



- *Director, The Cohen Family Asthma Institute*
- *Professor*
- *Department of Medicine*
- *Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine*

Conditions Treated:

- *Allergic Bronchopulmonary Aspergillosis (ABPA)*
- *Churg-Strauss Syndrome*
- *Eosinophilic Lung Disorders*
- *Acute and Chronic Eosinophilic Pneumonia*
- *Idiopathic Hypereosinophilic Syndrome*

Research Areas:

- *Churg-Strauss Syndrome*
- *Eosinophilic Lung Diseases*

Programs & Services:

- *Department of Medicine*
- *Asthma Treatment Program (Adult)*
- *Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine (Adult)*

My primary research focuses on clinical and translational asthma research, with three main foci of investigation: (i) asthma genetics and personalized medicine; (ii) clinical trials in asthma; and (iii) Churg-Strauss Syndrome. Regarding the genetics of asthma, I have investigated the role of numerous candidate gene polymorphisms in the pathogenesis and management of asthma. I was the Principal Investigator of the Lancet-published, NHLBI-funded Asthma Clinical Research Network's LARGE trial, which prospectively investigated the effect of beta-adrenergic receptor polymorphisms on the asthmatic response to salmeterol. I also led a recently completed Partners Genetics Enters Medicine Initiative funded trial examining genotype-stratified treatment with anticholinergics vs. beta-agonists (long acting) and exacerbations (GABLE) in asthma (currently undergoing analysis).

I was a site Principal Investigator examining the effects of a novel therapy for asthma ([bronchial thermoplasty](#)) that utilizes thermal energy to disrupt airway smooth muscle and presented study data to the FDA Medical Advisory panel in 2009, leading to its 2010 FDA approval. I was also awarded an NIH sponsored R21 award to examine the effects of placebo on lung function in asthma, and completed this clinical trial work in over 40 subjects. Having reported on the importance of using placebos in clinical trials and on the relevance of patient reported outcomes in clinical trials, my NEJM manuscript has reset the standard for clinical trial design in this condition. I am a member of the Steering Committee of the NIH-sponsored Asthma Clinical Research Network (ACRN, now called Asthmanet), a multi-center asthma clinical trials consortium that has conducted numerous trials that have clarified our understanding of asthma phenotyping and asthma management, laying the foundation for current asthma guidelines. As a member of this consortium, I was the lead investigator who described an association between asthma treatment failures and beta agonist use in African Americans, and am a lead investigator in 2 separate trials examining race-specific differences in response to asthma therapy.

A major focus of my research efforts is elucidating the pathophysiology of the Churg-Strauss syndrome, a rare form of eosinophilic vasculitis. I was the first to describe the relationship

between CSS and leukotriene modifiers, and between CSS and anti-IgE therapy for asthma . I clinically follow one of the largest cohorts of CSS patients in the country and I serve as a referral base for patients with severe asthma from all over the USA. This expertise, and two research awards, have enabled me to recruit the largest cohort of CSS patients, which are serving as the primary test population in a genome-wide association study of CSS. I have examined the role of anti-IL5 in the treatment of CSS patients and have received NIAID R34 funding to plan a double blind placebo controlled trial in this patient population, that is set to start in 2013.

Board Certification

1999 (Recertified 2009): Diplomate, Subspecialty of Critical Care Medicine, American Board of Internal Medicine
1998 (Recertified 2009): Diplomate, Subspecialty of Pulmonary Disease, American Board of Internal Medicine
1996: Diplomate, American Board of Internal Medicine

Education

1985 - 1989 Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, AB magna cum laude, Biochemical Science
1989 - 1993 McGill University School of Medicine, Montreal, Quebec, MD, Medicine
2000 - 2003 Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, MMSc, Master in Medical Science

Residency

1993 - 1996 Beth Israel Hospital, Boston, MA, Intern/Resident, Internal Medicine
1995 - 1996 West Roxbury VA Medical Center, W. Roxbury, MA, Chief Medical Resident, Internal Medicine

Fellowship

1996 - 1998 Beth Israel Medical Center, Brigham and Women's Hospital Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA, Harvard Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Fellowship, Clinical Fellow
1998 - 1999 Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA, Harvard Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Fellowship, Research Fellow

Professional Memberships

2012-present: Member, American Society for Clinical Investigation
2012-present: Member, International Eosinophil Society
1993-present: Member, Massachusetts Medical Society
2002-2005: Member, American Academy of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology
1996-2000: Member, American College of Chest Physicians
1993-1999: Member, American Medical Association

Awards & Recognition

Present: Associate Editor, Allergy
2003: Research Award, Clinical, Merck
2002: Research Award, American Lung Association
2001: Young Investigator Special Project Award, Respiratory, Merck
1999: Young Investigators Meeting (participant), Respiratory, Merck
1998: Investigator Award, Clinical Research, American College of Chest Physicians, CHEST Foundation
1993: Campbell Howard Prize, Clinical Medicine, McGill University
1993: Dr. A Macdonald Award, Medicine, McGill University
1990: James Q Bliss Prize, Medical Physiology, McGill University
1986-1989: Dean's List, Harvard College
1986-1989: Harvard College Scholarship, Harvard College

