Baylor College of Medicine

THE MARGARET M. AND ALBERT B. ALKEK
DEPARTMENT OF
MEDICINE

JULY 2019 NEWSLETTER

VOL 2, ISSUE NO. 2

HASHEM B. EL-SERAG, M.D., M.P.H.
Chair of the
Department of Medicine

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Our department of medicine—through 14 Sections and seven Vice Chair Groups covering Education, Clinical Affairs, Research, Faculty and Staff Development, Quality Improvement and Innovation, Harris Health System and Veterans Affairs—continues to break new ground in improving the breadth and depth of our offerings for students, trainees, faculty and staff, and the community at large.

Our clinical faculty provide both comprehensive primary care to the Houston community as well as highly specialized consultation that is increasingly multidisciplinary to patients from all around the country and beyond.

Our ranks of research faculty are growing, including several highly funded researchers, and we are building a research infrastructure that further enables our rising ranking in the research community.

We train and graduate high-quality residents and fellows who go on to pursue careers in esteemed medical centers. The strong showing of our newest class of residents and fellows reflects the strength of our brand.

In this newsletter we highlight a few of our many achievements in 2019, as we look forward to a successful and prosperous 2020.

Hashem B. El-Serag, M.D., M.P.H.

QUALITY

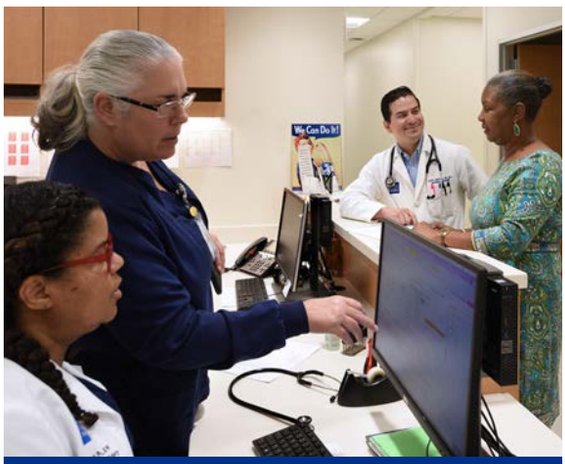
GIM CHAMPIONS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

New GIM Clinic at McNair Campus, 8th Floor

The **Section of General Internal Medicine (GIM)** is housed in multiple locations and settings, offering several avenues for internists to work. One setting is the year-old clinic in the Baylor College of Medicine - McNair Campus. The new clinic facilities offer a modern healthcare setting that allows patients to be seen more efficiently and effectively. Three new physicians have been added in the past year, and extended-hour schedules improve patients' access and convenience. In addition, the clinic's new physician assistant, **Isabel Valdez**, perfectly complements the physician-led team by providing care for acute conditions and follow-up visits, while providing same- or next-day availability for patients.

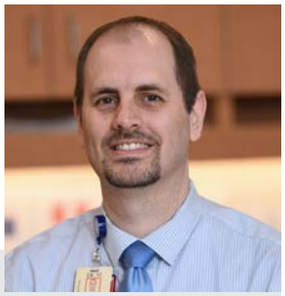
Dr. Daniel Murphy, assistant professor and medical director at the **McNair GIM clinic**, leads several GIM initiatives to improve care through the McNair Campus aimed at generating exceptional healthcare. Many of the initiatives originated during GIM Process Improvement team meetings—a voluntary team of clinicians and staff from the clinic, front desk and call center, who meet monthly.

- The clinic has instituted a program to safely transition patients who have been admitted to local hospitals back into the outpatient setting. The Section's licensed vocational nurse, **Michelle Falknor**, maintains this program by communicating handoffs, addressing urgent patient needs, and arranging timely follow-up.
- The clinic has instituted a **Women's Health Clinic** each Monday, led by **Dr. Sobia Khan**, assistant professor, and aimed at addressing non-surgical women's health needs.
- The clinic has advanced its role in contributing to Baylor's education mission by incorporating resident trainees for block rotations in February 2019 and for continuity clinics in July 2019. In the continuity clinic, residents experience the process of providing care to regular patients in a fee-for-service model that is offered at Baylor College of Medicine. Several GIM physicians—including **Drs. Vani Potluri** and **Eloy Cavazos**—participate in teaching activities for seven to ten residents per year.
- The clinic is piloting a new program to employ medical scribes to assist physicians with note taking. This will allow physicians to focus more on patients during visits and reduce the burden of completing progress notes during nights and weekends, an all-too-common task referred to as "pajama time." This program is expected to allow physicians to provide more efficient care, be more attentive to patients, avoid burnout, and improve both patient and physician satisfaction.



