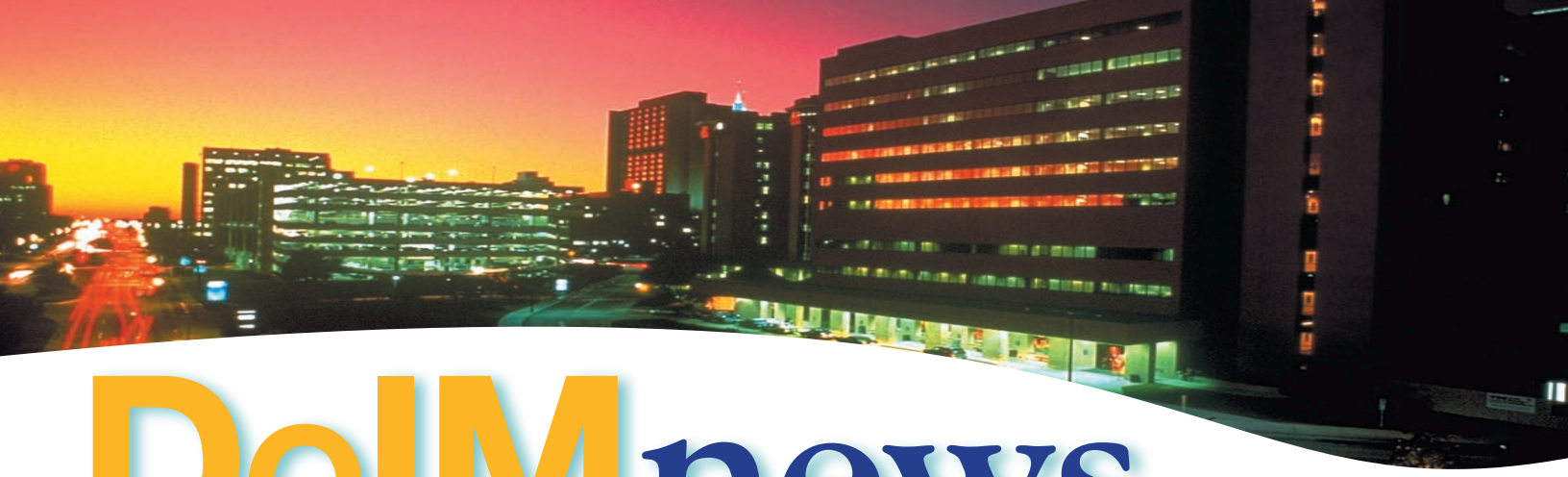

DoIMnews

Information Exchange from the Division of Internal Medicine • Summer 2006

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MD ANDERSON CANCER CENTER
Making Cancer History®

2006 Division of Internal Medicine Research Retreat

More than 200 faculty, fellows and staff attended the 2006 Division of Internal Medicine Research Retreat, which was held May 2, 2006. The purpose of the retreat was to highlight the research efforts of the Division's faculty, fellows, and research staff, and promote new interactions and future collaborations. The retreat included concurrent, interactive workshops based on four research themes (Inflammation, Surrogate Markers of Disease, Neoplasias, and Cancer-related Symptoms and Morbidity) and a poster session. Michael Tuvim, PhD, Associate Professor of Pulmonary Medicine and DoIM Research Committee Chair, moderated the retreat, which began with a presentation by Robert Gagel, MD, DoIM Division Head, detailing the Division's new focus on "Redefining Survivorship Research."

Ann O'Mara, PhD, MPH, RN (Community Oncology and Prevention Trials Research Group, NCI, NIH) provided a keynote address that reviewed various NIH funding mechanisms and tips for successful submissions, with particular emphasis on information that would be helpful for investigators with limited NIH grant experience.

Drs. Robert Gagel (left) and Michael Tuvim hosted Dr. Ann O'Mara (center) from the NCI as the guest speaker for the 2006 Research Retreat.

