

Hispanic Heritage Month
Sept. 15 – Oct. 15

The NIH Clinical Center treats a diverse group of patients from all over the world. It also draws researchers from different cultures and backgrounds. Learn more about some of the many researchers of Hispanic origin who conduct their work at the Clinical Center.



Greti Aguilera, M.D., who conducts research for the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development at the NIH Clinical Center, is a senior investigator and head of the Section on Endocrine Physiology.

Dr. Greti Aguilera received an M.D. degree from the University of Chile in 1968. She trained in Clinical Endocrinology, Department of Medicine, University of Chile, and in basic research on steroid biochemistry in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics.

In 1975, she joined Dr. Kevin Catt's laboratory at NICHD as an international Fogarty Fellow, in 1977 she was appointed as Visiting Scientist, and then as a senior researcher in 1984. Since 1989, she has served as chief of the Section of Endocrine Physiology within the Program on Developmental Endocrinology and Genetics in NICHD.

Research contributions include: identification of factors responsible for regulation of adrenal glomerulosa responsiveness to angiotensin II; characterization of the relative role of corticotropin releasing hormone and vasopressin on the HPA axis adaptation during stress; characterization of the properties, signaling-transduction, and regulation of the receptors for these peptide hormones, and the identification of novel mechanisms for the transcriptional regulation of CRH.

Current work in Dr. Aguilera's laboratory focuses on the molecular mechanisms of positive and negative regulation of CRH transcription responsible for the rapid but transient responses to stress, the consequences of early life experiences and circadian and ultradian rhythms of glucocorticoid secretion on gene transcription, and the mechanisms determining pulsatile glucocorticoid secretion by the adrenal.

To learn more about the research of Dr. Aguilera, click [here](#).



Andrea B. Apolo, M.D., conducts research for the National Cancer Center at the NIH Clinical Center. She is an investigator in the Genitourinary Malignancies Branch and head of the Bladder Cancer Section and a 2014 NIH Lasker Clinical Research Scholar.

Dr. Apolo is a graduate of Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. She completed clinical training in internal medicine at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center. Following her residency, she completed a medical oncology fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Dr. Apolo joined the Medical Oncology Branch of the National Cancer Institute as an assistant clinical investigator. She is board certified for the practice of internal medicine and medical oncology and is a participating member of the American Society for Clinical Oncology.

Dr. Apolo is dedicated to improving the treatment and survival of patients with genitourinary tumors. Her research involves developing and designing clinical trials to test novel agents for the treatment of urologic cancers. Her primary research interest is in bladder cancer (urothelial carcinoma) and prostate cancer. In particular, she is working to develop new bladder cancer therapies that use targeted agents including anti-angiogenesis compounds, which block the growth of new blood vessels that feed tumors.

Other research focuses include improving tumor detection by using new imaging modalities in bladder and prostate cancer and identifying molecular alterations in bladder tumors that will serve as targets for individualized treatment strategies in patients with this disease.

For more information and a video on Dr. Apolo's research, click [here](#).



Federico Bernal, Ph.D., is an investigator in the Lymphoid Malignancies Branch of the National Cancer Institute who conducts research at the NIH Clinical Center.

Dr. Bernal did his undergraduate training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduating in 1997 with degrees in chemistry and chemical engineering. He obtained his Ph.D. from The Scripps Research Institute in 2002 after performing work on the development of synthetic methodologies for the construction of complex marine natural products in the laboratory of K. C. Nicolaou. Dr. Bernal then returned to Cambridge, MA to undergo postdoctoral training in chemical biology at Harvard University in the group of Gregory L. Verdine. He then

continued his foray into cancer chemical biology in the laboratory of Loren D. Walensky at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

He established his laboratory in the Metabolism Branch (now the Lymphoid Malignancies Branch) of the Center for Cancer Research at NCI in 2010. His research focus involves the investigation and manipulation of cancer pathogenesis pathways with synthetic molecules.

For more information on Dr. Bernal's research, click [here](#).



Rafael Cristian Casellas, Ph.D., who conducts research for the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases at the NIH Clinical Center, is a senior investigator and head of the Laboratory of Genomics and Immunity.

Dr. Casellas was born in Buenos Aires and lived in Geneva, Paris and Helsinki before coming to the United States, where he received his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Brigham Young University in 1996. He received a Ph.D. in Molecular Immunology from the Rockefeller University in 2002.

There, he worked under Dr. Michel Nussenzweig studying the role of immunoglobulin gene expression and recombination in the establishment of B cell tolerance and peripheral activation. From 2002 to 2003,

he did postdoctoral training with David Baltimore at the California Institute of Technology. Dr. Casellas continued his molecular studies of B cell activation and developed new mouse gene targeting techniques.

In December 2003, Dr. Casellas moved to the NIAMS where he is currently a senior investigator and head of the Laboratory of Genomics & Immunity. Dr. Casellas is also serving as an adjunct investigator at the Center for Cancer Research, NCI.

For more information on the Genomics and Immunity Section, click [here](#), and to learn more about Dr. Casellas' role as an adjunct investigator at NCI, click [here](#).