GIM Continuity Clinic at McNair Campus, 8th Floor, with Dr. Eloy Cavazos and LVN Michelle Falknor

Dr. Murphy sees dynamic improvements taking place in the McNair Clinic and throughout GIM and the Department of Medicine. As he says—and shows through his actions, "**Quality is my main focus—for patients, physicians, staff and trainees.**"



DR. DANIEL MURPHY

- Medical Director of General Internal Medicine FGP Clinic
- Holds an MBA from University of Miami School of Business
- Focuses his research and practice on improving the safety and efficiency of communication through electronic health records
- Member of the Center for Innovation in Quality, Effectiveness, and Safety

COLLABORATION

WOUND CLINIC: A STORY OF COLLABORATION AND MENTORSHIP

The **Wound Clinic at Ben Taub Hospital** receives patients through referral from doctors or the Emergency Care service or before being discharged from the hospital. **Dr. Lee Poythress**, associate professor, General Internal Medicine, began his tenure in the Wound Clinic in 2004 when his mentor asked him to help with the clinic in his "free" time. Thanks to her guidance, he discovered that he enjoyed the pace and challenges of the Wound Clinic; he stayed.

In 2012, another mentor, **Dr. David Hyman**, asked Lee to take on a new project: to decrease the number of magnetic resonance imaging orders (MRIs) being prescribed for patients with diabetes who present with foot ulcers. Lee of course agreed. He implemented studies as well as protocols for osteomyelitis that incorporated early use of obtaining samples. His data proved the ability to reduce MRIs and amputations to Harris Health System.

By 2016, he had decreased MRI rate for this affliction by 99%, and amputation rate by 92%.

On the basis of this success, a third mentor entered: **Dr. Stephen Greenberg** asked Dr. Poythress to work with **Dr. Joseph Mills**, a world-famous vascular surgeon who had developed a system for scoring the severity of lower-extremity wounds and had created an app to measure the risk of severity, to create a limb salvage program. The three assembled a task force of specialists that developed protocols on how to handle patients in clinic using the app's severity scores. Dr. Poythress began teaching clinicians to introduce the scoring method into their daily routines.

These programs have expanded into a comprehensive plan for training both hospital staff and residents rotating into the Ben Taub system.

Dr. Poythress says, "It was mentorship that got me here; I wouldn't have done any of this on my own. If someone is thinking about you, and offers to mentor you to help solve a need, stick with it. And carry the torch: If you're in a position to help someone else up the ladder, take the time."

Dr. Lee Poythress with Internal Medicine resident, Dr. Sophia Chang, at Ben Taub Hospital Wound Clinic

Wound Clinic staff with Dr. Lee Poythress

DR. LEE POYTHRESS

- Associate professor, General Internal Medicine
- Assistant Dean in the Office of Student Affairs
- Came to the idea of the Wound Clinic because a mentor guided him
- Teaches clinicians how to implement the scoring method for safer, quicker and more effective wound treatment

HEALTHCARE

MOBILE ICU BRINGS TOGETHER TRAINING AND TECHNOLOGY TO SAVE LIVES

The **Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center (BSLMC)** operates a robust intensive care unit (ICU) under the direction of Dr. Pat Herlihy, a faculty member of the Department of Medicine's Section of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine. The ICU maintains 13 separate, specialized units, created to address a wide range of unique medical needs such as surgical, neurological or coronary cardiac critical care. This arrangement affords premium care to complex patients. What really sets BSLMC'S ICU apart, however, is the **mobile ICU (MICU)** that Dr. Herlihy has initiated.

Available at a moment's notice, the team mobilizes to critically ill patients, whenever and wherever an emergency occurs, including in the Emergency Department (ED) and on Acute Care floors.

The BSLMC MICU provides care and coverage that exceeds the typical hospital team. It consists of 15 ICU-trained Rapid Response nurses, 13 specially trained ICU staff physicians, a rotating fellow, six nurse practitioners, decision support personnel and the equipment needed to stabilize the patient—right where they need it. As Dr. Herlihy says, "For every hour a patient waits to receive intensive care treatment on the floor or in the ED, the risk of mortality increases."

