



ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

College of Pharmacy
and Health Sciences

Dean's Hour: Careers in Toxicology

The event is sponsored by the Office of the Dean in the
College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and Tau Omega Chi.
It is supported, in part, by the Society of Toxicology (SOT) through
the Mid-Atlantic SOT Regional Chapter.



Tuesday, November 9
Virtual

Featured Speakers



Nikaeta Sadekar, B.Pharm. '10P, '17Ph.D.
Respiratory Toxicologist
Research Institute for Fragrance Materials (RIFM)

Dr. Sadekar joined the Research Institute for Fragrance Materials in January of 2018. She is the lead for Local Respiratory Toxicity Safety Assessment and its research program. She is engaged in various collaborations across the scientific community with academic,

governmental, and industrial peers to develop the RIFM's Respiratory Sciences program.

As a part of the process team, Dr. Sadekar is also actively involved with various process development projects within RIFM. Communicating scientific projects to a broad audience is part of her role and responsibilities at RIFM. Dr. Sadekar has practical training working with *in vitro* and *in vivo* models (2009–17) and is experienced in teaching and leading the Biomedical and Human Anatomy and Physiology [laboratories](#) at St. John's University (2011–16).

She is an active member of the [Society of Toxicology \(SOT\)](#), where she participates in several specialty sections and special interest groups. She served as the Counselor for the SOT's [Ethical, Legal, Forensic, and Societal Issues Specialty Section](#) between 2019 and 2021. The Regulatory and Safety Evaluation Specialty Section at SOT recognized Dr. Sadekar for her doctoral work investigating the toxicity profile of Ras Sindoor, an Indian Ayurvedic medicine used as an alleged therapeutic agent (2017).

She has co-authored many peer-reviewed publications and serves as a reviewer for scientific journals. Dr. Sadekar has served as the newsletter editor for the [American Society for Cellular and Computational Toxicology](#) since 2019. Her skillsets include human health risk assessment, and her research interests are associated with developing alternative methods to animal studies, using *in vitro* and *in silico* tools.

Dr. Sadekar has served on the scientific advisory panel focusing on the [US Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)'s Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act](#) (December 2018) and as a Peer Reviewer for the [EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention](#) (October 2020). She was a member of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee at St. John's University (2016–17), volunteered for service on the Women in Toxicology Awards Committee (2016), and has served as the Mercury Toxicity Poster Session Chair at the Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting (2016).



Siddharth Sunilkumar '19Ph.D.

Postdoctoral scholar

Penn State College of Medicine

Dr. Sunilkumar is a postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Physiology at Penn State College of Medicine. He began his academic career majoring in pharmaceutical sciences and earned his Ph.D. in [pharmaceutical sciences](#)

with a concentration in toxicology from St. John's University under the mentorship of [Sue M. Ford, Ph.D.](#) A result-oriented scientist and an innovative leader with more than 10 years of research experience in academia, Dr. Sunilkumar has multiple peer-reviewed manuscripts and has secured \$20,000 in research funding.

In his current role, he studies diabetes pathophysiology and the underlying mechanisms of development and progression of diabetes-associated pathologies. His expertise in cell signal transduction mechanisms with a focus on mTOR and cyclic-AMP-mediated signaling pathways also aids in developing better *in vitro* models for studying disease pathophysiology.

Dr. Sunilkumar's duties involve planning and coordinating studies, as well as writing and editing manuscripts and research grants. His work on a novel hypothesis derived from stress protein-influenced retinal pathologies has been awarded a research grant by the Children's Miracle Network.

As a graduate student, his research focused on renal cell phenotype changes influenced by culture media composition. His experience as a teaching fellow at St. John's has been conducive in his development as an academician. The collaborative environment fostered both during his graduate work and currently has allowed him to be actively involved in the scientific community mentoring junior scientists in toxicology and molecular physiology.



J'nelle Oxford, M.P.H.. '13P

Health Program Coordinator

New York State Department of Health, Division of Epidemiology

Ms. Oxford is currently the Health Program Coordinator for the [New York State Department of Health](#)'s Division of Epidemiology. She earned her bachelor's degree in [toxicology](#) from St. John's

University in 2013 and went on to pursue her master's in public health at Kaplan University.

She began the COVID-19 pandemic working at the local level of a county health department performing case investigation and contact tracing; she also assisted setting up their drive-through testing site and specimen transport. She then went on to secure a position with the Department of Health, during which she has been on a team assisting with all state-operated mass vaccination sites across New York State.

At the peak of the pandemic, 30 sites were open seven days a week in all regions of New York State. She is currently the subject matter expert for the state program known as the Countermeasure Data Management System, which handles patient registration for all mass vaccination sites, as well as their record processing and retention.



Kristen Brocavich, D.D.S. '13P

Periodontist

Private Practice, Long Island, NY

Dr. Brocavich is currently practicing as a periodontist in Islip, Commack, and Setauket, NY, in multiple private periodontal offices. From a young age, Dr. Brocavich had a passion for science and an interest in dentistry.

She began her undergraduate studies at St. John's University and graduated in 2013 with a Bachelor of Science in [Toxicology](#) with a minor in [Chemistry](#), and earned a Gold Medal from the [College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences](#). During her time at St. John's University, she was an active member of Tau Omega Chi and had the opportunity to serve as President in her senior year.

Upon graduation, Dr. Brocavich continued her studies at Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine, where she earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery in 2017. She continued her postdoctoral training at Stony Brook's Advanced Education Program in Periodontics, where she earned her certificate in Periodontics and Implant Dentistry in 2020. Dr. Brocavich also earned her Master of Science with a focus in Oral Biology and Pathology while completing her specialty certificate. Her research focused on bone regeneration of a novel nanoparticle scaffold in craniomaxillofacial defects.

As a periodontist, Dr. Brocavich provides nonsurgical and surgical treatment for the treatment of gingival and periodontal diseases. She also replaces missing teeth through the placement of dental implants.