

Highlights From Our 2026 Annual Meeting in Long Beach

Thank you to everyone who joined us in Long Beach, California, for our 2026 Annual Meeting! More than 265 attendees participated in this year's meeting held at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach Hotel March 25-27, 2026. As always, our conference program was highly interactive, providing ample opportunities for questions, discussions, and forging new connections between people with lived experience, trainees, clinicians, researchers, and other rehabilitation professionals to advance the field.

Pre-Conference Events

In partnership with the Implantable Brain-Computer Interface Collaborative Community (iBCI-CC), ASNR was delighted to host a pre-conference workshop on March 24th. This workshop included a delicious dinner, presentations, and group discussions. The event focused on "Defining Success and Eligibility for Implantable Brain-Computer Interfaces."

"I think the extent to which BCI events are becoming embedded in the conferences of so many medical fields is notable," Dr. Oliver Armitage indicated after the workshop. "They're not just confined to BCI meetings. They're now a sub-theme in neurorehabilitation, trauma, critical care, and other neurological conferences. This is great to see because it means the BCI community is doing what it should do, which is finding lots of different clinical indications and making connections across all clinical spaces." Dr. Armitage is Chief Clinical and Data Officer at Axoft, a startup company that is creating soft brain implants.

Our speakers shared updates in their presentations and posed questions to gain insights and perspectives from the attendees, who spanned diverse clinical, research, and industry backgrounds. What outcomes matter to patients and clinicians? How should iBCI clinical trial populations be defined? Continuing these interdisciplinary conversations is integral for shaping the future implementation of iBCI technology in neurorehabilitation.



Conference Program

Professional Development Roundtables

We began Day one of the meeting with introductory remarks from Education Committee Members Dr. Jaqueline Palmer and Dr. Ahlam Salameh. Then, we launched our Professional Development Roundtable sessions.

"ASNR is a great conference," said Dr. Allison Miller, a postdoctoral research scholar in the Program in Physical Therapy at WashU Medicine. "I really enjoy it because it's a smaller, more

intimate setting. The conference starts off with these fantastic roundtables where we can meet other people, learn about their research, and have casual conversations. So it helps set the stage to have a really interactive conference.”



The Roundtables focused on these topics:

- Patient Perspectives and Lived Experience
- Academia vs. Industry: Translating Rehab Science
- Managing Lab Dynamics - aka Building a Lab that Works
- Writing for Impact: Grants, Journals, and Public Engagement
- Making New Connections
- Cost-Effective and Resilient Research in Uncertain Funding Climates

“So far, my favorite part of the meeting has been the Roundtables. I thought it was a great opportunity for people from earlier career stages and later stages to get together and talk about some of the really important topics in our field,” noted Dr. Brice Cleland is a Research Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy at the University of Illinois Chicago. Attendees rotated between tables at set intervals, giving them a chance to visit multiple tables and participate in dynamic discussions on different topics.

Scientific Symposia

This year, our scientific programming included seven symposia with a total of twenty-one speakers. The presentations spanned a range of disciplines, approaches, methods, systems, and diseases. Here are the topics our speakers covered during their symposia presentations:

- Cognitive Contributions to Motor Performance: Measurement, Metrics and Mechanisms
- Proprioceptive Biomarkers and Robotic Training for Tailored Movement Rehabilitation After Stroke
- Stem Cell Therapies for Spinal Cord Injury: From Transcriptional Profiling to Primate Functional Repair
- Rethinking Recovery: Objective and Mechanistic Metrics for Post-Stroke Motor Function
- Ischemic Conditioning as a Neurorehabilitation Primer: Mechanisms and Translational Applications Across Populations
- The Impact of Balance Discordance on Clinical Outcomes in Neurological Populations: An Open Science Perspective
- Slowing the Progression of Parkinson Disease: Results of CYCLE 2 Trial



“I’m enjoying the diversity of the presentations and all the different patient populations that they’re covering,” remarked Dr. Cielita Lopez-Lennon, a Rehabilitation Science PhD Student and Physical Therapist at the University of Utah. When asked about her favorite session, she replied, “I really liked the one on ischemic conditioning. It was particularly interesting, and I didn’t know anything about it before attending the session.” A carefully curated program with diverse content allows attendees to learn something new and hear about research in the field that is outside of their immediate area of expertise.



Sylwia Lipior said it well. “I came to the ASNR meeting to connect with potential collaborators to learn about research being done in my field. And because I am in the field of biokinesiology, it’s extremely interdisciplinary. I can find experts from all related fields at this conference, which I really love.” Sylwia is a PhD student in the Division of Biokinesiology at the University of Southern California.

Building on these statements, Dr. Julie Schwertfeger explained that, “You’ve got this amazing group of OTs, PTs, speech therapists, engineers, PhD researchers, and neurologists. And it’s that mix of different professionals that really makes it a cut above any other conference that I’ve gone to.” Dr. Schwertfeger is an Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy at LSU Health Shreveport.