Retreat guest speaker Dr. O'Mara emphasized several points for new investigators pursuing grant funding:

1. Before submitting, investigators should contact the designated NIH program staff member as early as possible to discuss the proposed research project and whether the Institute would be interested in funding it. If the proposed work is not a high priority for the program staff member's portfolio, the staff member may suggest other funding programs within that Institute or in other Institutes that might be more interested in the particular focus area.
2. Investigators should invite as many people as possible to review a draft of the application, particularly those with different areas of expertise and who are not associated with the project. One of the most frequent criticisms Dr. O'Mara has seen in the review process is "lack of clarity" of the study narrative. Reviews performed by other experienced investigators can help identify areas that are confusing or are not adequately described.
3. Investigators should be realistic when preparing the budget. Underbudgeting to appear frugal or "padding" the budget with extra, unwarranted dollars is quickly detected by most reviewers and, at best, is seen as poor planning and management. At worst, a significantly unrealistic budget can diminish the reviewers' enthusiasm for the entire application, and may contribute to an unfundable priority score.

A new retreat feature, the 2006 Abstract Competition, was a highlight of the day's events. More than 60 abstracts, submitted by DoIM investigators, were reviewed and scored by the 16-member Research Committee (see page 5). The 13 highest scoring abstracts were selected as candidates for the competition and were forwarded to a distinguished panel of judges, including Drs. Robert Bast, Jr., Thomas Burke, Margaret Kripke, Maurie Markman, and Leonard Zwelling, who were responsible for selecting the four finalists.

(From left to right) Drs. Robert Bast, Maurie Markman, Naifa Busaidy, Robert Gagel, Margaret Kripke, Aarif Khakoo, Thomas Burke, and Leonard Zwelling after presentation of the "Outstanding Basic Research" and "Outstanding Clinical Research" awards to Drs Busaidy and Khakoo.

The four finalists, Naifa Busaidy, MD, Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders, Aarif Khakoo, MD, Cardiology, Nachman Mazurek, PhD, GI Medicine and Nutrition, and Sui Zhang, MD, PhD, Cardiology, competed for two $5,000 prizes, one for outstanding clinical or translational research and one for outstanding basic research. Dr. Busaidy described the effects of poor glycemic control on a group of pancreatic cancer

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A Few Words from Dr. Gagel

This issue of the DoIM News highlights the growing body of DoIM research activities. At the recent 2006 DoIM Research Retreat, more than one hundred posters and oral presentations demonstrated the diversity of research activity in the DoIM. Discovery, in its many forms, is the greatest contribution our division can make to M. D. Anderson. It was particularly pleasing for me to observe the intensity and creativity that flowed through the many presentations at the retreat. An important thread that was woven through this complex tapestry is a redefinition of survivorship. For example, many of the new therapies for cancer target specific signal transduction pathways that are present not only in cancer cells but in a variety of other cell and tissue types. Along with the desirable effect of slowing the growth of the malignancy, it is becoming increasingly apparent that these agents may also induce effects that may be both undesirable (e.g., neuropathic) and potentially desirable (e.g., reduction of hypertension) in our patients. Redefining survivorship will require that we refocus our research efforts to better understand the effects of existing and, most importantly, novel new therapies on normal cells and organs. Specific examples being pursued by DoIM faculty include studies on the effects of Herceptin (monoclonal antibody against the erbB2 receptor) on cardiac function, and the effects of several new tyrosine kinase inhibitors that can cause congestive heart failure by disrupting signal transduction in the heart muscle fibers. The goal of this investigation is to further understand the mechanisms by which these effects occur and, most importantly, develop strategies to prevent or reduce these effects so that the drugs can continue to be administered to effectively treat the malignancy. The DoIM faculty should take great satisfaction in the progress that they have made in the past four years towards this goal.

Remembering a Beloved Faculty Member

We were saddened by the death of Mary Ann Weiser, MD, Professor, General Internal Medicine, AT and EC, who died on June 9, 2006. Dr. Weiser was loved by her patients and fellow faculty members for her consummate clinical skills, enthusiasm for discovery, and her ability to juggle both personal and professional responsibilities. She joined GIM, AT and EC in 1993 as the fourth member of a newly evolving group and quickly established herself as an astute general internist who cared deeply for her patients.

Over her tenure at M. D. Anderson, Dr. Weiser's work evolved in several directions. With the development of patient self-referral in the mid 1990s, a need emerged for a program focused on patients who had symptoms or signs of possible cancer but who had not been diagnosed. Over the next five years, Dr. Weiser established herself as a medical detective, piecing together difficult medical findings to reach a diagnosis. This activity showcased her curiosity, intellect, and her desire to help patients in need. Displaying her commitment to patient care and M. D. Anderson, Dr. Weiser helped train several of her colleagues in these unique diagnostic skills, ensuring the continuation of this valuable program.

