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IIMS News
Institute for Integration of Medicine & Science
A Partnership to Improve Health

Winter Edition
December 2010
iims.uthscsa.edu
## Upcoming Events

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/15</td>
<td>Pilot Project RFA Announcement</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://iims.uthscsa.edu">http://iims.uthscsa.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/16</td>
<td>K-Paseo seminar</td>
<td>3rd Thursday of the month</td>
<td>209L</td>
<td>4-5:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/19</td>
<td>Frontiers of Translational Science Research Day</td>
<td>Poster presentations and judging, oral presentations and award presentations</td>
<td>Parman Auditorium</td>
<td>9AM-3PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/19</td>
<td>Seminars in Translational Research (STRECH)</td>
<td>Speaker: Dr. Maren Scheuner &quot;Health Services Genomics Research at the Greater Los Angeles VA&quot;</td>
<td>309L</td>
<td>4-5PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/21</td>
<td>K-Paseo seminar</td>
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<td>209L</td>
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<td>2/3</td>
<td>Translational Researcher Ethical Advice on Teamwork (TREAT)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Library 2.019</td>
<td>4-5PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/7-18</td>
<td>Intro to Clinical Investigation (ICI) course</td>
<td><a href="http://iims.uthscsa.edu/ed_ici_intro.html">http://iims.uthscsa.edu/ed_ici_intro.html</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>8AM-5PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Seminars in Translational Research (STRECH)</td>
<td>Speaker: Rubens Pamies, MD</td>
<td>UTSA; UC 2.02.02</td>
<td>4-5PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/18</td>
<td>K-Paseo seminar</td>
<td></td>
<td>209L</td>
<td>4-5:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/2 &amp; 3/3</td>
<td>Conducting Clinical Research</td>
<td>For info email <a href="mailto:OCRmail@uthscsa.edu">OCRmail@uthscsa.edu</a> or register through Knowledge Center</td>
<td>HSC Auditorium</td>
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### IIMS-RAHC Clinical Research Unit

The Frederic Bartter Institutional Resource to Support Translation (FIRST) Program, which is the clinical research support core of the IIMS, has been working with the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC) to establish a new Clinical Research Unit (RAHC-CRU). This Harlingen-based unit includes over 8,000 square feet of space designed with exam, interview, laboratory, pharmacy, and office space to support clinical and translational research in the South Texas border region. Juan Reyna, RN, BSN, MBA, (reyna3@uthscsa.edu) is the senior clinic manager of the project and Vanessa Benavidez (benavidez@uthscsa.edu) is the study coordinator. Both are available to assist investigators with the conduct of early and late stage clinical trials and community-based research projects targeting health improvement in the valley region.

The RAHC-CRU, when fully functional, will include support services ranging from providing clinical research facilities to mobilized research staff support that are able to travel to community homes and clinics. Staff resources include basic assessments, skilled nursing, and project coordinator services to assist in conducting studies. The goal of this unit is to support Clinical and Translational Science research in the valley area, either with local or UTHSCSA-based Investigators and clinical scientists. IRB and Regulatory Knowledge support is available to Harlingen-area investigators who desire these services.

The first major research study for this unit is the ASPREE (Aspirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly) Study of UTHSCSA Investigator, Michael L. Parchman, M.D. This study is an industry-academia collaboration seeking to learn if the potential benefits of aspirin in keeping elderly populations fully functional, both mentally and physically, outweigh the side-effects of possible bleeding in the brain or stomach. About 500 participants will come from the valley area. See page 5 for more details on the ASPREE study.
**Speed Networking Event a Success**

Connect and collaborate was the theme of the first Translational Research Connection event, co-sponsored by the Cancer Therapy & Research Center (CTRC) and the Institute for Integration of Medicine and Science (IIMS). The event was held Friday, December 3rd. Over forty participants met in a fast-paced, controlled environment with three minutes to meet and share interests, exchange cards, make notes and determine who they wanted to seek out during the reception time following the event. Door prizes were awarded and plans established to submit joint Pilot Project applications (see article on page 6 for Pilot Project RFA details).

This event was modeled after a similar event held by Weill-Cornell’s Clinical and Translational Science Award group. Their event met with such success that they have now held a second event.

Overall the feedback for the local event was very positive. Many attendees felt that this was an innovative way to meet possible research collaborators. Most said they would consider attending another Speed Networking event and would definitely tell their colleagues about it.