Dr. Herlihy's goal for this super team is to address critical issues within minutes, not hours; screen patients for decompensation; and reduce mortality.

Dr. Pat Herlihy, Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center

Mobile Intensive Care Unit in action at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center

"For every hour a patient waits to receive intensive care treatment on the floor or in the ED, the risk of mortality increases linearly."

HEALTHCARE

“It’s like an EMT but inside the hospital.”

Drs. Muhammad Siddique, Pat Herlihy and Christopher Morgan

According to MICU Director **Dr. Muhammad Siddique**, “The alert system has been critical to the success of the MICU.” The alert system uses DECISIOInsight®, the first FDA-approved web-based decision support tool, to generate continuous “NEWS” (National Early Warning Score) for all patients in the hospital. If the score hits the number associated with the onset of critical illness (organ- or life-threatening condition), the Rapid Response nurses are notified electronically and immediately respond to the bedside. If the alert has indeed identified a critical condition, the nurses contact the MICU team, which institutes necessary measures.

Data from more than one year into the program indicates a positive impact on hospital outcomes, including mortality. Dr. Siddique explains, “We often miss signals about trouble in patients. For example, in 85% of patients who experience cardiac arrest, there is a biological signal up to eight hours before the event that can be picked up. DECISIO notifies the Rapid Response nurses who then assemble the MICU team and attend to the patient. This practice has resulted in a tremendous reduction – 25% – in cardiac arrests at BSLMC. We won an Alfred Soffer Research Award last fall at CHEST for this work.”

Armed with a “**precision medicine**” **grant from the Department of Medicine**, **Dr. Christopher Morgan** is working on machine-learning-generated algorithms to predict which individuals are at high risk of critical decompensation. Dr. Morgan aims to assign standards to a wide variety of data points that will allow healthcare providers to observe for potential corresponding dangers. For example, a combination of a particular age, weight, and current medications may inform the medical team that the patient is susceptible to myocardial infarction or pneumonia—and how many days out before he or she may show signs, so the team can treat the patient proactively to avoid the event. Dr. Morgan feels this could revolutionize the future of critical care and save lives.

Dr. Morgan is working closely with **Dr. Aanand Naik**, **Vice Chair** of the department’s **Quality Improvement and Innovations Group**; the hospital’s Information Technology group; as well as **Javad Razjouyan**, a big data scientist, and **Dr. Christopher Howard**, also from the **Section of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine**. The group seeks to develop customized alerts to address the specific characteristics of most patients seen at BSLMC and is working with the hospital’s Quality Specialist **Seanna D’Avignon** to address change management, policy changes and implementation procedures to incorporate these changes throughout BSLMC.

A LOOK BACK AT SPRING 2019

SELECT FACULTY AWARDS

National Leadership Awards, Recognitions & Appointments

Dr. Samaya Anumudu	Public Policy Committee, American Society of Nephrology
Dr. Jairo Barrantes Perez	Public Safety Committee, American Academy of Sleep Medicine
Dr. Sanket Borgaonkar	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
Dr. Andrea Bradford	Member-at-Large, Society for Health Psychology
Dr. Miguel Cruz	Hemostasis and Thrombosis Study Section, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Scientific Review
Dr. Natasha Dave	Media and Communications Committee, American Society of Nephrology
Dr. Jessica Davila	Evaluation Plan Development for the Rural Health Faculty Development Project, VA Office of Academic Affiliations
Dr. Jessica Davila	HSR&D Researcher & Evaluator in Residence, VA Office of Academic Affiliations
Dr. Hashem El-Serag	114th President, American Gastroenterological Association
Dr. Kevin Erickson	Quality and Patient Safety Committee, American Society of Nephrology
Dr. Kevin Erickson	Editorial Board, Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology
Dr. Mary Estes	Fellow, National Academy of Inventors for 2019
Dr. Loan Ho	Power of Professionalism Award, The Center for Professionalism
Dr. Michael Holliday	18th Annual Nephrology Young Investigators' Forum First-Place Award, Southern Society for Clinical Investigation
Dr. Nadia Ismail	National Clerkship Directors in Internal Medicine Council, Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine
Dr. Derian Lai	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
Dr. Nasser Lakkis	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
Dr. Glenn Levine	2019 Gifted Educator Award, American College of Cardiology
Dr. Anita Major	Ambulatory Care Service Think Innovation Transformation Award, Harris Health System Executive Team
Dr. Anthony McClafferty	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
Dr. Yamini Natarajan	American Board of Internal Medicine 2019 Gastroenterology Standard Setting Committee
Dr. Sankar Navaneethan	EPI Statistics Committee of the Council on Epidemiology and Prevention, American Heart Association

