

2025 CAMBAC Symposium
Advances in Musculoskeletal Infection Research: From Bench to Bedside
Friday, December 5, 2025
AGENDA

8:00 – 9:00 AM –Poster Session

9:00 – 9:05 AM – Welcome & Opening Remarks

Introductions by Kenneth G. Saag, MD, MSc, Anna Lois Waters Professor and Director, CAMBAC and Division of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology, UAB

9:05 – 9:45 AM – Infections in Orthopedic Patients: Patients: Prevention, Diagnosis & Management

William Obremskey, MD, MPH, Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation; Director of Orthopaedic Trauma, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Introduction by Joseph P. Johnson, MD, Associate Professor, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, UAB.

9:45 – 10:25 AM - Osteoimmunology: Linking Oral Infections to Bone Health

Ping Zhang, DDS, PhD, Professor and Director for Research, Department of Pediatric Dentistry, UAB

Introduction by Amjad Javed, MSc, PhD, Professor and Associate Dean for Research, UAB School of Dentistry, Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery.

10:25 – 10:45 AM – Break

10:45 – 11:25 AM – How Phage Therapy Could Change the (Sur)Face of MSK Infections

Juan Calix, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor, Division of Infectious Diseases, UAB

Introduction by Frances E. Lund, PhD, Professor, Department of Microbiology; Director, Heersink School of Medicine Immunology Institute.

11:25 AM – 12:05 PM Host-pathogen Interactions During Staphylococcus aureus Osteomyelitis

James E. Cassat, MD, PhD, Associate Professor, Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Introduction by Kenneth G. Saag, MD, MSc, Anna Lois Waters Professor and Director, CAMBAC and Division of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology, UAB.

12:05 – 1:15 PM – Lunch, Poster Session

Announcements by Hassan Ghomrawi, PhD, MPH, Triton Endowed Professorship and Vice Chair for Research Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Associate Director, CAMBAC.

1:15 – 1:30 PM – Poster Award Announcements

Announcements by Rosa Serra, PhD, Professor, Department of Cell, Developmental and Integrative Biology, Associate Director, CAMBAC.

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1:30 – 2:10 PM – Infection Risks & Prevention Strategies in Immunosuppressed Patients

Kevin Winthrop, MD, MPH, Professor of Infectious Diseases and Public Health; Director, Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases, Oregon Health & Science University

Introduction by Jeffrey R. Curtis, MD, MS, MPH, *Harbert-Ball* Endowed Professor of Medicine, Division of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology.

2:10 – 2:50 PM – Infection Risks & Prevention Strategies in Immunosuppressed Patients

Daniela F. de Lima Corvino, MD, Assistant Professor, Division of Infectious Diseases, UAB

Introduction by Martin J. Rodriguez, MD, Professor and Director, Division of Infectious Diseases, UAB.

2:50 PM – Closing Remarks & Acknowledgments

Summary by Kenneth G. Saag, MD, MSc, *Anna Lois Waters* Professor and Director, CAMBAC and Division of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology, UAB

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Speaker Biographies

William Obremskey, MD, MPH

Dr. William Obremskey is a Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation and Director of Orthopaedic Trauma at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Originally from Indiana, he completed his undergraduate and medical education at Duke University, earned an MPH from the University of North Carolina, and completed orthopedic training at the University of Washington. He served in the U.S. Air Force as a general orthopedic surgeon and completed an AO trauma fellowship in Basel, Switzerland. He later spent five years on faculty at the University of North Carolina before joining Vanderbilt in 2002.

His career has focused on developing innovative techniques for complex orthopedic trauma, including knee dislocations, scapular fractures, and plate/nail constructs. Dr. Obremskey chaired the OTA Evidence Based Medicine Committee for ten years and is president-elect of the Orthopedic Trauma Association. Over the last decade, his work has emphasized infection prevention and treatment in orthopedic trauma, a pervasive challenge in the field.

Ping Zhang, DDS, PhD

Dr. Ping Zhang is a Professor and Director of Research in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry at the UAB School of Dentistry, and a senior scientist in multiple interdisciplinary research centers at UAB. She earned her dental degree and PhD in Oral Biology from Wuhan University School of Stomatology, completed postdoctoral training in Microbiology at UAB, and completed her Pediatric Dentistry residency at UAB. She is also a diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry.