ASNR is intentionally interdisciplinary because advancing neurorehabilitation will require individuals from many different disciplines to work together to address the grand challenges in the field.

Professional Development Sessions

Beyond our Scientific Symposia, our Education Committee planned two interactive Professional Development Sessions that were very well-received by attendees. The first session was titled, “Closing the Gap Between Clinical Research and Practice: The Need for Good Common Data Through Collaborations.” It sparked fruitful discussions and new ideas surrounding the development and use of common data to support both clinical and research endeavors.



The second Professional Development Session, titled “Molecular Blood Biomarkers in Precision Neurorehabilitation: Capacity and Infrastructure Building Workshop,” gave attendees insight into the processes involved in using blood-based biomarkers in rehabilitation research, from sample collection and processing through data analyses.



“I think the professional development sessions were really fun, and it was great to see clinicians and researchers come together,” noted Dr. Trisha Kesar, an Associate Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Emory University.



After each Symposium and Professional Development session, attendees in the audience had the opportunity to ask questions and engage the speakers and facilitators in discussions. These question and answer sessions are a core component of our Annual Meeting, and we encourage attendees at all career stages to step up to the microphone to share their inquiries and ideas!

“We’re here to educate one another about the new research we’re doing, things we’ve discovered, and lessons learned. That is super valuable as a scientist and somebody who also wants to grow and become a better scientist. Presenting our own work, exchanging ideas, and getting feedback on those ideas is what being at a conference is all about. It’s why we do this and why it’s such a great opportunity to be here,” Dr. Andrew Hooyman acknowledged.

Poster Receptions

At ASNR 2026, we had 120 posters on display during two poster receptions. “The poster session is my favorite part,” said Dr. Cristian Cuadra, Assistant Professor at the University at Buffalo, and multiple other attendees shared this sentiment. He explained that “they are where I get the most feedback on my research, and I can see what other people are doing too. It’s fantastic.”



Excited to present her poster later in the day, Dr. Julie Schwertfeger shared her thoughts: “I’m going to have the rehab researchers who I’ve admired and whose work I’ve followed my entire career coming and talking to me about my methods, pointing out the things that I missed or could do better, and also encouraging me and congratulating me on the things I got right. That is absolutely priceless.”

Dr. Oliver Armitage commented that he was “seeing a trend towards quantitative, non-wearable-based, continuous neural recording technologies becoming more prevalent,” and he was excited to see more people using electrical recording technologies across a variety of neurological areas. “It’s very promising to see the community using more high-fidelity biological data,” he stated.

Since neurorehabilitation is such a diverse field, a lot of different kinds of research are represented at our poster session, adding depth and breadth to the conversations that occur at our Annual Meeting. “There’s a lot of really great scientific content. The poster session is always very interactive with lots of good traffic. It’s a really great opportunity to make connections, hear about other work going on in the field, and learn from others how to enhance your own research,” explained Dr. Allison Miller.



During the poster receptions, attendees had the opportunity to visit our sponsors and exhibitors, California Rehabilitation Institute (Gold-Level Sponsor), Rogue Research Inc., Cleveland FES Center, the Neuro-PRECISE Center, the six new NIH-funded Medical Rehabilitation Research Resource Centers (P50 Centers), NIRx, Cambridge Electronic Design Limited, MedTech International Group, and Kinarm. We appreciate their support!

ASNR Award Ceremony

On Thursday afternoon, we recognized our 2026 Fellows of the American Society of Neurorehabilitation (FASNR); Visionary Innovator in Science, Translation, and Education (VISTE) Award Recipient; and Rising Investigator in Science and Innovation for Neurorehabilitation (Rising Star) Award Recipient during our award ceremony. The latter two awards were presented for the first time this year.

ASNR 2026 AWARD RECIPIENTS

<p style="text-align: center;">Fellows of the American Society of Neurorehabilitation</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Left to right: Teresa Kimberley, PT, PhD, FAPTA, FASNR Mindy Levin, PT, PhD, FASNR Sangeetha Madhavan, PT, PhD, FASNR</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Visionary Innovator in Science, Translation, and Education (VISTE) Award</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Steven Kirshblum, MD</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Rising Investigator in Science and Innovation for Neurorehabilitation (Rising Star) Award</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">David Lin, MD</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2026 Diversity Fellows</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <small>Layla Abdullatif, PhD</small> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <small>Desmond Asante</small> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <small>Ignacio Novoa-Cornejo, MSc</small> </div> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fletcher McDowell / Presidential Abstract Awards</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <small>Sara Dyslin</small> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <small>Jessica Bath, PT, DPT, PhD</small> </div> </div>

Dr. Steven Kirshblum delivered an inspiring presentation, which was followed by a panel discussion with this year's awardees. You can learn more about each award recipient in [our recent blog article](#). We also announced our oral abstract awards and honored our [Diversity Fellows](#). Congratulations to all of this year's award recipients!



