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Patient Profile

Xavier Castillo



To me bravery is knowing you are entering a risky or dangerous situation and going forward anyway, like my grandfather and the rest of the 741st Tank Battalion did on D-Day, June 6, 1944. It can also be giving something of yourself for the benefit of another, like the first wave on Omaha beach that lost their lives, but left their equipment on the beach for the next wave. I liken this to the donor families that selflessly give their loved-ones organs, just moments after hearing they aren't going to make it, so a stranger can live a longer, healthier life.

At a glance Xavier Castillo appears to be your typical two-year-old, but there is more to this little guy than meets the eye. At 22 months of age, he's already braver than most adults. At just a few months of age he was diagnosed with cystic dysplasia in both his kidneys.

In April of this year, Xavier received a deceased donor kidney at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center. Transplant surgeons Charles Van Buren, Jacqueline Lappin, and Alejandra Cicero from The University of Texas Medical School at Houston performed the technically challenging 9-hour surgery. His vena cava, a large vein returning blood to the heart, was the only vein Xavier had available to which the transplant kidney could be attached. The vein was already catheterized for dialysis, so using it took away his chances for future dialysis if the graft failed—a huge risk. Thankfully, this had been discussed with his parents who bravely encouraged the team to “go for broke,” according to Dr. Lappin.

A few months after the surgery, Xavier is doing well, celebrating his second birthday on June 6th—the 65th anniversary of D-Day. Xavier's parents, Julian and Christina Castillo are adjusting to his new energy level.

It took a lot of teamwork to get him to this point.

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THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS
MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

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Meet Our New Fellow



Shadi Ali Al Ekish, MD

Dr. Shadi Ali Sulieman Al Ekish gained his MBBS degree in medicine and surgery from Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) in 1999. Following graduation, he practiced medicine from 1999 to 2003 in different locations in Jordanian governmental and private hospitals as a general practitioner and as the chief of the Emergency Department in Queen Rania Hospital in the south of

Jordan, which reinforced his clinical and communications proficiency. Afterward, he entered a residency training program in General Urology at Princess Basma Teaching Hospital–Jordan, starting as a junior resident in the General Surgery Department for two years, followed by a urology residency in the Urology Division for three more years. While a specialist in different Jordanian governmental hospitals, working in diverse branches of urology, including endo-urology, onco-urology, pediatric urology, and urolithiasis, Dr. Al Ekish enriched his qualifications with new academic achievements, passing the European Board of Urology (FEBU) in 2008. Dr. Al Ekish joined the Division of Immunology and Organ Transplantation in July 2009.



Xavier Castillo

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Xavier in for a check up with Dr. Lappin.

“We got a lot of help from the Medical School nephrologists, who followed the toddler every step of the way,” says Lappin. Dr. Joseph Angelo and Dr. Michael Braun monitored Xavier continuously during his early transplant course. “Xavier’s care from the time he was born and onwards has always been a challenge, requiring the joining of efforts of the Pediatric Nephrology

Team, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Children’s Dialysis Unit, Pediatric Surgery Team, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Interventional Radiology, and the Castillo family. Without this combined, excellent effort Xavier would not have survived infancy, grown to a size to permit a kidney transplant, and achieved enough health stability to succeed the postoperative course,” says Pediatric Nephrologist Rita Swinford. “No one can whistle a symphony, it takes an orchestra to play it.”

- Photos and story by:

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Farewell Dinner

Fellows honored

A farewell dinner was held August 18, 2009 to honor fellows Dr. Karoly Varga and Dr. Jose Benito A. Abraham. Faculty and staff from The University of Texas Medical School at Houston, Memorial Hermann–TMC and St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital attended. Division Director Charles T. Van Buren, MD presented the fellows with a certificate documenting their completion of the fellowship.

Dr. Varga has accepted a faculty position at the Medical School within the Division of Immunology and Organ Transplantation beginning in November.

After his training at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston, Dr. Abraham now stands as the first and only fellowship-trained Filipino urologist with two surgical subspecialties: minimally invasive urology and organ transplantation. He plans to rejoin the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery at The University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City, Philippines to help in the instruction of medical students and the training of urology residents.

He also will be rejoining the medical staff of the National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTi) in Manila, where Dr. Abraham initially finished his urology residency. "I have always been at home with NKTi," he remarked. "It has always been a leader in the care of



From left: Drs. Jose Abraham, Van Buren and Karoly Varga.

patients with medical and surgical diseases of the urinary tract. I hope to push in this same direction when I get back to the Philippines—knowing full well that a lot of patients rely on me—they have been very supportive of my training and some of them even cried when I was leaving. To them, I owe all that I have learned in the United States."

Dr. Abraham plans to be a leader in these two fields: urology and transplantation. We know that wherever he goes, his good nature and talent will benefit patients everywhere.



Presentations

Charles T. Van Buren, MD

Poster: **DY Liu, S Holmes, Z Kaposztas**, R Zhang, J Yuan, AZ Luo, MR Blackburn, **AD Kulkarni**, F Thompson, **CT Van Buren**. "Topical Application of Nucleotides Does Not Effect Wound Healing in CD73 Knockout Mice," 31st European Society of Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN) Congress on Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism, Vienna, Austria, August 31, 2009.

Ronald H. Kerman, PhD

"What to Do? Desensitize, ABO Incompatible, Paired Exchange: The Immunologist's Perspective," Transplant Immunosuppression 2009: Today's Issues, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, September 25, 2009.

"Understanding the Sensitized Patient," Transplant Immunosuppression 2009: Today's Issues, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, September 25, 2009.

Publications

Kahan BD. Forty Years of Publication of Transplantation Proceedings—The Second Decade: the Cyclosporine Revolution. *Transplant Proc*; 41(5):1423-37, 2009.

Rigotti P, **Kahan BD**. Sirolimus-based Therapy for Kidney Transplantation from Expanded Criteria Donors. *Transplantation*; 87(8 Suppl):S11-3, 2009.

Taylor A, **Kahan BD**. Living Donor Kidney Transplantation Without Transmission of Multiple Sclerosis after 10 Years. *Clin Nephrol*; 71(4):454-5, 2009.

Division Update

New Faculty and Staff

Shadi Ali Sulieman Al Ekish, MD
Clinical Fellow

Jenna Mitchell
Research Assistant I

Ali Ahmad Ishaq Al-Daghmin, MD
Clinical Fellow

Phillip Erice
Research Assistant I

New Transplant Service Website Launched



As the main source of information for patients, the site consolidates all the contact information a patient might need in one location. Contacting coordinators, making appointments for pre- and post-transplant care, as well as getting to know their doctors is all just a click away now. Patient forms are available for download in both English and Spanish. Referring physicians can also use this site as a resource.

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Honors and Awards



Jacqueline Lappin, MD, was named President-Elect for the Texas Transplantation Society (TTS) board for 2009-2010. The Texas Transplantation Society was founded in 1987. Dr. Lappin is an Assistant Professor of Surgery and Chief of Pancreas Transplantation at the Medical School.

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