



Scoop



Nat.'l Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Friday, October 1, 1999

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS - HOUSTON MEDICAL SCHOOL

EVENTS TO KNOW:

► **Integrative Biology & Pharmacology Lecture**, Mon., Oct. 4, 4 p.m., **Dr. Guy Banta**, "Human Performance and Psycho/Physiological Response to Adverse Environments," MSB 2.103. Reception following in MSB 5.036.

► **Joint Conference/Division of Urology, Dept. of Surgery**, Tues., Oct. 5, 5 p.m., **Dr. Charles Pak**, "How to Diagnose and Treat Kidney Stones," MSB 3.001.

► **Clinical Research Curriculum Introductory Course**, Wed., Oct. 6, 5 - 6:30 p.m., **Drs. Paula Knudson and Elizabeth Heitman**, "Ethical and Regulatory Issues," MSB 2.135.

► **Microbiology & Molecular Genetics Lecture**, Thurs., Oct. 7, 4 p.m., **Dr. Robert McLean**, "Bacterial Biofilm Growth and its Importance in Kidney Stones, Geology, and Space Flight," MSB 2.135

► **Medical School 1999 Research Retreat**, Oct. 15, 16.



Dr. Corriere

DR. CORRIERE PRESENTED UROLOGICAL AWARD

Dr. Joseph N. Corriere Jr., professor and holder of the Cecil M. Crigler, M.D., Chair in Urology, was awarded the 2000 American Urological Association (AUA) Distinguished Service Award, annually presented to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the goals of the association. Corriere, who is the AUA's Director of the Office of Education, joined the Medical School faculty in 1974 as director of the Division of Urology. He held that position until 1993.

DR. FELDMAN OFFERS NEW GLAUCOMA SURGERY

Dr. Robert M. Feldman, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science, is one of a few doctors performing a new experimental surgical procedure to treat glaucoma, called viscocanalostomy (see *Houston Chronicle*, 9/27/99, p. 8D). The procedure is less invasive and has a quicker recovery time than other methods. Proponents are hoping for wider acceptance and NIH funding for a five-year study. The treatment's developer, **Dr. Robert Stegmann**, claims that the technique has stopped the progression of the disease for 80-90% of his patients. Three million Americans are reported to have glaucoma, a disease in which the normal fluid pressure of the eye rises, sometimes leading to blindness.

DR. VARAGOOR A PANELIST AT WWW WEBNET CONFERENCE

Dr. Gita Varagoor, Office of Educational Programs, has accepted an invitation to participate as a panelist, evolving from her experiences with the CATCHUM (Cancer Teaching and Curriculum Enhancement in Undergraduate Medicine) project, at a "WebNet World Conference 99" conference in Hawaii, **October 27**. The panel is composed of **Dr. Hermann Mauer**, Institute for Information Processing and Computer Supported New Media, Austria, and chair of the conference; **Dr. Dennis Beck**, Fonds Gesundes Osterreich, Austria; **Dr. Maria Lee**, CSIRO Mathematical and Information Sciences, Australia; **Dr. Slawomir Lobodzinski**, California State University, Electrical and Biomedical Engineering, U.S.; and **Dr. Herbert Matthies**, Hannover Medical School, Medical Computing Center, Germany. The team plans to examine some of the more strategic issues facing medicine on the world-wide web, including the importance of portal servers to make "the wealth of medical information and services accessible to both laypersons and specialists," said a conference organizer.

UTmost Interest

Dr. Thomas D. DuBose Jr., professor and division director, Renal Diseases and Hypertension, presented lectures and workshops at the American Society of Nephrology 4th Annual Board Review Course and Update in San Francisco.



FYI - Dr. W. Barry van Winkle, professor of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine and assistant dean, Student Affairs, says a preliminary report indicates that MSIIIs did very well on Step I of a USMLE summer exam. Medical School students scored a mean of 214 compared to a national average of 215 with 179 score being a pass. This roughly equates to a score of 86%, an increase over 1998. 181 students took the exam.

OPEN HOUSE - Tuesday, Oct. 12, all day, 5 a.m. - 8 p.m. Enjoy a free work-out, register for free prizes, including a \$50 gift certificate to Academy, sample free food 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Call 713-500-5044 for more information. Free aerobics classes, blood pressure and body fat screenings included.