Social Events and Networking

Each year, we build time into our Annual Meeting program for attendees to socialize, network, and continue to build and strengthen our neurorehabilitation community. Our breaks between sessions, and poster receptions are the perfect opportunities to meet new people in the field and reconnect with acquaintances, colleagues, and friends.

“I love the Annual Meeting because it provides a chance to catch up with my colleagues. We have an amazing community of incredible scholars. I also like the smaller size and interdisciplinary focus—it always leads to good discussions between sessions,” explained Dr. Keith Lohse, Associate Professor of Physical Therapy and Neurology at WashU Medicine.

Similarly, Dr. Andrew Hooyman reflected, “I enjoy seeing old colleagues and having the opportunity to meet new collaborators, colleagues, and trainees. Seeing how the community has stayed together, grown, and changed has been my favorite part of attending the Annual Meetings.”



Our single track format means that attendees are together for all sessions throughout the Annual Meeting, and this can enhance networking and the sense of community. “The other thing I really love about this conference that's unique is there's only one presentation going on at any one time. And you eat and network with the speakers and people you haven't met before, and this leads to new collaborations and idea sharing on a much deeper, richer level,” Dr. Julie Schwertfeger shared.

This is the kind of meeting where people from different backgrounds, career stages, and research areas can come together, interact, and shape the dynamic field of neurorehabilitation. This year, our structured programming ended at 6:00 pm, allowing attendees time to continue conversations over dinner and while exploring the city of Long Beach.

“This is my favorite conference, and this year was no different,” Dr. Trisha Kesar affirmed. “I loved the science and all the engagement that we had with the questions and discussions. And I enjoy the balance where we can socialize, go to karaoke and dinners, and catch up with all the folks that we see here every year,” she continued.

What started as a serendipitous after-hours gathering of attendees in Charleston at a place that just happened to feature karaoke has grown into an unofficial annual karaoke outing that often draws quite a crowd! “These same top luminaries in our field who have advanced rehabilitation research will be crooning and crowing and having fun singing together at a place that's walkable

from the venue. This enriches and deepens the relationships and the comfort with reaching out to share an idea or ask for insight. It just breaks down barriers in a way that bigger conferences don't allow for. It's well-designed, there are fantastic, brilliant people, and it's lots of fun," remarked Dr. Julie Schwertfeger.

As the field of neurorehabilitation continues to grow, so too, does ASNR. "I see that we are renewing our society. A lot of young scholars are trying to push the boundaries, following what other senior scientists are doing. I think it's a good mentorship experience here," observed Dr. Cristian Cuadra.

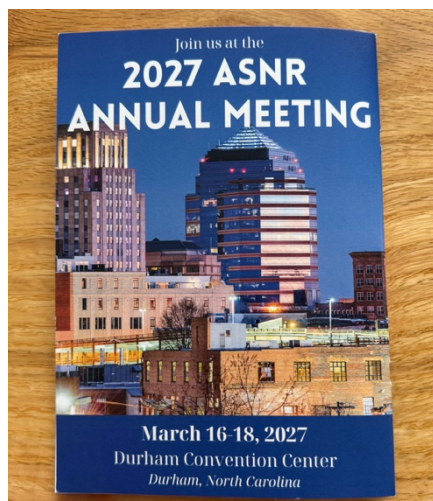
Dr. Rick Segal echoed this sentiment, saying, "There's a lot of us older people here, but I'm enjoying seeing enthusiastic younger people as well. I'm excited about the future. There were some great posters, and the presentations yesterday were fantastic. This is definitely my favorite meeting because I know so many people here, and it's just so much fun. The future is bright."



Save the Date for ASNR 2027 in Durham, NC

Our Annual Meetings would not be possible without the time, energy, and dedication of our phenomenal ASNR Committee Members. In particular, we would like to thank our Program Committee (Chair: Dr. Heidi Schambra) for their work planning outstanding content for this year's meeting, our Education Committee (Chair: Dr. Ela Plow) for the exceptional Professional Development Roundtables and Sessions, and our Member Engagement Committee (Chair: Dr. Steve Zeiler) and local members for spreading the word about the meeting and making everyone feel welcome in Long Beach!

Please take a moment to fill out our 2026 Annual Meeting Evaluation, and mark your calendars now to join us in Durham, North Carolina, for our next meeting March 16-18, 2027. In the meantime, we look forward to staying connected with you by email and on social media to share conference updates, important deadlines, news, and more!



Want to see even more moments from our 2026 Annual Meeting? [Check out our photo gallery!](#)



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