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The Gastrointestinal Tract XIX Conference: Making and Breaking a Gut

Organizer Bio: Maria T. Abreu, MD, PhD

Director, Crohn's & Colitis Center, Professor of Medicine, and Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, FL, USA

Maria T. Abreu is a gastroenterologist specializing in inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Her research lab has shown that toll-like receptor 4 (TLR4) is upregulated in human colitis-associated cancer and some sporadic colon cancers. They demonstrated that TLR4 acts as an oncogene in the intestine and is required for colitis-associated cancer. Subsequently, they described that TLR4 signaling activates β -catenin. These seminal observations highlight the intersection between innate immune signaling and tumorigenesis and offer opportunities for clinical intervention. Dr. Abreu's translational research first described that Crohn's disease patients with Nod2 mutations have stricturing disease. This observation is the basis of prognostic testing in Crohn's disease.

Abreu is also the Vice Chair of Research for the Department of Medicine and recipient of the Provost's 2018 Award for Scholarly Activity. In 2019, she received a Sherman Prize by The Bruce and Cynthia Sherman Charitable Foundation recognizing outstanding achievements in IBD; was appointed Deputy Chair of the International Organization for the Study of Inflammatory Bowel Disease; and recognized as a Councilor-at-Large member of the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) Governing Board. Dr. Abreu is proud to have received the 2016 Minority Digestive Health Care Award for her commitment to helping minority trainees and researching GI health issues in minority populations.