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**2nd Annual Frontiers of Translational Science Research Day**

Novel Clinical and Translational Methodologies (NCTM), as part of the Institute for Integration of Medicine and Science (IIMS) at UTHSCSA, will hold their 2nd Annual Frontiers of Translational Science Research Day on January 19, 2011 at the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio. The event begins at 9am in the Parman Auditorium Foyer with poster presentations, judging and oral presentations, followed by poster awards. At 4pm in room 309L our Distinguished Guest Speaker, Maren Scheuner MD, MPH will present her topic on “Health Services Genomics Research at the Greater Los Angeles VA.”

Our Distinguished Guest Speaker is a senior research scientist at the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and an adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Health Services at the UCLA School of Public Health. She is trained as an internist and medical geneticist and specializes in the field of common disease genetics. Her particular area of interest is health services and policy research related to effective and efficient clinical integration of new genetic/genomic technologies.

Dr. Scheuner is also a natural scientist at the RAND Corporation, and a research health scientist at the Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System. Scheuner received her bachelor’s degree in biology from UC Riverside, a master’s degree in Public Health and a medical degree from UCLA.

The IIMS would like to showcase posters at the 2nd Annual Frontiers of Translational Science Research Day that illustrate either completed or on-going research projects in translational science. Although the theme this year is translating genomic findings into improved health, we encourage the presentation of work across a broad spectrum of translational and clinical investigation. If you are interested in presenting a poster, abstracts should be submitted electronically (PDF email attachment) to the IIMS at IIMS/CTSA@uthscsa.edu by December 20, 2010 with the words “Second Annual Frontiers” in the message subject header. Instructions and templates for submitting an abstract, can be found at: http://iims.uthscsa.edu/sciresearachday.html. Submissions are welcome from: Students, Clinical Fellows, Post-doctoral Fellows, Instructors/Assistant Professors and Professors/Associate Professors. Previously presented posters and recently completed projects can be submitted. There are limited funds available through the IIMS for poster printing, so register early!

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**IIMS Website to get new look**

Coming soon - a totally re-designed IIMS website (iims.uthscsa.edu) with a new layout, updated information and easy-to-use navigation. Watch for more details in the next newsletter.
Interested in participating in a clinical research study?

Need participants for a clinical research study?

ResearchMatch.org brings researchers and participants together via an online portal.

ResearchMatch.org is a free and secure registry developed by major academic institutions across the county. All ages and backgrounds are welcome to register at the site.

The process for participants is simple -
1. Potential volunteers complete a registration form
2. Approved researchers search non-identifiable volunteer data for possible matches
3. Message is sent through the registry
4. Volunteers receive an email and can select if the researcher can have their contact information
5. The researcher may contact those volunteers who are interested in learning more about the study

Researchers - complete a researcher interest form on researchmatch.org and we will contact you.

Visit researchmatch.org for more information.

CTRC Develops an Educational Pipeline in Cancer Research

Under the direction of Dr. Susan Naylor, Professor of Cellular and Structural Biology and Associate Director for Shared Resources and Internal Education at the Cancer Therapy & Research Center (CTRC), the cancer center is developing an educational pipeline for cancer research in South Texas that spans high school through post-graduate training.

Eight M.D. and Ph.D. fellows, 5 Ph.D. candidates and 18 undergraduate students will have the opportunity to study cancer biology in labs at the Health Science Center as part of a three-year training award funded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). This award will allow expansion of existing programs within the cancer biology track of the graduate school and an already existing summer program for undergraduate students interested in cancer research.

In addition to the large training grant from CPRIT, Dr. Naylor and her colleague, Dr. Amelie Ramirez have received two grants from the NCI for training. The first is aimed at helping to encourage minority M.S. Students to seek and obtain Ph.D.s in the Behavioral Sciences. The second also sponsors the summer undergraduate program mentioned above. There are additional grants pending which would allow further expansion of the training programs in cancer biology. These include an NCI training grant that would provide support for both pre- and post-doctoral students and a supplement to the CTRC’s Cancer Center Support Grant that would provide an educational program for minority high school students interested in cancer biology.

