



DoIM news

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Information Exchange from the Division of Internal Medicine

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

Dermatology Offers New Services

The 2002 appointment of Ronald Rapini, MD, as the chair of the Dermatology Department heralded a makeover of dermatologic services at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Dr. Rapini chairs the first combined department shared by M. D. Anderson and the University of Texas Health Science Center. Over the past three years, Dr. Rapini has recruited six new faculty members into the department. The current 18 faculty members have a broad spectrum of dermatologic expertise made possible by this combined program.

Newly recruited faculty members at M. D. Anderson, in addition to Dr. Rapini, include: Tri Nguyen, MD, and Deborah MacFarlane, MD, both Mohs surgeons, and Susan Chon, MD, Carol Drucker, MD and Sharon Hymes, MD. They join established faculty members that include: Madeleine Duvic, MD, Parul Hazarika, PhD, Chun-Lei Zhang, MD, PhD and Xiao Ni, MD, PhD.

The expertise brought by the existing and new faculty members has made it

**Faculty
Spotlight**

possible for the Dermatology Department to develop several new avenues of care. Dermatologists continue to see consults and other patients every day at the Melanoma and Skin Center. Drs. Hymes, Chon and Drucker also have developed a thriving presence in the Cancer Prevention Center where they staff ten half-day clinics to screen patients for skin cancer. Drs. Nguyen and MacFarlane have developed a new Mohs and Dermatology Center (located adjacent to the University of Texas Dermatology Clinic at 6655 Travis). In addition, Dr. Rapini and several faculty members from UTHSC, including Asra Ali, MD and Steven Mays, MD, staff a general Dermatology Clinic in the Melanoma and Skin Center. These components of the dermatology program have greatly strengthened the depth and quality of dermatologic services provided to M. D. Anderson patients.

One of the exciting new programs has been the addition of Mohs surgery. This

Continued on page 2

A Few Words from Dr. Gagel



Physician-Scientists are a rare breed, combining clinical practice with laboratory-based research programs. These individuals are important to M. D. Anderson and particularly to the Division of Internal Medicine's efforts to enhance our own research activity. These 3-5 year

appointments provide each individual with a substantial amount of time to work in a senior faculty member's laboratory addressing important research questions. Our two Physician Scientists are Roberto Adachi, MD, Pulmonary Medicine, and Amir Onn, MD, Pulmonary Medicine. Two additional DoIM faculty members are competing for the FY06 Physician-Scientist Program.

Dr. Adachi and Dr. Onn have a passion for asking and seeking to answer important questions in their subspecialties that will significantly impact cancer patients. Dr. Onn has focused on the biology of pleural-based metastasis and development of pleural effusions. The accumulation of fluid between the chest wall and lung is a serious and life-threatening problem in patients when cancer has spread to this space. Dr. Onn's work focuses on understanding how and why cancer cells spread to the pleural space and on developing new therapeutic strategies to prevent this from happening. Dr. Onn's interests dovetail nicely with the development of a clinical program, led by Carlos Jimenez, MD, Pulmonary Medicine, to develop treatment strategies for this problem. Dr. Adachi is studying the role of mast cells in innate immunity. Considered for a long time as cells involved only in allergic reactions, it is now known that mast cells play a key role in defense against bacterial, viral and fungal infections. Dr. Adachi is manipulating this response exploiting powerful models in genetically modified animals.

More importantly, these Physician-Scientists are likely to be tomorrow's leaders in clinical practice research. They represent an important institutional commitment to improving therapy for cancer patients. We are proud to have these investigators in our midst and benefit greatly from the stimulation and expertise they provide to the Division of Internal Medicine.





Did you know you can get expert assistance in the review and scientific editing of your grant applications? Sue Davis, MMS, MBA, Administrative Director, Protocol Research, has more than 18 years of experience in reviewing and editing cancer research grants. You can contact Sue at 713-563-1866 or sedavis@mdanderson.org to discuss how

to make your grant applications more concise and competitive. In addition, the Department of Scientific Publications offers a wide range of editorial services, including editing scientific documents, consulting with authors on their early drafts, and answering questions about publishing, production, word usage, grammar and style. These services are provided on request and are free of charge (713-792-3305 for more information).

National Alopecia Areata Registry

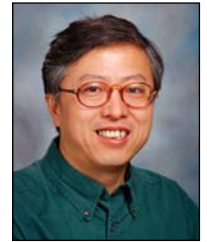
Madeleine Duvic, MD, Professor, Principal Investigator

The National Alopecia Areata Foundation held its 20th annual conference in Tampa, Florida, June 30-July 3, 2005. Attendees were Donna Campbell, Nazila Barahmani, MD, and Linda Cook of the Department of Dermatology. The National Alopecia Areata Registry (funded by NIAMS) is a resource for clinical data and selected biological research samples stored in a central repository and available to investigators who are studying Alopecia Areata. By collecting information on the genetic and environmental factors that predispose people to the disease, we can encourage new clinical trials, develop better medications, and perhaps even find the cure. The Registry consists of five locations, with Houston serving as the central site. Other locations include Denver, New York, Minneapolis and San Francisco. For more information, please visit the registry's website at www alopeciaareataregistry.org.



