



Aloka L. Patel, MD

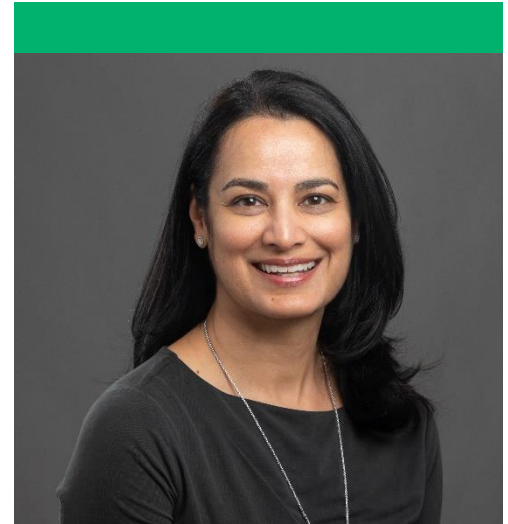
The Glore Family Professor of Neonatology

Advancement of Medicine

I continue to serve as multi-principal investigator with **Tricia Johnson, PhD**, a professor in the Department of Health Systems Management, for two National Institutes of Health, or NIH, R01-funded studies. This work will determine whether removing economic costs associated with providing breastmilk to hospitalized preterm infants is associated with longer and greater breastmilk provision (which is known to provide health benefits to both infants and their mothers). It will also directly measure these longer-term outcomes until 2 years of age. In 2025, we received a new, third R01 grant from the NIH to study these children through 6 years of age, which will enable us to better quantify cardiovascular, respiratory, growth, cognitive and behavioral outcomes associated with early breastmilk feedings.

In partnership with faculty in the Rush Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and their fellows, I conducted a study of a new model of postpartum care delivered during mothers' visits to their infants in the NICU. The goal of this study is to increase compliance with postpartum care for mothers, who often neglect their own health care when they have an infant in the NICU. This study was recently completed and will provide pilot data that will serve as a foundation for a larger trial of this novel health care model.

In 2025, Dr. Johnson and I received a philanthropic grant to study cardiometabolic outcomes in mothers of preterm infants. This study has expanded our research collaborations to include Rush Maternal Fetal Medicine and Adult Cardiology faculty. This study will examine the association between duration of breastmilk provision and cardiometabolic outcomes in high-risk mothers, providing preliminary data for future studies.





Research

Thanks to your generous support, I provided funding for junior faculty members **Leslie Harris, MD, MHS**, and **Esther Lee, MD, MPH**, as well as our neonatal-perinatal medicine fellows in their research endeavors. Dr. Harris conducts research to characterize maternal, family and community factors that influence infant and maternal health, with an overall objective of identifying potential targets for interventions and policies. Dr. Lee continues to conduct global health research on the incidence of retinopathy of prematurity and strategies to reduce it worldwide.

Glore Family Endowment funds also support a clinical research coordinator for the Division of Neonatology. The funds have generously assisted faculty, advanced-practice neonatal nurse practitioners, and research team members in attending clinical and research conferences to improve clinical practices and present our research findings.

Community Outreach and Education

I continue to serve as faculty for the American Academy of Pediatrics Fellows Perinatal and Developmental Medicine Symposia, providing me with the opportunity to educate and meet fellows from around the country. Additionally, I have been invited to present our research and community outreach efforts at several national conferences this year.

Grants

The Glore Family Endowment funds supported activities that resulted in both Drs. Harris and Lee receiving additional philanthropic support for their research. This philanthropic support is instrumental in enabling them to obtain preliminary data as they each apply to the NIH for a Research Career Development Award. Further, the Glore Family Endowment funds provided support for my research, which contributed to the receipt of two new grants in 2025: one NIH R01 grant and one philanthropic grant.

- **Neurodevelopmental, Health, and Economic Outcomes at Preschool Age in Former Very Preterm Infants Randomized to An Economic Intervention to Support Mother's Own Milk**
Sponsor: NIH-NICHD R01HD119178
Role: Principal Investigator (multi-PIs: Patel and Johnson)
September 10, 2025 – May 31, 2030



- **Cardiometabolic Health of Mother-Child Dyads after Very Preterm Birth**
Sponsor: Rush University College of Health Sciences Roubos Funding
Role: Principal Investigator (multi-PIs: Johnson and Patel)
July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027

Publication Highlights – Abbreviated

- “Neonatal Steroid Exposure and Body Composition in Preterm Infants at Discharge.” *Pediatric Research*; accepted

Invited Presentations

- Reducing Disparities in Mother's Own Milk in Very Low Birth Weight Infants Trial (ReDiMOM). Medela Symposium. Itasca, IL. September 11, 2025
- Colostrum: Transitioning to the Postnatal Period. NEC Symposium, Chicago, IL. September 10, 2025
- Mothers Providing Their Own Milk for Their Very Preterm Infants. The 6th Annual Richard A. Ehrenkranz Neonatology Symposium: Evidence-Based Nutrition in the NICU. Yale University, New Haven, CT, June 9, 2025

The Year Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

I will continue to provide broad research support to neonatology faculty through our Clinical Research Core and fund fellows' research. Future plans include continuing to support junior faculty member Dr. Harris as she develops her research interests and applies for an NIH Research Career Development Award.

With Gratitude

I am incredibly grateful for the support of the Gloré family, which allows the Division of Neonatology to support our multiple missions: excellent clinical care, education and research. The endowment is critical to supporting junior faculty investigators and trainees as they embark on their careers in neonatology. The endowment has provided the faculty with protected time to develop research ideas and obtain pilot data that will be critical to their paths toward becoming independent investigators.