Dr. Weiser with her daughters Julia and Lauren

Dr. Weiser also focused her efforts on exploring the relationship between poorly controlled diabetes mellitus and clinical outcomes in acute lymphoblastic leukemia patients. In a seminal manuscript published in the journal Cancer *(Cancer. 2004 Mar 15;100(6):1179-85)*, Dr. Weiser reported retrospective data indicating that patients with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and poorly controlled diabetes mellitus had substantially poorer outcomes than those with normal blood glucose. This observation led Dr. Weiser to propose several lines of investigation, the first focused on the effects hyperglycemia has on cancer cell biology. Because Dr. Weiser initiated and developed a multi-disciplinary research program (MRP) grant that has been recently funded, her research will continue under the direction of Sai-Ching Yeung, MD, PhD, GIM, AT and EC, and Michael Andreeff, MD, Blood and Bone Marrow Transplantation. In addition she worked with Naifa Busaidy, MD, Endocrine Neoplasia and Hormonal Disorders, to perform a retrospective analysis of the effects of hyperglycemia in pancreatic cancer patients, where similarly poor outcomes were observed. As a result, Drs. Weiser and Busaidy initiated prospective studies to document this effect. Dr. Weiser was deeply committed to discovery and determined to see the research continue.

Many of us at M. D. Anderson will miss Dr. Weiser's cheerful and resolute presence. We will be reminded of her presence by the legacy she established: an excellent diagnostic service for patients with suspected cancer, and an outstanding program to improve cancer outcomes in patients with diabetes mellitus. To further Dr. Weiser's legacy, the Mary Ann Weiser Endowment for Research is being established in her honor.

Symptoms as Outcome Measures in Cancer Clinical Trials

This August, the Department of Symptom Research (Chair, Charles S. Cleeland, PhD) will host invited representatives from the FDA and NCI and international leaders in the field of symptom assessment and outcomes research at its Symptoms as Outcome Measures in Cancer Clinical Trials workshop and consensus meeting. The workshop will explore the concept of symptom burden as an outcome measure for both curative and palliative clinical trials. Invited participants will review what is known about potential common biological pathways for symptom expression (such as inflammation), and discuss how these findings might be translated into patient-reported outcomes. Participants will also explore potential measurement methods for symptoms within a high burden of illness. The workshop will culminate with a state-of-the-science document summarizing recommendations for standardizing measurement methods of multiple symptoms.

DoIM Retreat *continued from page 1*

(Left to right) Drs Susan Chon, Carmen Escalante, Edward T. H. Yeh, and Issam Raad perform their roles as moderators for the "Surrogate Markers of Disease" Workshop.

patients with diabetes mellitus and highlighted the importance of diabetes management as a factor in the survival of cancer patients. Dr. Khakoo presented an innovative study of how stem cells target malignant cells, providing a strategy for blocking the metastatic potential of these cells. Dr. Mazurek described the effects of galectin-3 loss on an important tumor suppressor gene, PTEN, which was discovered at M. D. Anderson about five years ago. His work highlights the growing role of mucopolysaccharides in cell growth and regulation. Dr. Zhang described the mechanism by which adult stem cells participate in myocardial regeneration.

All four gave excellent presentations and thoughtful responses to the senior leadership's questioning, putting the judges to the test in selecting the competition's two awardees. The two awardees selected by the judges were Naifa L. Busaidy, MD, for Outstanding Clinical Research, and Aarif Khakoo, MD, for Outstanding Basic Research. All four finalists, as well as the other competition candidates, are congratulated for their fine work and for representing some of the "best" of the Division's research activities.

Another feature of the retreat was the interactive workshop sessions, moderated by DoIM Department Chairs and selected faculty. Each workshop was charged with generating ideas for future DoIM collaborative projects. The resulting future project ideas were presented to the general audience at the end of the retreat. As always, our Chairs and senior faculty rose to the challenge, identifying common themes that may be significantly facilitated by the following new ventures: 1) improving access to applicable models and reagents (antibodies, siRNAs, etc) to study signal transduction pathways contributing to chronic inflammation, which in several epithelial surfaces (skin, gut, lung) is mediated by T-cells and cytokines and can lead to the development of cancer (presented by Madeleine Duvic, MD); 2) the establishment of a committee to develop guidelines for the acquisition and banking of specimens across M. D. Anderson to identify and test new, novel biomarkers of disease and treatment effects (presented by Edward T.H. Yeh, MD); 3) the development of a working group to identify and share common methodologies across the DoIM used in studying neoplasias, particularly the role of inflammatory conditions and signaling pathways such as growth factors and binding proteins (presented by Steven I. Sherman, MD); and 4) enhancing cross-departmental Divisional collaborations in clinical research, and the development of a large Divisional database for clinical descriptive studies as well as the development of clinical trials (presented by Charles S. Cleeland, PhD).