Ad hoc reviewer:

New England Journal of Medicine
American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine

American Journal of Respiratory Cellular Molecular Biology
American Journal of Medicine
Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology
Chest
Thorax
Drug Safety
The Pharmacogenomics Journal
Nature Clinical Practice
JAMA
Respiratory Care Journal
Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine
European Respiratory Journal
Revista Portuguesa de Pneumologia, Portuguese Journal of Pulmonology
The Medical Letter
Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine
The Lancet
Arthritis and Rheumatism

Publications

Wechsler ME, Shah P, Niven R, Thomson N, Rubin A, Fiterman J, Lapa JR, Laviolette M, Olivenstein R, Hales JB, Shifren A, Cox G, Shargill NS, Armstrong B, Castro M for the AIR2 Trial Study Group. Benefits of Bronchial Thermoplasty Persist Out to 5 Years in Patients with Severe Asthma. ATS 2013

Wechsler ME, Kelley JM, Boyd IOE, Dutile S, Marigowda G, Kirsch I, Israel E, Kaptchuk TJ. Active or Placebo Albuterol, Sham Acupuncture or No Treatment in Asthma. *New Engl J Med* 2011 365 (2):119-126.(PMID: 21751905)

Wechsler ME, Castro M, Lehman E, Chinchilli V, Rand Sutherland E, Denlinger L, Lazarus SC, Peters SP, Israel E, the NHLBI Asthma Clinical Research Network. Impact of race on asthma treatment failures in the Asthma Clinical Research Network. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 2011 184:1247-1253. (PMID: 21885625)

Castro M, Rubin A, Laviolette M, Hanania NA, Armstrong B, Cox G; AIR2 Trial Study Group*. Persistence of effectiveness of bronchial thermoplasty in patients with severe asthma. *Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol.* 2011 Jul;107(1):65-70. Epub 2011 Apr 14 (PMID: 21496892)

Castro M, Rubin AS, Laviolette M, Fiterman J, Lima M, Shah PL, Fiss E, Olivenstein R, Thomson NC, Niven RM, Pavord ID, Simoff M, Duhamel DR, McEvoy C, Barbers R, ten Hacken NHT, **Wechsler ME**, Holmes M, Phillips MJ, Erzurum S, Lunn W, Israel E, Jarjour N, Kraft M, Berry SM, Quiring J, Shargill NS, Cox G. Effectiveness and safety of bronchial thermoplasty in the treatment of severe asthma: A multicenter, randomized, double-blinded, sham-controlled clinical trial. *Am. J. Respir. Crit. Care Med.* 2010;181(2):116-24 (PMCID: PMC2914569)

Castro M, **Wechsler ME**, Cox G. Bronchial thermoplasty is safe and effective for patients with severe asthma. *Am. J. Respir. Crit. Care Med.* 2010;182(12): p. 1565-1567

Hales J, **Wechsler ME**, Niven N, Prys-Picard C, Castro M, Cox G. Patient Selection for Bronchial Thermoplasty (BT) Following FDA Approval: Lessons Learned from Multiple Clinical Trials. ACAA 2010

Kim S, Oren E, Marigowda G, Israel E, **Wechsler ME**. Mepolizumab as a steroid sparing agent in Churg-Strauss syndrome. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2010; 125(6):1336-43 (PMCID: PMC2964431).

Wechsler ME, Kunselman SJ, Chinchilli VM, Bleecker E, Boushey HA, Calhoun WJ, Ameredes BT, Castro M, Craig TJ, Denlinger L, Fahy JV, Jarjour N, Kazani S, Kim S, Kraft M, Lazarus SC, Lemanske Jr RF, Markezich A, Martin RJ, Permaul P, Peters SP, Ramsdell J, Sorkness CA, Sutherland ER, Szeffler SJ, Walter MJ, Wasserman S, Israel E. Effect of beta2-adrenergic receptor polymorphism on response to long acting beta2 agonist in asthma (LARGE trial): a genotype-

stratified, randomized, placebo-controlled, crossover trial. The Lancet. 2009; 374(9703):1754-64. (PMCID: PMC2914569)

Wechsler M, Olivenstein R, Niven R, Pavord I, for the AIR2 Study Group. Reduction in Asthma-Related ER Visits and Hospitalizations Following Bronchial Thermoplasty (BT) in Patients with Severe, Symptomatic Asthma. Am J Respir Crit Care Med /ATS 2009

Wechsler ME. Bronchial thermoplasty for asthma: a critical review of a new therapy. Allergy Asthma Proc. 2008; 29(4):365-70

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