TST Scholar’s Research in Children with ASD

The Institute for Integration of Medicine and Science (IIMS) most recent Translational Science Training (TST) scholar, Janessa Manning, is currently doing research in the early neurological changes observed in young children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). The characteristic behaviors of ASDs begin to emerge in the first years of life, making this the most critical time to understand the divergent neurological trajectories these children follow. The Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) based research examines toddlers and pre-school aged children who are beginning to show atypical behaviors that are consistent with ASDs. After a diagnosis is confirmed, Janessa and a support team conduct scans on children at night during natural sleep. By scanning during sleep, a wider range of children with ASD can be included than have been traditionally eligible for MRI based research. All of the scans conducted at the Research Imaging Institute are part of Ms. Manning’s dissertation project.

The TST Scholars program has provided Ms. Manning with the opportunity to meet families and clinicians in the field so that she might better understand the importance of getting her research findings into the clinic to help change patients’ lives. “I very much enjoy working clinically with young children with Autism. But, I felt like I can do more and I felt like helping one child at a time was really important but I could help more children if I got into research.” While the current study is smaller in scope, the potential for this imaging technique is tremendous; it might someday be used to assess therapeutic effectiveness, monitor developmental change, or identify children at greatest risk.

To view a short video about Ms. Manning’s exciting research, click here.
ASPREE Study now at the RAHC

ASPREE (ASPirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly) is the largest international trial sponsored by the US National Institute on Aging (NIA). It is a randomized double-blind placebo-controlled trial in the primary prevention in healthy elderly people aged 70 years and older. The study aims to assess whether aspirin can not only prolong life, but a life free of physical disability or dementia for healthy older people. The goal is to enroll 6,500 healthy individuals from the United States in this research endeavor. All eligible participants are randomly assigned to take either a low dose aspirin or placebo daily for 5 years.

Study personnel conduct various functional and cognitive assessments on participants on an annual basis throughout the duration of the study. Research participants are now being seen in Harlingen, Texas at the RAHC (Regional Academic Health Center). Vanessa Benavidez is the Clinical Research Project Coordinator assigned in that region and just saw her first participant November 15th. The community doctors assisting in this study are Dr. Jesus Naranjo director of the McAllen Family Practice Residency Program and Dr. Norma Cavazos-Salas. According to Dr. Michael L. Parchman, the Principal Investigator at UTHSCSA, “Those who participate in the ASPREE study, will, we hope, make a significant contribution to our knowledge about how we can all maintain an active healthy life as we grow older.” For more information regarding this study please contact Melissa Navarro, Project Coordinator or Vanessa Benavidez at 877-524-3265.

Texas CTSA Consortium meets in San Antonio

The Frederic Bartter Institutional Resource to Support Translation (FIRST) Program, which is the clinical research support core of the IIMS, had the privilege of hosting a total of 19 visiting faculty and staff from other Texas-area CTSAs on October 20-21, 2010. Visitors to the two-day meeting came from the administrative and clinical research support cores of CTSAs in our sister UT system Health Science Centers located in Houston, Dallas, and Galveston, as well as visitors from the University of Arkansas in Little Rock and the University of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City. The purpose of the meeting was to share ideas, programs, and experiences encountered at each site during the transition from the General Clinical Research Centers (GCRC) to the CTSA grants and share what that has meant for clinical research support resources.

Interestingly, different sites have taken different approaches to mobilizing research support services beyond the hospital-based clinical research unit. Kimberly Summers, Pharm.D. (Acting Chief, Research and Development at the VA) presented a description of the UTHSCSA-VA collaboration and it was very clear, that our sister UT-system schools do not have a similar supportive and collaborative relationship with their local VA hospitals.

A major discussion revolved around how each site is developing “cost-recovery” mechanisms whereby investigators were expected to pay portions of cost for clinical research support services.

UTHSCSA IRB Director, Joseph Schmelz, Ph.D. presented to the group the development of plans for IRBs of the various UT-system schools to have reciprocal sharing agreements permitting across-institution collaborative studies to be conducted without the complication of multiple IRB review.

A significant portion of the meeting was directed towards plans for the different CTSAs to communicate with each other to share ideas, plans, strategies, and procedures that each site finds to work in the support of translational research at their institution. This is part of our working together to develop the Texas CTSA Consortium which is planned as a regional consortium of Texas CTSAs to collaborate on common research approaches and strategies to advance translation for the improvement of health care for Texas-area communities.

This was the second in a series of meetings between personnel from the Texas-area CTSAs. The next meeting is planned for April 2011 in Houston with a Fall 2011 meeting to be held in Galveston.