Michael Tuvim, PhD, Chair of DoIM Research Committee (on left), presented the "2006 DoIM Best Research Collaborator" award to Naifa Busaidy, MD, for her interdepartmental work studying outcomes of patients with both diabetes and cancer.

(Left to right) Daniel Lenihan, MD, and Michael Tuvim, PhD, Deputy Chair and Chair of the Research Committee, respectively, served as moderators of the 2006 DoIM Research Retreat.

As the retreat drew to a close, the retreat moderators, Drs. Tuvim and Lenihan, announced a new mechanism to reward collaborative research in the DoIM. This "surprise" award for the "2006 Division of Internal Medicine Best Research Collaborator" recognizes the efforts of an investigator who demonstrated excellence in promoting and supporting collaborative research to further DoIM goals. Naifa Busaidy, MD, Endocrine Neoplasia and HD, received the award for her collaborative work with several departments related to her studies of diabetes in various cancer populations, as well as the hearty congratulations and thanks from the retreat organizers and attendees.

Many attendees stayed to enjoy the wine and cheese reception immediately following the retreat as well as chat with retreat participants. As expressed by Maurie Markman, MD, "This was a wonderful activity. I was delighted to be able to participate, and the Division of Internal Medicine should be VERY PROUD of its research efforts and accomplishments."

(Left to right) Dr. Robert Bresalier discusses a Retreat presentation with Drs Shumei Song and Nachman Mazurek.

(Left to right) Drs Tasneem Bawa-Khalfe and Edward T. H. Yeh at their poster titled "Induction of SENP1 Directly Regulates the Development of Prostate Cancer."

(From left to right) Drs Dimitrios Kontoyiannis, Dan Lenihan, and Margaret Kripke enjoy the post-Retreat wine and cheese reception.

Third International Conference on Ubiquitin, Ubiquitin-Like Proteins and Cancer

The Third International Conference on Ubiquitin, Ubiquitin-Like Proteins and Cancer held on February 9-11, 2006, proved to be a resounding success, drawing more than 225 attendees who crowded into meeting rooms for state-of-the-art lectures and abstract presentations on late-breaking research. We proudly celebrated the 2004 Nobel Prize in chemistry awarded to Avram Hershko, MD, PhD, for his discovery of the ubiquitin pathway and the 10th year anniversary of the discovery of SUMO/Sentrin and NEDD8. Scientists and physicians traveled from 26 different countries and 25 states to participate for three days of high-level science and research. This intensely productive meeting was organized by Edward T.H. Yeh, MD, Professor and Chair, Department of Cardiology.

Avram Hershko, MD, PhD, Nobel Prize Laureate, receiving a silver and gold belt buckle from Edward T.H. Yeh, MD. The buckle reads: "World Champion Cowboy Scientist"

Ubiquitin-mediated protein degradation has gained prominence in recent years, because of its involvement in the regulation of a large number of biologically important proteins and critical cellular processes. The Third International Conference brought together world leaders to explore the link between ubiquitin and cancer, present the latest advances, and discuss the potential for designing new targets for cancer therapy. The recent introduction of a proteasome inhibitor for the treatment of myeloma was one of the first clinical contributions from the ubiquitin field, and discussion included details regarding the pipeline of potential drugs in clinical development.

Scientists and physicians were required to apply to attend this conference, and were qualified based on research contributions that have impacted their respective fields. In addition to the plenary sessions, sixty-seven exceptional abstracts were selected for presentation in breakout sessions. Not only did the presenters have the chance to review their work with world-leading experts, but the experts were also impressed by the cutting edge research from the lesser known but clearly capable young scientists. Within a field that is on the brink of exploding with emerging therapies, collaborative opportunities flourished and served to keep the participating scientists well informed and connected.

