



# YOUNG INVESTIGATORS GET THEIR FEET WET



**M**ayo Clinic investigators produce more than 7,200 publications and present research at thousands of conferences around the world each year. The legacy of impactful research that has emanated from Mayo Clinic for more than 150 years can intimidate new researchers. Where to begin? How to get noticed? How to make your mark?

Enter the Mayo Clinic Young Investigators Research Symposium (YIRS). This biennial event on the Rochester campus showcases the research of Mayo Clinic's young investigators from all sites — research and clinical fellows, graduate and medical students, residents and junior faculty. Researchers from other institutions are invited, and several from the University of Minnesota participated this year. Both external and Mayo Clinic investigators spoke about research-related topics in a daylong formal program.

Adela Cope, M.D. (OBG '18), a resident in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, presented a poster, "Postpartum Contraception Use in Somali Women: A Population-Based Study" — one of 264 posters in basic, clinical and translational science topics.

"I thought the event was an excellent representation of the variety of projects young investigators are conducting at Mayo and other institutions,"

says Dr. Cope. "There was a little something for everybody to get excited and learn more about.

"I appreciated the opportunity to share my work and gain experience presenting to those who may not be familiar with OB/GYN. In the process, I identified possible future collaborators in health care disparities, specifically in women's health and the Somali population. We exchanged information, and I also received contact information for a few people who are good connections for working with the



ADELA COPE, M.D.



Mayo Clinic Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Ph.D. student Luz Cumba-Garcia (IMM '21) presented her research at the Young Investigators Research Symposium.

Somali community. I may not have made these connections had it not been for our discussion about similar interests at the YIRS.”

Matthew D’Costa, M.D. (NEPH ’19), a clinical fellow in the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, also presented a poster, “Structural Heart Disease, Diabetes and Survival Among Elderly Patients Initiating Maintenance Hemodialysis.” He says he received excellent feedback on his project to improve its chances of publication. “One of the judges gave me advice about how to improve the presentation of my data, to include more sophisticated statistical analyses and to extend patient follow-up.”

Both Drs. Cope and D’Costa were poster presentation winners ([alumniassociation.mayo.edu/news](http://alumniassociation.mayo.edu/news) for a list of poster presentation winners).

Janet E. Olson, Ph.D. (HSR ’99), Division of Epidemiology, Department of Health Sciences Research at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, was a first-time judge at the symposium. “For some, it was a first chance to present at a poster session,” she says. “This is a fantastic opportunity to assist young investigators to gain experience in presenting and discussing their science. I left the session excited about the work being done by new investigators at our institution.”

Bruce Horazdovsky, Ph.D. (MBO ’02), Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, associate dean of Mayo Clinic Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and director of the Office of Research Postdoctoral Affairs, has been involved as an Advisory Committee member and judge since the symposium’s inception. “The YIRS was first proposed by our young investigators, who sought an opportunity to present their work and learn from experienced investigators in the Mayo community. This event allows the whole community of young investigators to gather and share what they’ve learned. New ideas are born, and new research teams are created. This benefits YIRS participants and enhances Mayo’s education, research and clinical practice missions.”

At the last two Young Investigators Research Symposiums, top winners from the Rochester Regional Science Fair — middle- and high-school students — also were invited to share their research. “These young investigators presented their award-winning science side by side with more than 260 Mayo Clinic researchers and held their own. The researchers of tomorrow were very well represented,” says Dr. Horazdovsky. ▲