CRIME ALERT - Officer Anthony Fisher, UT Police, would like to share with all Medical School personnel some suggestions to help prevent continued bike thefts:

- Use the bike racks and personalize your bike with engraving, tape or paint, to identify it
- Use the U-shaped kryptonite lock; don't use the cable lock
- Record your bicycle's serial number and keep in a safe place; place your name, address, and phone # in a plastic bag and place it inside the seat post
- Drop by any fire station and register your bike for \$1; also, take a photo of your bike
- Report any suspicious activity and register your bike with the National Bicycle Registry
- Keep your bike locked up at home and on-the-go, even if you're only gone for a short time.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-HOUSTON
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER



Medical School

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*Entering Its 12th Year With a \$4 Million NIH Renewal Grant***UNCOVERING THE MYSTERIES OF MULTIPLE ORGAN FAILURE****AT THE TRAUMA RESEARCH CENTER**

Promoting a healthy intestinal environment is not easy. Not easy because we come upon unexpected crises in our day-to-day lives. Unforeseen car accidents cripple our bodies and challenge the integrity of our internal organs. In response, our intestinal immune-enhancing cells - like agitated riders on a riveting roller coaster - come screeching to a halt. Why? We fill our days, and sometimes our nights, with long and anxious hours working with little scheduled nourishment. And stress-filled road or air travels lead, for some, to great frustration. All of the above spell trouble, with a capital "T," to the intestine. Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis come to mind as stress-related diseases. Many medical professionals are working around-the-clock solving these modern maladies.

**Dr. Frank Moody**

Says **Dr. Frank Moody**, the first Denton A. Cooley Professor of Surgery, Director of the Trauma Research Center, who tracks intestinal pathogens, "The Trauma Research Center here at Memorial-Hermann Hospital is the largest in the country. It's a unique, multi-disciplinary entity that brings together numerous scientists from the basic sciences, as well as the clinical and surgical sides of medicine." The Center has recently received a renewal of funding from NIH for \$4 million over the next four years.

Emphasizes **Dr. Frederick Moore**, Director, the Division of General Surgery at UT - Houston Medical School, also one of several major players at the Trauma Research Center, "The gut is an incredible immunologic organ. Our hypothesis is that if you do not feed the GI tract, you place it in jeopardy for failure. But if you feed it too aggressively with enteral (small intestine) tube feedings, then the bowel may die." Drs. Moody and Moore also collaborate with three other NIH grant co-principal investigators at the

UT-Houston Medical School, including **Drs. Norman Weisbrodt**, Professor, Department of Integrative Biology and Pharmacology; **David Mercer**, Associate Professor in General Surgery division and Chief of the Surgical Services at the LBJ Hospital; and **Bruce Kone**, Associate Professor, Internal Medicine/Renal Diseases.

Moore specializes in finding ways to prevent patients' demise. His focus is on averting the shock response in those who've had trauma and tremendous loss of blood to their internal organs, from slipping into ileus - or basically the shutting down of the intestines - leading to infection and death. Multiple organ failure or MOF commonly occurs in trauma victims these experts will tell you, including victims of recent earthquakes in Turkey and Taiwan.

In the laboratory, co-investigator Weisbrodt specializes in studying the gut's motility in cases of MOF. He uses nitric oxide, or NO, the molecule of the '90s, to evaluate how much or how little it's needed in peristaltic action and how to regulate it after traumatic internal injury has occurred. And Mercer studies the inhibition of gastric acid secretion in cases with severe injury and sepsis and the resultant growth of harmful bacteria within the stomach. It's known, for instance that pneumonia will occur in 10-65% of ICU (Intensive Care Unit) patients. Of those patients, the death rate is 13-55%. Kone studies samples of traumatized animal and human gut tissue at the molecular level. He and his associates hope to develop novel therapies to guide genetic MOF healing.

When we swallow a bite of an overripe fruit, our GI tracts will sample the antigens or abnormal bacteria from it, says Moore. "That's how babies don't get infected when they're breast feeding. Their mother has a mature immune system. It's processing all the antigens and the child is receiving the benefits of them through the breast milk. Until the baby gets old enough, it doesn't have an immune system." But the gut is processing all this and signaling to the rest of the body. That's the reason, Moore points out, that special immune-enhancing diets fascinate him. "Somehow by feeding the gut with arginine, glutamine, omega-3 fatty acids and nucleic components, you're preventing infections." It's called immuno-nutrition, and Moore states, it's really a medicine. Having worked with over 4,000 MOF patients over the years who've been fed enterally, Moore emphasizes, "What we know is that if we feed them early, they do better." The trick is, at what point do you intervene in the gut's function, and how much? "That's one of the keys to the puzzle we intend to find out." In this way, UT-Houston's Trauma Research Center remains a vital resource for uncovering the mysteries of multiple organ failure. - C. O'Brien



Dr. Frederick Moore, answering pager (r.), discusses patient's problems with **Drs. Frank Moody** (across, left), and **Norm Weisbrodt** (far left). **Dr. Bruce McKinley**, an engineer in anesthesiology, to the right of Dr. Moore. Nurse in background assists in enteral tube feeding.