A new and exciting addition to the conference was the Wireless Internet Café stationed nearby. We also hosted a Wine and Hors D'oeurves Reception and a scrumptious International Banquet and Viennese Table. The dinner was followed by "A Conversation with Living Legends," where Dr. Yeh explored the personal basis of scientific discovery by conversing with living legend Dr. Avram Hershko and several key players in the discovery of SUMO/Sentrin.

This conference provided an atmosphere of scientific intellect and creativity that sparked novel ideas bringing this field to new heights. To maximize on the momentum generated by the past conferences, we have already set the date of February 7-9, 2008, for the Fourth Conference.

Edward T.H. Yeh, MD, Professor and Chairman Dept. of Cardiology and Conference Organizer, Margo Cox, MD, Robert Gagel, MD, Division Head, Division of Internal Medicine, Avram Hershko, MD, PhD, Nobel Prize Laureate, Hui-Ming Chang, MD, MPH, Amy Heaton, Conference Organizer

Division of Internal Medicine Welcomes...

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Aisha Pinto, Student Extern
Kimberly Roe, Senior Administrative Assistant
LaTonya Jackson, Administrative Assistant
Mona Williams, Charge Capture & Document Manager

Dermatology
Barbra Wooten, Administrative Assistant
Kerri Fernandes, Data Entry Operator
Leena Samuel, Research Assistant I
Thomas Rodriguez, Research Assistant

Endocrine Neoplasia and HD
Libero Santarpia, Postdoctoral Fellow
Shitij Kapoor, Graduate Research Assistant

GI Medicine and Nutrition
Carolyn Paraguya, Research Nurse
Margarete Halfley, Senior Research Assistant

GIM, AT and EC
Janice Polk, Administrative Assistant
Kim Pham, Operations Manager
Maria "Zalie" Niangar, APN

ID, IC & EH
Victor Mulanovich, MD, Assistant Professor

Pulmonary Medicine
Amanda Orsak, Administrative Assistant
Lindsey (Katie) Bellinghausen, Research Assistant
Sheri Contella, Office Manager

Symptom Research
Vanessa Zavaleta, Clerk

Cardiopulmonary Center
Amanda Barker, Receptionist
Gloria Granda, EKG Technologist
Gerlie Lampa RN, Outpatient Clinical Nurse
Linsey McLain, Medical Assistant
Yolanda Gonzalez, EKG Technologist

IMC
Asusena Estrada, Receptionist (ACB)
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Laura Lisseth Marquez, Receptionist (MB)

DoIM Administrative Office
James Bramhall, Information Systems Coordinator

Promotions

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Jeanie Woodruff, Department Publications Coordinator, Symptom Research
Joyce Osei, Senior Research Assistant, Dermatology
Jinke Cheng, PhD, Assistant Professor, Cardiology
Kimberly Desrouleaux, Senior Research Nurse, Endocrine Neoplasia and HD
Liberty Posada, Lead Unit Service Coordinator, Emergency Center
Pamelia Stavely, Patient Service Coordinator, IMC
Rebecca Miranda, Patient Access Specialist, IMC
Sharon Robinson, Dermatology, Senior Administrative Assistant

PEOPLE SPOTLIGHT

2006 Faculty Achievement Award in Clinical Research

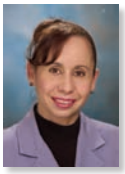
Issam Raad, MD, Chair, Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health

On May 3, 2006, Dr. Raad was awarded the Faculty Achievement Award in Clinical Research by the Faculty Senate. This award is the highest clinical research award given by the Faculty Senate to clinical investigators with outstanding achievements in clinical or translational research and who had significant impact on the field of biomedical science as it relates to cancer. Dr. Raad's innovative research has had worldwide impact with life-saving implications. In 2002, the CDC published its Guidelines and Recommendations for the Prevention of Intravascular Catheter-Related Infections. Among the three novel and most highly recommended approaches by the CDC were maximal sterile barrier and novel antimicrobial catheters, both of which were based on the innovative clinical research of Dr. Raad. The award will be presented to Dr. Raad at the 2006 Faculty Honors Convocation on November 9, 2006 at 4:00 pm in the Ballroom in the Charles A. LeMaistre Clinic.

Congratulations to Beth Johnson, RN, Research Nurse Supervisor, Symptom Research. Beth was nominated and elected Chair-elect for MDACC's Clinical Research Nurse Committee. She will hold this position for two months, then will serve as Chair for fiscal year 2007. The committee represents M. D. Anderson's community of research nurses and is responsible to the Vice President for Clinical Research for research activities and the Chief Nursing Officer for nursing practice.