A LOOK BACK AT SPRING 2019

SELECT FACULTY AWARDS

National Leadership Awards, Recognitions & Appointments

Dr. Sankar Navaneethan	Editorial Board, Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology
Dr. Sara Nowakowski	Arthur J. Spielman Early Career Distinguished Achievement Award for 2019, Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine
Dr. Sayna Norouzi	Workforce and Education Committee, American Society of Nephrology
Dr. Susan Samson	Board of Directors, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
Dr. Susan Samson	Member-at-Large of the Board of Trustees, American College of Endocrinology
Section of Geriatrics House Calls Team	National Committee for Quality Assurance-Certified Patient-Centered Medical Home
Dr. David Sheikh-Hamad	Grant Review Committee, American Society of Nephrology
Dr. Aaron Thrift	Clinical Guidelines Committee, American Gastroenterological Association Institute
Dr. Jefferson Triozzi	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
Dr. Christie Turin More	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
Dr. Anne Utech	Senior Executive Service Equivalent Position of National Director, Nutrition and Food Services, Veterans Health Administration
Dr. Diana Vila	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
Dr. Salim Virani	National Cardiovascular Disease Registry Scientific Quality and Oversight Subcommittee, American College of Cardiology
Dr. Armin Weinberg	Special Emphasis Panel for the Review of 2019 Loan Repayment Program, National Cancer Institute
Dr. Wolfgang Winkelmayer	Editorial Board, Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology
Dr. Cheryl Walker	Distinguished Toxicology Scholar Award, Society of Toxicology
Dr. David Wong	Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society

A LOOK BACK AT SPRING 2019

SELECT FACULTY AWARDS

Department and College Leadership Awards and Appointments

Dr. Horacio Adrogue	BCM Master Clinician Award for Excellence in Patient Care
Dr. Sharmila Anandasabapathy	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Christie Ballantyne	2019 Michael E. DeBakey, M.D., Excellence in Research Award
Dr. Jennifer Chen	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Nicolas Cortes-Penfield	BCM Center of Excellence in Health Equity, Training and Research Clinical Fellow Scholar
Dr. Priti Dangayach	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Kevin Erickson	2019 BCM Distinguished Educator Award
Dr. Cara Foldes	Director of Foundational Sciences Curriculum, School of Medicine
Dr. Kalpalatha Guntupalli	Selection Committee for Baylor's Master Clinician Award for Excellence in Patient Care
Dr. Nadia Ismail	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Lubna Khawaja	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Glenn Levine	Barbara and Corbin J. Robertson, Jr. Presidential Award for Excellence in Education
Dr. Doris Lin	Voting faculty member of Curriculum Committee, School of Medicine
Dr. Lee Lu	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Niraj Mehta	Medical Student Director of Evidence-Based Physical Exam Rounds at Ben Taub Hospital
Dr. Meroë Morse	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Ricardo Nuila	2019 Young Alumnus Award – School of Medicine
Dr. James Pool	Selection Committee for Baylor's Master Clinician Award for Excellence in Patient Care
Dr. Nalini Ram	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Venkat Ramanathan	BCM Master Clinician Award for Excellence in Patient Care
Dr. Stacey Rose	Assistant Dean of Clinical Curriculum, School of Medicine
Dr. Rosa Schmidt	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Section of Transition Medicine	FY19 FGP Patient Experience All Star Award
Dr. Richa Shukla	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Sandhya Thomas	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Barbara Trautner	Barbara and Corbin J. Robertson, Jr. Presidential Award
Isabel Valdez	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence
Dr. Carl Walther	2019 BCM Distinguished Educator Award
Dr. Laila Woc-Colburn	Selection Committee for BCM's Master Clinician Award for Excellence in Patient Care
Dr. Jingyin Yan	2019 BCM Distinguished Leadership Award
Dr. Liping Zhang	BCM 2019 Women of Excellence