How can the IIMS/CTSA help you?

Need help with statistical analysis or have questions about human study regulations? Go to the IIMS website and see what services we offer. If you find that our services can help, then fill out a Request for Services form on our website: iims.uthscsa.edu - click on SPOC Service Request Form.

Still not sure? Send an email to: IIMS/CTSA@uthscsa.edu or call us at 562-IIMS (4467).
IIMS Pilot Project RFA

The Institute for Integration of Medicine and Science (IIMS), the Cancer Therapy & Research Center (CTRC) and the School of Medicine are soliciting proposals for pilot project awards. The RFA will officially be released on Wednesday, December 15, 2010. Details and application templates will be available on our website at: http://iims.uthscsa.edu/pilot.html

We are requesting a letter of intent to be submitted no later than Thursday, January 20, 2011. LOIs and full proposals should be submitted electronically, each in a single PDF format attached to an email message to Ms. Cindy Russel (russel@uthscsa.edu). The deadline of the full application is Friday, February 18, 2011. Awards will be made for a one-year project with a maximum budget of $50,000.

2010 PBRN Convocation Recap

The Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN) Resource Center hosted its 2nd annual PBRN Convocation on October 15th and 16th at the Horizon Hill Conference Center in San Antonio. Over 200 community clinicians and investigators attended our timely program: Discovering Patient-Oriented Evidence that Matters. Clinicians from our seven active networks attended. These networks include South Texas Ambulatory Research Network, Residency Research Network, South Texas Psychiatry PBRN, South Texas Oral Health Network, VA Mental Health Network, Practice Research Network of San Antonio and the Improvement Science Research Network.

Participants noted that this was our best conference yet! Some of the professional changes that clinicians plan to make as a result of attending our conference include: learned ways to interact and communicate with other community practices; realized the importance of implementing an Electronic Medical Record for meaningful use and patient care enhancement; encouraged some to participate in research; increased awareness of potential research questions and learned from the results of clinical investigation in personal education and communicating with patients.

Highlights from the 2010 conference included:

• Sharing and discussion of early research findings from network research projects. Findings were shared on the following topics: domestic violence patterns, helping patients handle influenza, barriers in access to care, inefficiencies and savings in health care, diabetes risk assessment and health care utilization, “difficult” psychiatric patients, barriers to medication adherence and untreated depression in patients with chronic low back pain.

• Gaining perspectives from a dentist, a psychiatrist, a patient and a primary care clinician during a multidisciplinary panel discussion addressing “Sleepless in San Antonio: Multiple Perspectives on Sleep Disorders.” Participants discussed “gaps” in knowledge that could potentially be addressed in the PBRN setting.

• Setting research priorities for the individual networks. Top priorities included: vitamin D deficiency, poly-pharmacy management, bipolar and depression disorders, relationship between wound healing, implant integration and bisphosphonates and tv/computer use in the child’s bedroom.

• Networking and disseminating research findings during the research poster reception where over 30 projects were highlighted.

The primary function of the PBRN Resource Center is to facilitate opportunities for collaboration between Health Science Center investigators and community clinicians to utilize the PBRN as their real world laboratory and to engage community clinicians in practice-based research. Contact Holly Hayes, MSPH at 210-567-7863 or visit pbrn.uthscsa.edu for more information.

Conducting Clinical Research Course

This course is intended to be a practical one that provides to Principal Investigators and their research team members a basic framework to meet the regulatory and ethical requirements in the conduct of human subject research at the Health Science Center and affiliated institutions. The course will be divided into two half days, Wednesday morning March 2, 2011 from 8:00 AM to 12:00 noon and Thursday morning March 3, 2011 from 8 AM to 12 noon. Attendance on both dates is required in order to comply with the requirements of UT HSC HOP Policy 7.2.3 (Scope of Practice for Research Personnel).

Employees may register through the Knowledge Center. For more information or for affiliate/other community member registration, email the Office of Clinical Research at OCRmail@uthscsa.edu or call them at 210-567-0651.
Five Junior Faculty Receive Mentored Research Career Development (KL2) Scholar Awards

The Institution for Integration of Medicine and Science (IIMS) recently selected five early-career research investigators to receive Mentored Research Career Development (KL2) Scholar awards. The goal of the KL2 program is to provide each Scholar with intense, personalized research training and career development experiences that will optimize chances for a successful research career in academic medicine, industry, or government as an independent investigator. The program focuses on the very best of the best junior faculty who are committed to a research career in clinical and translational science.

