated metabolically dysfunctional microglial phenotypes found in numerous neurodegenerative diseases. John is now interested in exploring underlying cellular and molecular mechanisms of interventional psychiatry approaches, particularly ECT, with a particular focus on non-neuronal cells and peripheral immune changes. John has published peer-reviewed articles in high-impact journals, recently as a first author in *Nature Neuroscience*. He has delivered lectures regarding his work at prestigious conferences throughout the Americas and Europe, including the Gordon and Keystone series. Outside of research, John has been the leader and coordinator of the Columbia (medical school and undergraduate) Outdoor Orientation Programs as well as a walk-on Division 1 varsity fencing team member at Columbia. In his spare time, he enjoys climbing, running, baking, and setting up freshwater aquariums.



Burak Uzay, MD, PhD (he/him)

MD/PHD: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi
POSTDOC: Vanderbilt University

Burak was born and raised in Turkey, where he began his medical and scientific journey. His interest in research dates to his high school years where he won a contest organized by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey. This blossoming interest in research motivated him to pursue a PhD in neuroscience as an MD-PhD student at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey. During his PhD, he focused on investigating the molecular mechanisms of neuroinflammation underlying migraine and major depression. His early research piqued his interest in mental health, and to explore further, he pursued internships and collaborations at prestigious institutions around the world, including Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin in Germany, Université Claude Bernard Lyon in France, and Harvard University Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. In 2019 following his graduation, Burak moved to United States to start his postdoctoral research fellowship at Vanderbilt University, where he worked with Dr. Ege Kavalali and Dr. Lisa Monteggia, focusing on synaptic biology. He used human embryonic stem cell-derived cortical neurons and assessed synaptic neurotransmitter release using cellular electrophysiology. He uncovered novel mechanisms of abnormal synaptic vesicle release associated with aging, discovered a previously unknown mechanism of action for antipsychotics through homeostatic plasticity, and performed experiments targeting homeostatic plasticity mechanisms to treat treatment-resistant epilepsies associated with SNAP25 encephalopathies. He has published many first author manuscripts, including in *Cell Reports*, the *Journal of Physiology*, *Cell Calcium*, and the *Journal of Headache and Pain*. Burak aims to carry his experience in basic neuroscience to the translational/clinical realm to discover alternative treatment options for psychiatric disorders. In his spare time, Burak enjoys learning languages (he is fluent or near fluent in at least 4), reading books, and playing the cello.