Department of Medicine Faculty Promotions

The following faculty have been promoted in the first half of 2019:

Dr. Mayar Al Mohajer	Associate professor
Dr. Mahboob Alam	Associate professor
Dr. Ali Denktas	Professor
Dr. Rola El-Serag	Associate professor
Dr. Richardo Nuila	Associate professor
Dr. Mothaffar Rimawi	Professor
Dr. Tina Shah	Associate professor
Dr. Diana Stewart	Associate professor
Dr. Barbara Trautner	Professor
Dr. Salim Virani	Professor

EDUCATION

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

DR. SALIM VIRANI, Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship Program Director

The **ACGME-accredited Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship Program at Baylor** is a nationally renowned program that offers comprehensive clinical training in all disciplines of cardiology with a multitude of research opportunities in basic, translational and clinical cardiology. Each year, the program receives approximately 675 applications and, after interviewing 60 candidates, selects six to seven new fellows who will round into an ongoing group of 20 fellows. These 20 fellows, says **Dr. Salim Virani**, program director, are key to its success and strong reputation. The program has maintained a 100% board pass rate for the past three years.

All fellows rotate among three affiliated hospitals (Ben Taub Hospital), Michael E. DeBakey Veteran Affairs Medical Center, and Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center/ Texas Heart Institute) and the BCM Outpatient Clinic located at Baylor Clinic, providing an exceptional array of patient populations, pathology, and clinical settings and a capacity of more than 2000 beds, with each site offering a unique training environment with excellent patient volume and faculty supervision. The associate program directors are **Dr. Arunima Misra** (VA), **Dr. Ihab Hamzeh** (Ben Taub Hospital) and **Dr. Mahboob Alam** (BSLMC).

Lectures include those by renowned guest speakers, a board review series and grand rounds. Other learning experiences include educational emails (e.g. EKG/Cath Case/Echo of the Month, Journal Watch) and social media to complement curriculum-based education. Weekly research conferences include a statistics boot camp, fellows presenting on their research projects and sessions before and after major scientific meetings. Fellows present at annual scientific sessions at the American College of Cardiology, American Heart Association and Society for Coronary Angiography and Interventions meetings.

The **Interventional Cardiology Fellowship (Dr. Hani Jneid, Director)** accepts physicians who have completed a fellowship in cardiovascular disease and who are interested in developing a complete set of skills in interventional cardiology. Fellows are expected to obtain ABIM certification in interventional cardiology and acquire proficiency in percutaneous treatment of coronary artery, structural heart disease and peripheral vascular disease. Specialized tracks also are available to fellows interested in research: cardiovascular disease prevention, imaging, heart failure, electrophysiology, health outcomes and interventional cardiology.

Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship Program graduation dinner, 2019

EDUCATION: CARDIOLOGY SECTION

59	07	06	06	04	02
FACULTY MEMBERS ACROSS THE SECTION	PGY-4 FELLOWS	PGY-5 FELLOWS	PGY-6 FELLOWS	PGY-7 FELLOWS	RESEARCH FELLOWS