The 2010-2012 KL2 Scholars are Ashley Acheson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and the Research Imaging Institute; Amina El Jamali, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine/Renal Diseases; Christopher Frei, Pharm.D., Assistant Professor at the UT Austin College of Pharmacy, Pharmacotherapy Division; Roman Kuranov, Ph.D., Instructor in the Department of Ophthalmology; and Alina Maloyan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. These KL2 Scholars were selected from a group of applicants using a competitive, NIH-style application and scoring process.

The two-year KL2 Program is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA). The program is directed by Pedro Delgado, M.D., Professor and Chair of Psychiatry. Co-directors are Michael Lichtenstein, M.D., Professor of Medicine, and Linda McManus, Ph.D., Professor of Pathology.

In line with the CTSA initiative, the KL2 program is designed to increase the translation of basic science discoveries into clinical practice, and from best practices into the community. Throughout the program, the five Scholars will work individually and in group seminars. Additionally, each Scholar has a mentoring team that will help manage, develop, and encourage their research and career development. While in the program, partial salary support is provided by the KL2 Program to provide protected time for research and training activities. Additional funds are provided to the KL2 Scholars for research support and travel to professional meetings.

“The Health Science Center and the IIMS have shown increasing support for the KL2 program this year by providing funding for five KL2 scholars,” said Dr. Delgado. “This investment in early career research faculty demonstrates our interest in transforming our research enterprise.”

continued on page 8
ABOUT THE KL2 SCHOLARS:

**Ashley Acheson**, Ph.D., has primary research interests that involve the study of behavioral and neurobiological mechanisms underlying risks for addictions. His current projects include neuroimaging to define neural circuits that regulate impulse control and other processes in individuals at risk for developing substance use disorders. Research populations include children and young adults with family histories of substance use disorders, adolescents with conduct disorder, and combat veterans with post traumatic stress disorder. He is also conducting a longitudinal behavioral study examining relationships in adolescents between the development of impulse control and the development of substance use disorders.

**Amina El Jamali**, Ph.D., is dedicated to developing translational research in the field of oxidative stress and inflammatory diseases in man. Her research in the laboratory of Dr. Robert Clark resulted in the original discovery that the NOX enzymes are strongly activated by H2O2, a membrane-permanent form of reactive oxygen species (ROS), and she identified the molecular signaling pathway involved. Further, Dr. El Jamali demonstrated that this regulatory mechanism is operative in a variety of cells, likely comprising a major pathway in oxidative stress-related disorders. She is currently studying the dysregulation of the phagocyte NADPH oxidase, NOX2, in aging and the role of NOX in insulin resistance.

**Christopher Frei**, Pharm.D., M.Sc., has research interests in the study of clinically important infectious diseases, including pneumonia and skin and soft tissue infections. He is particularly interested in emerging antibiotic resistance among Gram-positive bacteria including Staphylococcus aureus, and his research approach involves antibiotic epidemiology and pharmacokinetics-pharmacodynamics. Dr. Frei plans to combine these methodologies with new information about microbial genetics to help improve treatment for patients with community-acquired methicillin-resistant S. aureus (CA-MRSA) infections.

**Roman Kuranov**, Ph.D., is working to translate a non-invasive, high-resolution imaging modality, functional Optical Coherence Tomography, for use with major eye disorders including diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration. His research aims are to develop early imaging biomarkers of diabetic retinopathy and other retinal disorders and to longitudinally investigate the underlying pathophysiology of the diseases. The goal of Dr. Kuranov’s research is early diagnosis for patients with these disorders, improved outcomes, and prevention of blindness.

**Alina Maloyan**, Ph.D., is conducting research to define the effect of maternal under- and over-nutrition on the expression of fetal cardiac miRNAs using miRNA profiling. Dr. Maloyan’s research builds on the hypothesis of fetal programming developed by Professor David Barker in 1990’s, which suggests that increased risks of cardiovascular or metabolic diseases could originate in response to adverse intrauterine conditions during fetal life and infancy. Dr. Maloyan’s research proposes that identification of specific cardiac miRNA affected by adverse intrauterine conditions will reveal unique biomarkers that are reflective or predictive of heart diseases triggered by fetal programming.