Ronald Rapini, MD, Chair, Dermatology will serve as President of the Texas Dermatological Society Executive Council 2006-2007. Congratulations Dr. Rapini!

Vi Ho, RN, APN, GIM, AT and EC successfully defended her dissertation prospectus, "Effects of an educational intervention on breast cancer screening and early detection beliefs and practices in Vietnamese American women" and she is now a PhD candidate. Additional kudos to Vi for receiving the 2006 National Cancer Awareness Recognition Award on April 27, 2006. She was recognized for her volunteer work in cancer education in the Houston Vietnamese American community. Congratulations Vi!



Carmen E. Gonzalez, MD and **Margaret B. Row, MD,**

GIM, AT and EC have recently been elected as Fellows of the American College of Physicians (ACP). The American College of Physicians (ACP) is the second-largest physician group in the United States. Membership includes more than 116,000 internists, related sub-specialists, and medical students.

Brenton L. Scott, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow, Pulmonary Medicine, was awarded an Odyssey Fellow second year appointment (June 1, 2006 - May 31, 2007). This award provides Dr. Scott with an additional $10,000 research allowance to be used for research efforts and professional development.

Faculty, residents and researchers from the Dermatology Departments of M. D. Anderson and the University of Texas - Houston Medical School participated again this year in the American Academy of Dermatology 64th Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA, on March 3-7, 2006. The American Academy of Dermatology is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. At the meeting, **Chunlei Zhang MD, PhD,** was awarded a $20,000 Dermatology Foundation research grant for translational studies of SAHA in CTCL. Congratulations Dr. Zhang!

The **Department of Symptom Research** celebrated "Data Analysts' Week" in March, 2006 to recognize and honor their hard-working, behind-the-scenes data folks—Ibrahima Gning, Gary Mobley, and Yiqun Zhang. Without them none of the department's research efforts could move forward. They enter data collected from patient questionnaires, verify data accuracy, maintain data quality, tabulate and analyze results, design paper and electronic forms, and are even learning to write journal papers.

Sharmila Anandasabapathy, MD, GI Medicine and Nutrition, received

funding for a research study entitled, "Computer-Assisted Analysis of Brush Biopsy Specimens (EndoCDx) in the Detection of Esophageal Dysplasia: A Multicenter Prospective Clinical Trial" from CDx Laboratories (award date June 2006 – June 2011). Congratulations Dr. Anandasabapathy!

(From left to right) Seated: Sue Davis, MMS, MBA (Advisor); Sara Peleg, PhD; Parul Hazarika, PhD; Jane M. Geraci, MD, MPH; Jessica P. Hwang, MD, MPH; and Naifa L. Busaidy, MD.
Standing: Michael Tuvim, PhD, Chair; Amir Onn, MD; Ray Y. Hachem, MD; James Byrd, PhD; Tito R. Mendoza, PhD; Aarif Khakoo, MD; and Sushovan Guha, MD, PhD.
Not in Picture: Daniel J. Lenihan, MD, Deputy Chair; Susan Chon, MD; Dimitrios P. Kontoyiannis, MD; and Karen O. Anderson, PhD

The Division of Internal Medicine Research Committee is charged with enhancing research communications and collaborations across the DoIM. Members include two representatives from each Department, typically one basic science investigator and one clinical investigator, who are appointed by their respective Department Chairs. In addition to its role in enhancing communication across the DoIM departments, the committee is charged with coordinating the DoIM's Research Retreat, as well as reviewing and recommending research-related equipment requests, annual capital equipment planning, and identifying and addressing issues related to faculty and trainee educational needs, the research process, and sponsored programs and activities. The committee meets monthly, and DoIM faculty are encouraged to contact their Committee representatives with questions or information about their Department's research activities.

Bone Disease Program of Texas 4th Annual Scientific Retreat, Rolanette and Berdon Lawrence Bone Research Awards

On Friday, March 17, 2006, clinicians and scientists in the Bone Disease Program of Texas met for the program's 4th annual scientific retreat. The Bone Disease Program of Texas is a collaborative clinical and research program of The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and Baylor College of Medicine, and is led by Dr. Robert Gagel and headquartered in the Division of Internal Medicine.