CARDIOLOGY FELLOWS: 20 MANUSCRIPTS IN 3 MONTHS

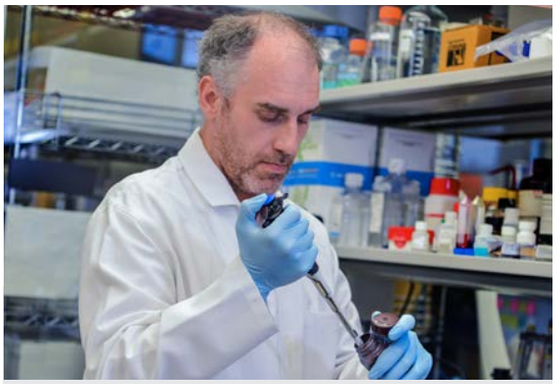
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Association between Lipid Testing and Statin Adherence in the Veterans Affairs Health System	Understanding by General Providers of the Echocardiogram Report	The Use of Risk Enhancing Factors to Personalize ASCVD Risk Assessment: Evidence and Recommendations from the 2018 AHA/ ACC Multi-society Cholesterol Guidelines	Atrial pacing every other beat: Is it pacemaker malfunction?	High-sensitivity troponin I and incident coronary events, stroke, heart failure, and mortality in the ARIC study (2019)	Major Randomized Clinical Trials in Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Presented at the 2019 American College of Cardiology Annual Scientific Session	ST-Segment Elevation Soon after Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
An interesting ECG in a patient with a dual chamber pacemaker	The Interplay of the Global Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease Risk Scoring and Cardiorespiratory Fitness for the Prediction of All-Cause Mortality and Myocardial Infarction	Impact of sex and race on underuse of cardiovascular stress testing in the outpatient setting	Emerging Lipid-Lowering Therapies in Secondary Prevention	Relation Between Cardiology Follow-up Visits, Evidence-Based Statin Prescribing, and Statin Adherence	Relation Between Cigarette Smoking and Heart Failure	Can Coronary Artery Calcium identify primary prevention adults who are at sufficiently high risk for atherothrombotic cardiovascular events to consider low-dose rivaroxaban thromboprophylaxis?
15	16	17	18	19	20	
Statin use in carnitine palmitoyltransferase II deficiency	Fluctuations in PVC burden can impact medical assessment and management	Catheter Directed Ultrasound Assisted Thrombolysis in Massive and Sub-Massive Pulmonary Embolism (USAT)	Correlation of altmetric attention score and citations for high-impact general medicine journals: A cross-sectional study	Medical therapy for heart failure caused by ischemic heart disease	The use of lipid modifying agents in secondary ASCVD prevention	

RESEARCH: A PATH TO SUCCESS

Many or our research programs focus on finding treatments and cures for important ailments that affect our patients. Two such programs achieving strong results are in the areas of diabetes and liver cancer.

Conquering Diabetes with Healthy Fat Cells

In the greater metropolitan area of Houston, 30% of the population is obese, placing Houston near the top of obesity rates in the United States. We know that obesity increases the risk of dying early from heart disease, stroke, diabetes, liver disease and kidney disease.



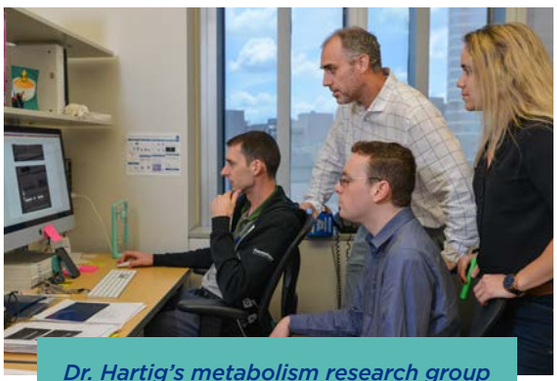
DR. SEAN HARTIG

- Assistant professor, Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism
- Leads a basic research program in obesity
- Teaches both endocrinology/diabetes/ metabolism and molecular/cell biology
- Is driven to address the obesity epidemic

The research program led by **Dr. Sean Hartig** is devoted to studying the origins of metabolic diseases and, ultimately, finding treatments that improve the quality of life for individuals suffering from obesity and type 2 diabetes. His group explores the ways in which adipose tissues influence endocrine control of energy balance. The research leverages metabolic, genetic and cell biology approaches to understand how dietary stress acts on adipose tissues to influence the co-morbidities of obesity, particularly fatty liver and cardiovascular diseases.

Dr. Hartig came to Baylor in 2008 with a PhD in chemical engineering and, within five years, had established independent funding for his research. When asked about his segue from chemical engineering to studying mouse metabolism, he simply says, “I followed the questions.” He’s now hoping those questions will be leading to impactful discoveries.

Dr. Hartig works to answer questions in the context of mouse studies, which are an important gateway into understanding diabetes and metabolism. The team studies how mice respond to environmental and dietary stress by analyzing measures of metabolism, expecting that the knowledge gained will lead to better understanding of metabolic issues in humans.



Dr. Hartig’s metabolism research group

Dr. Hartig proudly demonstrates the new testing facilities that extra funding from the Department of Medicine made possible. “The cages are larger, with better light and temperature control,” he says, “and they allow the mice to live more comfortably with less stress.” This is important, he says, to obtain better measurements of mouse energy balance.