Her research focuses on host-microbial interactions in oral infectious diseases, inflammatory signaling pathways, osteoimmunology, periodontal bone loss, and links between periodontal and systemic diseases. Dr. Zhang has served as PI or co-investigator on numerous NIH and industry-supported projects, authored 86 peer-reviewed articles, 8 book chapters, and over 100 abstracts, and currently serves as President-Elect of the Oral Microbiology and Immunology Group of the International Association for Dental Research.

Juan Calix, MD, PhD

Dr. Juan Calix is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the UAB Heersink School of Medicine. He earned his BS from Loyola University New Orleans and both his MD and PhD in Microbiology from UAB. He completed Internal Medicine residency in the Physician-Scientist Training Program and an Infectious Diseases fellowship at Barnes-Jewish Hospital/Washington University School of Medicine. His research training included work with Patricia Dorn, Moon Nahm, Mario Feldman, and Gautam Dantas.

Dr. Calix has received numerous recognitions, including the UAB Samuel B. Barker Award for Excellence in Graduate Studies, an IDSA Travel Grant, the Knowlton Incentive for Excellence Award, and the UAB Department of Medicine Raegan Durant Award. His research program, established in 2021, investigates microbial surface structures and genomic signatures that drive dissemination of pathogens such as multidrug-resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* and *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. His lab integrates epidemiology, comparative genomics, and molecular microbiology to develop antibiotic-sparing therapeutic and diagnostic approaches.

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James E. Cassat, MD, PhD

Dr. James Cassat is an Associate Professor in the Departments of Pediatrics, Pathology, Microbiology, Immunology, and Biomedical Engineering at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. He earned his MD and PhD at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, completing doctoral work in comparative genomics and transcriptional profiling of *Staphylococcus aureus*. He completed Pediatrics residency and a Pediatric Infectious Diseases fellowship at Vanderbilt before joining the faculty in 2014.

Dr. Cassat serves as Associate Director of the Vanderbilt Institute for Infection, Immunology, and Inflammation (VI4) and is a primary faculty member of the Vanderbilt Center for Bone Biology. His research focuses on host-pathogen interactions in osteomyelitis and the effects of infection and inflammation on musculoskeletal cell biology. He has maintained continuous NIH funding for 15 years and has received major awards including the PIDS Young Investigator Award, induction into the American Society for Clinical Investigation, and the Edward Claiborne Stahlman Endowed Chair in Pediatric Physiology and Cell Metabolism.

Kevin Winthrop, MD, MPH

Dr. Kevin Winthrop is a Professor of Public Health, Infectious Diseases, and Ophthalmology at Oregon Health & Science University, where he also directs the Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases. He completed medical school at OHSU, internal medicine training at Stanford University and Legacy Emanuel Health Systems, and fellowship training in infectious diseases at National Jewish Medical Center and the CDC. He later served as an infectious disease epidemiologist in the CDC's Division of Tuberculosis Elimination.

Dr. Winthrop has authored more than 400 publications on non-tuberculous mycobacterial diseases, tuberculosis, and infections associated with rheumatic diseases and biologic therapies. He provides regional consultations on chronic chest infections and advises the Oregon Public Health Division's TB control program. As founder of the NTM Research Consortium and its Clinical Trials Network, he has led numerous multi-site cohort studies and clinical trials. He also mentors graduate students, medical trainees, and physicians at OHSU.

Daniela F. de Lima Corvino, MD

Dr. Daniela F. de Lima Corvino is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at UAB and serves as Director of the Orthopedic Infectious Disease Program. She earned her medical degree from the Universidad Central de Venezuela, completed residency at Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, and completed an Infectious Diseases fellowship at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital. She joined the UAB faculty in 2020.

Since arriving at UAB, Dr. Corvino has become Director of Orthopedic Infectious Disease (2023) and launched the Orthopedic-Infectious Disease clinical service in July 2024, with a clinical focus on musculoskeletal infections. She contributes to the Complex Outpatient Antibiotic Service and plays an important role in antibiotic stewardship. Her work centers on improving clinical care pathways for complex musculoskeletal infections and expanding multidisciplinary infectious disease-orthopedic collaborations.