



# DoIM NEWS

SPRING 2005, VOL. 1

Information Exchange from the Division of Internal Medicine

## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

### DoIM Faculty Member Discovers Relationship Between Glucose Control and Cancer Outcomes

Dr. Mary Ann Weiser, by nature, is a curious person. This curiosity led her to an observation that may have fundamental importance in the management of diabetic cancer patients.



Many studies have demonstrated both long and short-term health risks associated with hyperglycemia in patients with and without a prior history of diabetes mellitus. Reduction of hyperglycemia has been shown to improve patient outcomes among intensive care unit and cardiac surgery patients. These observations led Dr. Weiser to postulate that outcomes among patients with cancer might be improved in patients with normal glucose metabolism.

Among cancer patients, the relationship between diabetes and/or hyperglycemia and cancer-related morbidity and mortality has been studied in only a few settings but prior studies suggest this possibility. A retrospective analysis of patients with colon cancer showed that outcomes were poor in patients with diabetes compared to those without diabetes. These observations stimulated Weiser's interest and prompted her to initiate a study of the prevalence of hyperglycemia during induction chemotherapy for acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) using standard therapy (including cyclophosphamide, vincristine, doxorubicin, and a potent corticosteroid,

dexamethazone) and to determine the effect of hyperglycemia on survival, remission, duration and treatment-related complications.

Her results were striking. Cancer patients with hyperglycemia had a shorter median complete remission duration (24 versus 52 months) and a shorter median survival (29 versus 88 months). By any standard, these are dramatic effects. In fact, Weiser's analysis of this study group showed that the presence of hyperglycemia was almost as strong a predictor of a poor outcome as was the presence of a Philadelphia + chromosome.

These impressive results have led Weiser to

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
MD ANDERSON  
CANCER CENTER  
*Making Cancer History\**

## A Few Words from Dr. Gagel

This month we highlight the emerging importance of diabetes mellitus and obesity as a health problem in the cancer population. Fully 17% or more of our patient population have elevated blood glucose values during random screening analysis. The high incidence of diabetes mellitus in our patient population is no doubt a reflection of the growing prevalence of this health problem in the general population. Moreover, the importance of diabetes mellitus as a problem in hospitalized patients has been underscored by studies over the past five years that have shown intensive treatment of diabetes mellitus in the intensive care unit setting substantially improves outcomes including survival of an intensive care unit experience. Given the high prevalence of diabetes mellitus in cancer patients at MDACC and the large intensive care unit population, these findings are no doubt applicable to our intensive care unit as well.



The recent report by Mary Ann Weiser, M.D. and her colleagues that show survival outcomes in patients with acute leukemia are better in patients who

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## 3rd Annual Diabetes Fair Was a Success!



According to the American Diabetes Association, approximately 17 million people in the United States have diabetes, a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin.

Since many M. D. Anderson patients and employees suffer from the disease, the Department of Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders and the Patient Education Office hosted the third Annual Diabetes Awareness Day Health Fair, Wednesday, November 3rd, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the third floor crosswalk between the Rose Zone and Rotary House.

Experts from nursing, clinical nutrition, pharmacy, and patient education provided information about the disease and potential complications, answered questions, discussed prevention, and assessed the participants risk of developing diabetes. Other activities included blood glucose monitoring, foot screening by a podiatrist, and a display of blood glucose meters available for use at home.

A new feature of the event was the arrival of "Bubba", a mannequin that represented the American epidemic of obesity. "Bubba" was served a meal of French fries, double meat with cheese hamburger, fried onion rings, and a chocolate shake. Those who stopped by were asked to guess the total number of calories, fat and carbohydrate grams, and milligrams of sodium in the meal. The correct answers were quite eye opening for many.

Approximately 500 patients and staff participated in the day's activities.



## A Few Words from Dr. Gagel

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have normal blood glucoses when compared with those with an elevated glucose is among the first indications that diabetes mellitus affects outcomes in patients with cancer. The reason for the poor outcomes in diabetic patients is unclear, although it is known that infectious complications are more common in those with high blood glucose value. Importantly, Dr. Weiser and her colleagues have initiated a prospective clinical trial to address the question of whether intensive insulin therapy will improve outcomes in diabetic leukemia patients.