The team is studying how adipose tissues behave in different parts of the body. Adipose tissue is an endocrine organ that dynamically expands and contracts to meet the metabolic demands of the organism. Excess abdominal fat is associated with insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. In contrast, expansion of subcutaneous white adipose tissue depots is associated with normal insulin sensitivity and reduced incidence of obesity-linked conditions, including ectopic fat deposition, hepatic steatosis and type 2 diabetes. “Eighty percent of fat cells are in places where you don’t see them,” Dr. Hartig says. They’re seeking to understand how to “click on” these subcutaneous fat cells to allow the adipose tissue to expand.

11

RESEARCH: A PATH TO SUCCESS

The goal of this research? According to Dr. Hartig, "our laboratory is geographically centered within a significant health problem driven by obesity. We want to empower a healthy metabolic profile and allow humans to have a better lifestyle."

DR. PRADIP SAHA

His group includes several colleagues – **Aaron Cox**, instructor; **Natasha Chernis**, laboratory manager; **Peter Masschelin**, graduate student; **Jessica Felix**, graduate student – and **Dr. Pradip Saha**, who is an internationally recognized expert in mouse phenotyping. Dr. Saha is co-director of the **Mouse Metabolic and Phenotyping Core (MMPC)** Lab at Baylor. The MMPC is a comprehensive fee-for-service rodent phenotyping facility that contains a multitude of testing capabilities for the analysis of mouse models from embryo to adult. It uses state-of-the-art equipment and techniques to standardize key methodologies and to expedite comprehensive research analyses on diseases related to cancer, cardiovascular dysfunction, metabolic disorders, mouse models of disease, and drug studies. Together, Drs. Hartig and Saha are excited about the prospects of this important research and Baylor's ability to improve the health of its patients.

Early Detection of Liver Cancer

DR. FASIHA KANWAL

- Professor of Medicine
- Chief, Section of Gastroenterology and Hepatology
- Editor-in-Chief of the journal Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology
- Maintains memberships or committee/chair positions, in ten organizations

Dr. Fasiha Kanwal recently received funding from the National Cancer Institute for her U01 grant, "Risk Stratification for and Early Detection of Liver Cancer." **Drs. Hashem El-Serag**, **Saira Khaderi** and **Donna White** are co-investigators on the project. The goal of the study is to reduce mortality from **hepatocellular cancer (HCC)** by developing personalized indices that can improve clinical risk stratification and increase early HCC detection. The group is looking at the risk factors for liver cancer by focusing on common issues and identifying potentially modifiable high-risk factors in future interventions.

> **"THCCC will be an invaluable resource to develop novel methods for predicting future development of liver cancer."**

The research group previously used large-population-based virtual cohorts to identify the different risk factors for HCC, including hepatitis C virus infection, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease and metabolic factors.

The study is leveraging data from the institutions involved in an ongoing **Texas HCC Consortium (THCCC) study (P.I.: Hashem El-Serag)** supported by the Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT)—including UT Southwestern, UT-San Antonio, Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center and the Houston Veterans Health Administration Medical Center, which is providing a wealth of information, such as extensive clinical and patient data, family history and blood specimens on a large prospective cohort of patients with cirrhosis from multiple etiologies. "Because no such large cohorts currently exist and because the study is designed to provide long term follow-up," Dr. Kanwal says, "This will be an invaluable resource to develop novel methods for predicting future development of liver cancer."

Importantly, the study will also provide a framework that combines patient and other liver disease-related factors to improve detection of early liver cancer.

RESEARCH: A PATH TO SUCCESS

NEW NIH RESEARCH GRANTS 2018

BCM FACULTY NAME	GRANT TYPE	FUNDING SOURCE
Dr. Christie Ballantyne	R01	National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
Dr. Melissa Bondy	R01	National Cancer Institute
Dr. Chao Cheng	R21	National Cancer Institute
Dr. Elizabeth Chiao	R01	National Cancer Institute
Dr. David Corry	R01 supplement	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Dr. Miguel Cruz	R01	National Institute of General Medical Sciences
Dr. Richard Finnell	R01	Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development
Dr. Yafang Li	R21	National Cancer Institute
Dr. Grace Lo	R21	National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases
Dr. Aanand Naik	U01	Health Resources & Services Administration
Dr. Rolando Rumbaut	R01	National Eye Institute
Dr. Christopher Scott	R01	National Human Genome Research Institute
Dr. Zheng Sun	R01	National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
Dr. Sanjiv Sur	R01	National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
Dr. Barbara Trautner	R01	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Dr. Cheryl Walker	P30	National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
Dr. Li Zhang	K03	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