The retreat, held in the Texas Medical Center, had a record attendance of over 60 participants from Baylor College of Medicine, M. D. Anderson, UT Health Science Center at Houston, and Rice University.

Steven Teitelbaum, MD, Messing Professor of Pathology, Department of Pathology and Immunology, at Washington University in St. Louis, gave the keynote address. His talk, titled "Osteoclasts, Integrins and Osteoporosis," highlighted his laboratory's recent discovery that the bone-degrading capacity of osteoclasts depends upon their physical interaction with receptor proteins on the bone surface. Blocking these receptors, known as integrins, also prevents osteoporosis. This effect was demonstrated when mice bred by the researchers without genes for the major integrins developed increased bone mass. Phase II clinical trials in humans are now underway for drugs that target the integrins.

The retreat focused on five presentations from a larger pool of young investigator applicants who were competing for the first Rolanette and Berdon Lawrence Bone Research Awards. A panel of external reviewers evaluated the proposals and presentations, and the following grant proposals were selected for one-year funding of $45,000.

Dr. Gagel flanked by research finalists Khalid Mohamedali, Experimental Therapeutics and Nadezhda Koshkina, Pediatrics, M. D. Anderson, Qipeng Zheng, Molecular and Human Genetics, Baylor, and award winners Krishna Sinha, Molecular Genetics, M. D. Anderson, and Roy Morello, Molecular and Human Genetics, Baylor.

"Role of Collagen Prolyl 3-Hydroxylation in Bone Formation and Human Disease," Roy Morello, PhD, Principal Investigator, Baylor College of Medicine, Department of Molecular and Human Genetics. Osteogenesis imperfecta is a devastating childhood bone disease characterized by low bone mass that is typically, although not always, due to a defect in the type-1 collagen gene. Dr. Roy Morello from Baylor College of Medicine's Department of Molecular and Human Genetics, and his mentor Brandon Lee, MD, PhD, identified a protein expressed by the CRTAP (cartilage-associated protein) gene, and proposed that this gene, when mutated, may be responsible for the cases of osteogenesis imperfecta where there is no primary type-1 collagen defect. Dr. Morello is working to develop a mouse model in which the CRTAP gene is defective to examine its effect on normal bone formation and mineralization.

"Characterization of NO66, an Osx Interacting Protein During Osteoblast Differentiation and Bone Formation, " Krishna M. Sinha, PhD, M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, Department of Molecular Genetics. Dr Sinha's mentor, Dr. Benoit deCrombrugghe, identified a gene/protein that is necessary for normal mineralization of the skeleton, which he named osterix. Dr. Krishna subsequently identified a protein, named NO66, that interacts with osterix and inhibits its activity. Dr. Sinha will undertake a series of rationally designed studies to understand how this protein regulates bone formation and mineralization.

The Bone Program, through mechanisms such as the Rolanette and Berdon Lawrence Bone Research Awards, is committed to fostering groundbreaking research and to motivate bright, young investigators towards careers in bone research.

The external selection committee: Steven Teitelbaum, Washington University, St. Louis, Dianna Milewicz, UT Health Science Center-Houston, and Magnus Hook, Institute of Biosciences and Technology, Texas A&M University Health Science Center, Houston

In light of the growing need to diagnose and treat endocrine patients in a setting that facilitates multidisciplinary collaboration in patient care, education and research, M. D. Anderson approved the establishment of the **Endocrine Center** in fiscal year 2006. Since its inception, the Divisions of Internal Medicine and Surgery have been instrumental in the development of the Center. The Departments of Endocrine Neoplasia, Surgical Oncology and Head and Neck Surgery will collaborate to centralize the provision of multidisciplinary care that is the hallmark of cancer care at M. D. Anderson.

After minor renovations to existing space on the 10th floor of the Rose Zone, the Endocrine Center will open its doors in August of 2006 with six exam rooms, a physician workroom and an administrative/operational area. Given the limited space and resources immediately available, Clinical Operations has planned a phased approach for future growth of the Endocrine Center to allow for program and space development.

Shumei Song, MD, PhD, GI Medicine and Nutrition at her award reception (Digestive Disease Week 2006) with Barry Marshall, MD (Nobel Prize in Medicine 2005) and Robert Bresalier, MD, Chair, GI Medicine and Nutrition. Dr. Song is holding Dr. Marshall's Nobel Prize Medal!

DoIMnews

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