Parul Hazarika, PhD, Assistant Professor, Dermatology, was awarded a SPOR subproject grant to study the function of flotillin 2 in melanoma.

Chunlei Zhang, MD, PhD, Instructor, Dermatology, is the recipient of a Merck investigator-initiated grant to understand the mechanism of action of SAHA.



Dimitrios P. Kontoyiannis, MD, ScD, Associate Professor, Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health,

was recently awarded a two-year \$200,000 research grant from the CLL Global Research Foundation for his research project, "Monitoring of innate immune responses in chronic lymphocytic leukemia-A pilot study to assess patient risk of infection." Despite advances in supportive care, infection still accounts for over 60% of deaths in patients with CLL. Available laboratory tests currently can only detect quantitative immune deficiencies. This pilot study, the first of its kind, will attempt to characterize qualitative immunodeficiency in CLL patients and will focus on differences in phagocytic killing of the key bacterial pathogens and fungi that frequently lead to death in CLL patients. The project's goal is to use these findings to better stratify patients according to their risk for severe infection and help in the development of effective prophylaxis of these infections.



Third International Conference on Ubiquitin, Ubiquitin-Like Proteins, and Cancer February 9-11, 2006

Sponsored by the Department of Cardiology, the Third International Conference will bring together world leaders in this field in an interactive setting to explore the link between ubiquitin and cancer, present the latest advances, and discuss the potential for designing new targets for cancer therapy. Ubiquitin

CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHT

is a universal protein modifier that covalently attaches to other proteins and targets them for degradation. 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 conference also will celebrate the Nobel Prize awarded to Avram Hershko, Aaron Ciechanover, and Irwin Rose for their discovery of the ubiquitin pathway, as well as the 10th anniversary of the discovery of SUMO/Sentrin and NEDD8.

New Services continued from page 1

technique, which involves removal of cancerous skin lesions by layers with meticulous margin control, permits complete removal of cancerous lesions with the least damage possible to surrounding normal tissues. This program joins an existing multi-disciplinary effort involving the Departments of Head and Neck Surgery and Plastic Surgery and provides the full complement of care for skin cancer patients. Patients referred to any component of this program are reviewed in a multi-disciplinary planning conference to receive optimal care.

Research efforts by Madeleine Duvic, MD, in cutaneous lymphoma have resulted in the development of a center of excellence for treatment of this malignancy. Dr. Duvic and her colleagues have pioneered several new therapies, including denileukin diftiox, photopheresis, CpG immunotherapy, forodesine, monoclonal antibody to CD4, and a CD30 monoclonal antibody. Combined efforts with the Department of Lymphoma have led to the recognition of this program as one of the most stellar in the world.

The growth in this program has also permitted the development of other subspecialty interests. For example, graft-versus-host disease (GvHD) can lead to a broad spectrum of dermatologic complications. Dr. Hymes has worked closely with the Blood and Bone Marrow Transplantation Department to develop a Chronic Graft-versus-Host Disease (GvHD) Clinic, which already has improved the care of this very difficult to treat condition.

You can learn more about Dermatology's activities by visiting their intranetsite at <http://inside.mdanderson.org/departments/dermatology>.

PEOPLE SPOTLIGHT



Issam Raad, MD, Professor, has been named the Chair of the Department of Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health.

Congratulations Dr. Raad!



Albert E. Gunn, Esquire, MD, Associate Professor, GIM, AT and EC, recently celebrated his 30-year anniversary with M. D. Anderson. Dr. Gunn joined M. D. Anderson in July 1975. During his tenure here, he headed up the Rehabilitation Center and served as Deputy Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine. Since 1979, he has been Associate Dean for Admissions and Chairman of the Admissions Committee at the UT-Houston Medical School. Congratulations Dr. Gunn!



Congratulations to **Burton Dickey, MD, Professor and Chair, Pulmonary Medicine**, for being appointed as the holder of the Clifton D. Howe Distinguished Professorship in Pulmonary Medicine, established in 1983 in memory of Clifton D. Howe.



Joseph Swafford, MD, Cardiology, has been promoted to Professor.

Congratulations Dr. Swafford!

Congratulations to all!

Belinda Weatherly, RN, Clinical Administrative Director, Internal Medicine Center, spoke at the 11th Annual Picker Institution International Symposium in August. Her presentation was titled, "Providing Emotional Support: Right Information, Right Time, Right Place" and was based on the patient satisfaction pilot currently running in the Internal Medicine Center and Breast Center.