OTHER NEW RESEARCH GRANTS 2018

Dr. Sandeep Agarwal	The Krist Foundation
Dr. John Berens	Baylor College of Medicine
Dr. Chao Cheng	Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas
Dr. Hashem El-Serag	Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas
Dr. Matthew Ellis	Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
Dr. Ellen Fremion	Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
Dr. Jason Hou	Veterans Administration
Dr. Prasun Jalal	Dora Roberts Foundation
Dr. Fasiha Kanwal	Department of Defense
Dr. Natalia Khalaf	American Pancreatic Association
Dr. Ayse Mindikoglu	Roderick Duncan McDonald Research Award
Dr. Cynthia Peacock	Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
Dr. Maria Rodriguez-Barradas	Centers for Disease Control
Dr. Hardeep Singh	Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
Dr. Aaron Thrift	Dan L Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center
Dr. Li-Yuan Yu-Lee	Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas

VICE CHAIR GROUPS

DR. BIYKEM BOZKURT

As the Department of Medicine's **Vice Chair for Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center (MEDVAMC), Dr. Biykem Bozkurt** oversees the many daily interactions between MEDVAMC and the department's numerous healthcare faculty and trainees assigned to veteran healthcare as well as education and research.

Veterans Affairs – Transitions of Care

The inpatient medicine teams have a comprehensive care portfolio for transitions of care. The daily assessment incorporates daily huddles with case managers, social workers, pharmacists, nurses, inpatient medicine team attendings and trainees. Discharge planning, barriers to care and right models of care are discussed for each patient at a leadership huddle with representation from medicine, social work, case managers, coders, extended care line representatives, geriatrics, inpatient nursing home/palliative care services and mental health. Goals of care is a critical component of patient care and is addressed at each level, from the time of admission to discharge.

Veterans Affairs – Palliative Care

Palliative care is an important part of the services provided at MEDVAMC, including supportive care for advanced medical conditions and hospice care. Palliative care consultation is available as an outpatient service as well as for patients admitted to the hospital. MEDVAMC also provides many options for support after discharge, including home-based primary care, home-based skilled nursing care, rehabilitation at home, home-based palliative care or hospice, veteran-directed care (in which the family or veteran hires their own providers for care at home), respite care, telehealth, remote monitoring with skilled nursing care, a contract nursing home or a personal care home.

PALLIATIVE CARE AT MEDVAMC:

- Nutritional supplements
- Pain medications
- Physical therapy
- Medical procedures to ease pain
- Help with personal tasks and planning

CARING IN ACTION

DR. POTLURI'S MISSION TO ADDRESS PATIENT CARE IN GIM

DR. VANI POTLURI

- Assistant Professor, General Internal Medicine
- Received all her medical training in Houston
- Joined BCM faculty in 2018
- Practices at Baylor College of Medicine – McNair Clinic and Ben Taub Hospital

The Department of Medicine emphasizes compassionate healthcare. Its physicians, nurses, aides and staff are carefully selected, trained and rewarded for their compassion and care for patients' well-being. It's no surprise, then, that the Department personnel consistently are awarded key recognitions for "caring in action."

Dr. Vani Potluri is a highly sought-out physician in the Section of General Internal Medicine (GIM). She practices in the section's outpatient clinic in Baylor's McNair campus. Patients arrive for both preventative health visits and more complex disease management. In her typical unassuming manner, Dr. Potluri explains, "My job is pretty simple: to keep people healthy by treating the diseases that people have and trying to prevent any new complications or disease process."

Dr. Potluri's passion is outpatient medicine, but she still loves certain aspects of hospital medicine; for this reason, she also works at Ben Taub Hospital on teaching teams with residents. Vani enjoys working at Ben Taub because of the opportunity to work with patients who have received little to no primary care in the past. At Ben Taub, she can offer them a different answer: an entire network of doctors to work with.

"I want everyone to know that if they are sick, there is always an option. I became a primary care doctor partly because I want to prevent situations such as metastatic breast cancer, massive heart attacks or repeated asthma exacerbation. My current work validates all the reasons I decided to become a primary care physician."

"It was such an honor to train in the Harris Health System as a resident, and I want everyone to know that if they are sick, there is always an option."

Baylor College of Medicine

THE MARGARET M. AND ALBERT B. ALKEK
DEPARTMENT OF
MEDICINE

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