The growing evidence that a broad spectrum of outcomes are improved by intensive insulin treatment of diabetes mellitus has been a clarion call to departments within the Division of Internal Medicine to develop programs to improve diabetic control. This may seem straightforward in concept, however, the complexities of improving diabetic control in both the inpatient unit and the outpatient setting are daunting. To address this problem, the departments of Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders and General Internal Medicine are building a collaborative program focused on the improvement of control of diabetes mellitus in our patient population. It is our goal to be the first cancer center to build a comprehensive program focused on improvement of diabetic control in a large percentage of patients. To accomplish this goal, there will be the requirement for a centralized mechanism to educate patients and physicians on techniques for improving diabetic control and for making adjustments of insulin and other diabetic agents on an ongoing and timely basis. Although the task is daunting, will likely take several years to implement, and will require broad participation and cooperation across the institution, it is our belief that if we are successful, patients will not only have improved outcomes but enjoy a higher quality in length of life. Our thanks to Mary and her team for taking the first important steps towards this goal.

Thank you, Dr. Robert F. Gagel

**HOLD THE DATE**

Division of  
Internal Medicine  
Holiday Party

**December 4, 2005**

**4-7pm**

**Hyatt Regency**

## Outpatient Diabetes Self-Management Class Now Available

The Internal Medicine Clinic is proud to announce that an Outpatient Diabetes Self-Management Class is now available. Previously this class was only available to inpatients but with the opening of the ACB, the class is now being offered on an outpatient basis as well. Clara Richardson, Diabetes Education Coordinator, RN, CDE (Certified Diabetic Educator), teaches both the inpatient and outpatient diabetes classes.

The Outpatient Diabetes Self-Management Class is open to patients, family members and employees. The class focus is diabetes management which includes the following topics: understanding diabetes, identifying and managing intermediate and long-term complications of diabetes, checking blood sugars to evaluate the prescribed treatment regimen and understanding how insulin works and how to safely administer insulin.

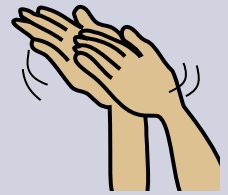
The Outpatient Diabetes Self-Management Class is offered every Monday from 10:00- 11:30am and every Wednesday from 1:00-2:30pm in the ACB Learning Center. No appointment is required to attend a session.

For more information, please contact Clara Richardson at (713) 792-8042 or Belinda Weatherly, Clinical Administrative Director at (713) 794-1135.



## Applauding Our APN's and PA's

*Recognizing their professionalism, dedication and commitment to quality of care for our patients.*



**Emergency Center**  
APN Leslie McMahon

**Cardiology**  
PA John Centenio  
PA Justine Isabel  
PA Amber Reece  
PA Myrshia Woods  
APN Anecita Fadol

**General Internal Medicine, AT and EC**  
APN Carmen D'Amico  
APN Menchu Mante  
APN Rosalie Valdres  
APN Tuong-Vi Ho

**Gastrointestinal Medicine and Nutrition**  
PA Joyce Lehmann  
PA Tonya Whitlow  
PA JoAnn Monette  
PA Debra Cole

**Endocrine, Neoplasia and HD**  
PA Shelia Gibwa  
APN Martha Beck  
APN Sherrie Flores

**Pulmonary Medicine**  
PA Larry Settles  
PA Rodney Haltom

**Dermatology**  
PA April Harrison

## Grand Round's

Rena V. Sellin, M.D. will be the host for June's Institutional Grand Rounds. The topic is "Current Approach to the Treatment of Adrenal Cortical Carcinoma" and invited speakers include: Jeffrey Lee, M.D, Surgical Oncology, Nicholas Sarlis, M.D., PhD, Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders and Vivek Samntra, M.D., Assistant Professor of Medicine, Dartmouth Medical School. Institutional Grand Rounds will take place on Friday, June 10, 2005 from 12:00 – 1:00 pm in Hickey Auditorium, R11.1400.

