

Colorectal Research Center

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

March 9, 2026

LEADERSHIP & PERSONEL	<p>Alex Hawkins has been appointed Associate Editor for Colorectal Surgery for Annals of Surgery. Additionally, he will serve as the Program Chair for the 2026 Tennessee Chapter of the American College of Surgeons (TN ACS) meeting.</p> <p>Maryam Sherwani and James C. O'Donnell recently joined the Colorectal Research Center as Colorectal Surgery Research Fellows over the winter. Both are already making significant contributions to high-impact projects, driving innovation and progress in colorectal surgery research.</p>
FELLOWSHIP	<p>In August, we welcomed Raha Al Marzooqi as our 2025–26 Colorectal Fellow. She is already making strides in her research and will be presenting her work on pathologic complete response rates between early- and late-onset rectal cancer at ASCRS 2026.</p> <p>We are also excited to announce that we successfully matched Ama Winland from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center as our 2026–27 Colorectal Fellow. She is already working on looking the role of colorectal surgeons in opportunistic salpingectomy.</p>
GRANTS	<p>Alex Hawkins' R01 grant on comparing placebo versus antibiotics for acute uncomplicated diverticulitis has been funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). This groundbreaking multicenter randomized controlled trial is the first North American study to directly compare these two treatment modalities for patients with acute uncomplicated diverticulitis, marking a significant milestone in advancing evidence-based care for this condition.</p>
AWARDS	<p>Maryam Sherwani earned 1st place at the Southeastern Surgical Congress Shark Tank competition for her innovative study titled, "Evaluation of Collagen Content in Excised Colorectal Tissue as a Predictor of Anastomotic Leak." Her research holds promising implications for improving surgical outcomes and understanding factors that contribute to anastomotic complications in colorectal surgery.</p>
PAPERS	<p>The group had 22 papers published in the second half of 2025. They follow on the next page.</p>
PRESENTATIONS	<p>Timothy Geiger delivered grand rounds at the University of Missouri on December 25, 2025, followed by another presentation at Lahey Clinic on January 26, 2026. Alex Hawkins gave grand rounds at UT-Knoxville on January 22, 2026 and Columbia University on February 19, 2026. Aimal Khan shared his robotics expertise during grand rounds at Thomas Jefferson University. Sam Younan served as the keynote speaker at the 2026 Health Communication Research Forum, while Noah Wills-Johnston presented his study, "Surgical Perspectives on a Staged Surgical Approach for Complicated Diverticulitis: A Mixed-Methods Survey Study," at the Inaugural Frist College of Medicine Research Day.</p>
DEADLINES	<p>The deadline for grant submission for the ASCRS Foundation is March 15, 2026. Expect abstract deadline for TN-ACS in May 2026 followed by Academic Surgical Congress in August 2026.</p>
BOOKS	<p>Dave Beck is serving as the editor for the 4th edition of Fundamentals of Anorectal Surgery.</p>
WEBPAGE	<p>Visit our website! vumc.org/vcrg</p>
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Published Papers:

1. Liu Z, Abdullah A, Hashim M, Sethurathnam J, Fleshman J, Fichera A, Khan A. Water Under the Bridge: Ureteral Injury After Robotic Versus Laparoscopic Rectal Surgery. *Annals of Surgery Open*. 2026 Mar;7(1):e642.
2. Wang CC, Ali D, Habib DRS, Shou M, Sun K, Rogers JL, Eng C, Magge D, Zafar SN, Khan A. Unmasking inequalities in gastrointestinal cancer outcomes among Asian American subpopulations. *Sci Rep*. 2026 Feb 11. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41673032.
3. Goel CR, Gozza CM, Gamboa AC, Warren EK, Regenbogen SE, Hendren S, Holder-Murray J, Kalady M, Ejaz A, Hawkins AT, Silveira ML, Maithel SK, Balch GC, Rosen SA. Neoadjuvant Chemoradiation Does Not Improve Outcomes for Patients Undergoing Resection for Upper Rectal Cancer: A US Rectal Cancer Consortium Analysis. *Am Surg*. 2026 Feb;92(2):457-466. Epub 2025 Aug 28. PMID: 40875479.
4. Kobylarz FC, Parascandola SA, Khan A. Right Colectomy Using Single-Port Robotic Platform. *Dis Colon Rectum*. 2026 Jan 1;69(1):104. Epub 2025 Oct 6. PMID: 41052363.
5. Hamid SA, Fayanju OM, Greenup RA, Hawkins AT, Dossett LA. Navigating the Surgeon-Scientist Path in Health Services Research: Insights From a Mentorship Series for Trainees. *Ann Surg*. 2026 Jan 1;283(1):45-47. Epub 2025 Jul 8. PMID: 40626597.
6. Ueland TE, Shelley JP, Mosley JD, Robinson J, Gamazon ER, Maguire LL, Peek R, Sharp K, Hawkins AT. Genetic Risk, Healthy Lifestyle, and Risk Stratification for Diverticulitis. *J Am Coll Surg*. 2026 Jan 22. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41568825.
7. Younan SA, Fa A, Williams PJ, Ali D, Kuo MC, Khan A, Ye F, Irlmeier R, Dennis BM, Hawkins AT. Surgeon perspective on the treatment of acute diverticulitis: A survey-based analysis. *Surgery*. 2026 Jan 12;191:110048. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41529306.
8. Sassun R, Brucchi F, Sileo A, Vignati B, Crippa J, Achilli P, Maggioni D, Spinelli A, Montroni I, Hawkins AT, Mari G. Recurrent left-sided diverticulitis after surgery: A systematic review and single arm meta-analysis. *Colorectal Dis*. 2026 Jan;28(1):e70368. PMID: 41524293.
9. Bradley EM, Siddiqui S, Irlmeier R, Ye F, Hawkins A, Khan A, Ciombor KK, Bailey CE, Moses KA, Kripalani S, Idrees K. Association of Patient Health Literacy With NCCN-Concordant Colorectal Cancer Treatment and Survival. *J Natl Compr Canc Netw*. 2025 Dec 15;24(1):e257084. PMID: 41671447.
10. Yaszai AQK, Alizai Q, Ali D, Mirza MB, Kakar IK, Ullah A, George TJ, Idrees K, Khan A. Very Early-Onset Colorectal Cancer: Need for a Sub-Category Based on Differences in Tumor Biology, Metastatic and Survival Patterns? A Population-Based Cohort Study. *Clin Colorectal Cancer*. 2025 Dec 21:S1533-0028(25)00107-0. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41580344.
11. Rogers J, Ali D, Khan A. Mortality Trends from Colorectal Pathologies in the United States (1999-2020): A Retrospective Cohort Study Using CDC WONDER. *Tech in Coloproctol*. 2025 Dec (accepted).
12. Beck DE. Clinics in Colon and Rectal Surgery: The Early Years. *Clin Colon Rectal Surg*. 2025 Dec 19;39(1):1-2. PMID: 41425097; PMCID: PMC12716914.
13. Neylan CJ, Ueland T, Abramowitz SA, DePaolo JS, Tsao NL, Roberson JL, Hawkins AT, Carey DJ, Smelser DT, Levin MG, Hoffman RL, Damrauer SM, Maguire LH. Novel polygenic risk score associates with diverticulitis in a multi-institutional, ancestrally diverse cohort. *Sci Rep*. 2025 Nov 27;15(1):42348. PMID: 41298745; PMCID: PMC12660771.
14. Williams PJ, Martin K, McChesney S, Khan A. Single-Port Robotic Total Abdominal Colectomy. *Dis Colon Rectum*. 2025 Nov 17. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41252224.
15. Vadlakonda A, Sakowitz S, Khan A, Lee H. Current Status of Intraoperative Radiation Therapy in Rectal Cancer: A National Cancer Database Analysis. *Surgical Oncology Insight*. 2025 Aug. PMID: 100175.
16. Sun K, Wang CC, Geiger TM, Smith MC, Lee H, Younan SA, Khan A. Increasing Differences in Surgical Site Infections After Emergency and Elective Colorectal Surgery. *J Surg Res*. 2025 Oct;314:261-272. Epub 2025 Aug 7. PMID: 40779969.

17. Ueland TE, Shelley JP, Mosley JD, Robinson JR, Gamazon ER, Maguire LH, Peek R, Hawkins AT. Plasma Proteomic Signatures for Diverticulitis Risk Stratification. *J Surg Res.* 2025 Aug 23:S0022-4804(25)00496-2. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40850905.
18. Ueland TE, Shroder MM, Younan SA, Horst SN, McCoy AB, Bachmann JM, Hawkins AT. Benchmarks after bowel resection in Crohn's disease: implementing clinically meaningful health-related quality of life targets. *Surg Endosc.* 2025 Sep;39(9):6180-6191. Epub 2025 Jul 23. PMID: 40699344; PMCID: PMC12408668.
19. Hawkins AT, Younan SA, Bonnet K, Schlundt DG, Gordon EJ, Ye F, Irlmeier R, Cavanaugh KL; DivDA Study Collaborative. A Novel Decision Aid for Colectomy in Diverticulitis: Cluster Randomized Pilot and Feasibility Study. *Dis Colon Rectum.* 2025 Nov 1;68(11):1327-1337. Epub 2025 Jul 16. PMID: 40667761; PMCID: PMC12817323.
20. Younan SA, Ueland TE, Savitz BL, Jerome RN, Budine TD, Hawkins AT, Thayer WP, Wu DT, Lynch SE, Clark CR. "Pure Recombinant Platelet-Derived Growth Factor in Tissue Repair and Rejuvenation: A Review Exploring Frontiers in Regenerative Medicine". *Plast Reconstr Surg.* 2025 Sep 15. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40952157.
21. Shroder M, Ueland T, Du L, Spann A, Younan SA, McCoy A, Ye F, Hawkins AT. The use of patient-reported outcome measures in recurrent diverticulitis. *Surgery.* 2025 Sep;185:109492. Epub 2025 Jun 16. PMID: 40527090.
22. Hawkins AT, Ueland TE. Success in Diverticulitis Management: What Outcomes Really Matter? *Clin Colon Rectal Surg.* 2024 Oct 4;38(4):283-289. PMID: 40501525; PMCID: PMC12151586.