Georgios Chamilos, MD, Post-doctoral Fellow, Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health, was the first winner in the 2005 Bristol-Myers Squibb Trainee Recognition Day Award in Translational Research poster competition ("Drosophila as an Alternative In Vivo Model to Study Candidiasis"). Dimitrios P. Kontoyiannis, MD, Associate Professor, is Dr. Chamilos' research mentor.

Jenta Young, Patient Access Specialist, Emergency Center, recently received her Master of Public Administration degree from Texas Southern University. Congratulations Jenta!

Congratulations to **Sushovan Guha, MD, Assistant Professor, GIM and Nutrition**, who was the recipient of the 2005 REGAL Award (Research Excellence in GI and Liver). The award is reviewed by an AGA committee based on a published research paper in a peer-reviewed journal from a junior faculty member or a graduating GI fellow. Dr. Guha will be presenting his research work in pancreatic cancer and will accept the \$5,000 award in October 2005 in San Francisco, CA. Dr. Guha was also awarded the Outstanding Young Investigator Award for Basic Research at the Young Investigators Research Forum 2005, jointly sponsored by the Department of Symptom Research in the Division of Internal Medicine and the Medical Oncology Fellowship Program in the Division of Cancer Medicine.



Congratulations to **Sandra Cunningham, Nurse Manager, Internal Medicine Center**, for receiving ambulatory care nursing certification from the American Nurses Credentialing Center. Congratulations to **Justina Omerhi, Outpatient Clinical Nurse, Internal Medicine Center**, for receiving recertification in medical/surgical nursing from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

Anecita Fadol, CNS, FNP, RN, Cardiology is the 2005 recipient of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Excellence in Patient/Public Education Award. This award recognizes and supports significant contributions in patient/public education. As part of the award ceremony Anecita was invited to present at the ONS 30th Annual Congress on April 30, 2005. The title of her lecture was: "From heart failure to heart success: Improving outcomes in cancer patients with heart failure through collaborative practice."



Tri Nguyen, MD, Associate Professor, Dermatology, is a participant in Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO), whose mission is to improve the availability and quality of health care in developing

countries through medical training and education. In February 2005, Dr. Nguyen visited Hanoi, Vietnam (he makes regular visits to Vietnam) to provide dermatology training and consultation to an orphanage and to local dermatologists at the National Institute of Dermatology and Venerology.



Division of Internal Medicine Welcomes...

Cardiology

Aarif Y. Khakoo, MD, MBA, Assistant Professor
Mona Massey, RN, BSN, Research Nurse

Dermatology

Janice John, Data Entry Operator
Rebecca Chusid, Clinical Research Fellow

Endocrine, Neoplasia and HD

Cynthia Yazbeck, MD, Research Data Coordinator
Nancy Schwab, PhD, RN, ANP

General Internal Medicine, AT and EC

Clair Lakkis, MD, Instructor
Mohammed Ahmed, MD, Instructor
Munira Abbas, MBA, MHA, Operations Manager

GI Medicine and Nutrition

Evette Toney, MPH, Clinical Research
Program Coordinator
Glenda Raley, PA-C, Physician Assistant
Sharmila Anandasabapathy, MD,
Assistant Professor
Sushovan Guha, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor
Victoria Brosset, Senior Secretary

Infectious Diseases, Infection Control and Employee Health

Patrick King, Infection Control Practitioner
Ying Jiang, MS, Statistical Analyst

Symptom Research

Amanda Heath, Department Clerk
Nicole Streeter, MA, Project Director

Cardiopulmonary Center

David Blanco, Pulmonary Technologist
Earsel Franklin, RN, Outpatient Clinical Nurse
Vanessa Richards, RN, Outpatient
Clinical Nurse

Emergency Center

Cynthia Grigalonis, RN, Clinical Nurse
Gina McNair, RN, Clinical Nurse
Melissa LeBleu, RN, Clinical Nurse

Internal Medicine Center

Madonna Cruz, RN, Outpatient Clinical Nurse

Promotions

Bernice Pines
Senior Administrative Assistant, Endocrine

Lori Williams, RN, DSN, OCN, AOCN
Instructor, Symptom Research

Passion Sparrow, MPH
Clinical Research Programs Coordinator
GIM and Nutrition

Philip Abraham
Operations Manager, GIM and Nutrition

Salli Saxton
Senior Administrative Assistant
Infectious Diseases, Infection Control
and Employee Health

Suzanne Bradie-Muller, RN
Senior Research Nurse, Infectious Diseases,
Infection Control and Employee Health

Recognizing Our Stars!



Employees who received a FY 05 performance award were recognized on August 12th at an appreciation luncheon sponsored by the DoIM.

Congratulations to all of our STARS!

DoIMnews

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