

**The Association for Women in Science, Northwestern University, and
The University of Chicago
Present
Science Career Forum: Diverse Careers in Science Panel
March 14, 2008**

Panelist Bios

Kara Johnson, PhD

***Scientific Affairs Manager, Diagnostic Division
Abbott Laboratories***

Kara is a Scientific Affairs Manager at Abbott Laboratories in the Diagnostic Division. In this role, Kara acts as a scientific liaison between the scientists that develop Abbott's diagnostic products and the customers that use them. Her responsibilities include presenting scientific information to physicians, pathologists, and laboratorians in support of US sales; conducting educational workshops for students and non-scientists such as the sales and marketing teams; and participating in the organization of large world-wide studies that are designed to test the performance of Abbott's diagnostic products. Before joining the Scientific Affairs team, Kara was a Technical Support Scientist where she was responsible for overseeing on-market product improvements, product reformulations, and failure investigations for the Hepatitis line of diagnostic assays.

Kara serves on multiple committees, both within and outside of Abbott. She is an active participant in Abbott Laboratories Diagnostic Division Technical Advisory Board (TAB). She serves on the TAB Distinguished Speakers Seminar Series committee and is the acting co-chair of the Communications committee. Kara's outside committee involvement includes co-Vice President of the Newsletter committee for the Association of Women in Science – Chicago Area Chapter.

Kara received her Bachelor's of Science degree in Microbiology from Colorado State University and a Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology from Loyola University.

Cynthia L Wallner, PhD

***Senior Consultant, Solutions Group
Sg2***

Cynthia is a Senior Consultant in Sg2's Solutions Group, which provides services including publications, conferences, forecasting, and custom consulting to the Sg2 clientele of hospitals and health systems. Her primary responsibilities are to evaluate the impact of emerging trends and technologies on cardiovascular and pediatrics health care delivery, with the ultimate goal of improving clients' performance, growth, and clinical effectiveness.

Prior to joining Sg2, Cynthia was a senior project manager in global operations at Abbott Diagnostics, a division of Abbott Laboratories. In this role, she managed the production, approval and launch of 10 diagnostic products in the international market. Cynthia also worked at Abbott as a senior technical specialist, supporting the production of FDA-approved molecular diagnostic products for the detection of infectious diseases.

During her doctoral studies at Northwestern University, Cynthia clarified novel molecular mechanisms of bacterial pathogenesis by using a new cell culture technique developed in collaboration with multiple laboratories worldwide. While earning her PhD, she was awarded a competitive training grant from the National Institutes of Health, and developed and presented curricula for Northwestern's medical and dental microbiology courses.

Cynthia also holds a BS in biology from the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse University.

Jennifer Hepker, PhD

Account Director

Prescott Medical Communications Group

Jennifer Hepker joined Prescott Medical Communications Group in November 2001. Her responsibilities include project management and overseeing publication planning, as well as symposia development and technical writing/editing of manuscripts, CME supplements and posters. Her major projects have included FDA Advisory Committee slide presentation and briefing book development, Medical Science Liaison Training materials and sales training materials.

Prior to joining the Prescott Group, Jennie was a senior account executive at Weber Shandwick Public Relations (formerly BSMG Worldwide), where she began her medical and health communications career in 2000. Previously, she was a technical specialist on the hepatitis C business team at Abbott Laboratories, where she resolved technical problems for laboratory members, and provided technical input in the development of clinical trials for new products.

Jennie is a *cum laude* graduate of North Central College, earning a BS degree in Chemistry. She received her PhD from the Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Cellular Biology at Northwestern University.

Karl Reich, PhD

Chief Scientific Officer

Independent Forensics

Karl Reich grew up in New York City and had an urban childhood. He received his undergraduate degree in Chemistry from Cornell University in rural Ithaca. He then worked in several laboratories as a technician, before going back to school and obtaining his doctorate in Molecular Biology from UCLA [through a quirk, his graduate research was performed at Harvard Medical School].

Dr. Reich's postdoctoral training included work at the Institut Pasteur, Paris France and at Stanford Medical School in Stanford California. He then spent five years in the Pharmaceutical Division of Abbott Laboratories. This experience awakened his interest in the commercial opportunities of science. Subsequently he has worked in a number of biotech ventures all related to genomics, genetics and DNA. He is presently the Chief Scientific Officer of IFI where he oversees the laboratory and directs the research and development efforts.

Karl has more than 20 years of scientific experience in chemistry, molecular biology, biochemistry and forensics. Karl has industrial management experience from his years at Abbott Laboratories where he directed numerous molecular biology projects in anti-infectives and diabetes. He has published more than 20 research papers in first line scientific journals, and has received allowances on four molecular biology related patents. In his current role in a forensic DNA laboratory he has been court qualified as an expert in DNA, Biology and Statistics.