

Wetzel, Dawn

Dr. Dawn M. Wetzel is an early stage physician scientist principal investigator in the Departments of Pediatrics and Pharmacology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Dr. Wetzel was born in Toms River, NJ. She earned her BA in Biophysics at Johns Hopkins University. She earned her M.D., Ph.D. at Washington University in St. Louis, in the laboratory of L. David Sibley. She did her pediatric residency at the Children's Hospital of New York-Presbyterian and her fellowship in Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Yale University. She developed her own postdoctoral project between the laboratories of two mentors, and therefore, she was able to bring all aspects of this project to her new faculty position. Through this extensive training, Dr. Wetzel has over 10 years of experience performing basic and translational research on protozoa such as *Toxoplasma*, *Plasmodium*, *Cryptosporidium*, and *Leishmania*.

Dr. Wetzel's new laboratory has two main interests. One project is to explore the host:pathogen interactions necessary for *Leishmania* to enter into and survive within macrophages. The other is to discover and develop drugs that affect the *Leishmania* life cycle as new therapies for leishmaniasis and other parasitic diseases. Even though leishmaniasis is one of the 20 most common causes of death worldwide, it is considered to be one of the neglected tropical diseases by the World Health Organization, and as such it remains understudied. In fact, to her knowledge, she is the only pediatrician in the United States studying leishmaniasis.