## Dr. Mary A. Weiser

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develop a prospective study in collaboration with faculty in the Department of Endocrine, Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders and Leukemia to address the important question of whether tight control of diabetes mellitus will improve survival in patients with leukemia. In other studies, Dr. Weiser is working with Dr. Marina Konopleva in the Department of Bone Marrow Transplant to understand the mechanism by which hyperglycemia may cause chemo resistance in acute lymphoblastic leukemia blast cells. They have promising data that suggests that PI3 kinase/AKT signaling is activated in leukemic cells. They are currently pursuing studies to determine whether hyperglycemia results in further activation of this process that is associated with chemo resistance.

## 2nd Joint Meeting of the European Calcified Tissue Society (ECTS) and International Bone and Mineral Society (IBMS)



25-29 June 2005

Geneva, Switzerland

[www.ects-ibms-2005.org](http://www.ects-ibms-2005.org) for full details.

Tel: +41 (0)22 33 99 595

Email: [ects-ibms@mci-group.com](mailto:ects-ibms@mci-group.com)

## Awards

### Outstanding Patient Educators Recognized

Louise Villejo, Executive Director of the Patient Education Office (left), and Steve Stuyck, Vice President for Public Affairs (right), present awards to 2004 Outstanding Patient Educators Rosalie Valdres (second from left), Charles Levenback, M.D., Linda Pataki and Emylinda Basa. Rosanne Arlington (not pictured) also was named a 2004 Outstanding Patient Educator.



**Rosalie Valdres**, advanced practice nurse, General Internal Medicine-Ambulatory Treatment Center and Emergency Center was honored for her initiative to develop a cancer-related Fatigue Class in partnership with the Patient Education Office. The class is held twice a month and was formed as a result of a successful Fatigue Awareness Week panel session. She has authored a book chapter on cancer-related fatigue, developed patient education information, presented several poster presentations and given numerous lectures.

## Everyone Had a Great Time at the Picnic!



## DoIM NEWS

### Newsletter Committee

Head, Division of Internal Medicine,  
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Division Administrator, **Rosemary Scarfia**

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## DoIM Welcomes

### New Faculty

**Susan Chon, MD**, Assistant Professor, Dermatology

**Lara Bashoura, MD**, Assistant Professor, Pulmonary Medicine

### New Employees

**Annette Allett**, Sr. Secretary, Endocrine

**Veronica Beard**, Administrative Assistant, Pulmonary Medicine

**Samrat Bhat, MBBS**, Graduate Research Assistant, Symptom Research

**Kirby A. Bonier, MS**, Office Manager, Department of Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health

**Lisa Echeverry**, Senior Administrative Assistance, Dermatology

**Linda Foot**, Manager, Clinical Protocol Administration, Pulmonary Medicine

**Rodney Haltom, PA**, Pulmonary Medicine

**Iman Hussein**, Sr. Data Analyst, General Internal Medicine, AT and EC

**Arlene Lastimoso, RN**, Cardiopulmonary Center

**Seyed Peyman Moghaddam, MD**, Sr. Research Assistant, Pulmonary Medicine

**Hays Young, PhD**, Postdoctoral Fellow, Pulmonary Medicine

**Kenichi Satake, MD, PhD**, Postdoctoral Fellow, Endocrine

**Gilbert Sayeghe, MD**, Coordinator, Clinical Research Programs, Endocrine

**Brenton Scott**, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow, Pulmonary Medicine

**Ajay Nooka, MD**, Graduate Research Assistant, Endocrine

**Audrey-Anne Proctor Worthing**, Research Nurse, Endocrine

**Lisa M. Welsh-Skiffington**, Program Manager, Division of Internal Medicine

Internal Medicine Center

**Rebecca Miranda, PSC**

**Rhodrick Haralson, PSC**

**Joan Steele, RN**

**Jonetta Cyrus, RN**

**Justina Omerhi, RN**

**Karen Lipscomb Tounkara, LVN**

### Promotions

**Lutisha Tish Alexander**, Sr. Administrative Assistant, Pulmonary Medicine

### Transfers

**Pamela H. Jones**, Program Director, Bone Disease Program