



December 15, 1997

Volume 1, Number 15 • Indianapolis, Indiana

IUSM roundup

IARC grant renewed for five-year period

The IARC at IUSM was established in 1987 with a \$5 million grant from the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, a research institute within the NIH. On Dec. 1, the IARC was funded for years 11 through 15 with an \$8.5 million grant.

Genetic determinants of alcohol ingestion continues to be the research theme of the IARC which is located at IUSM in Indianapolis and IU Bloomington. For the past 10 years, IARC researchers have focused on both animal and human studies.

IARC Director Ting-Kai Li, MD, and Lawrence Lumeng, MD, developed rodent models that have either a preference or nonpreference for alcohol. Their rat models are used by scientists who are searching for a neurobiological basis for alcohol-seeking behavior.

The IARC investigators pioneered studies of a broad approach to the association of alcohol and aldehyde dehydrogenase polymorphism to alcoholism and its complications, as well as the heritability, sensitivity and repeatability of a variety of responses to ethanol in humans. They are studying subjective sensations and brain activity in subjects who do and don't have family histories of alcoholism.

Twins and siblings are studied to determine the genetic basis for alcohol- related personality and temperament traits. Molecular biologists Lucy Carr, PhD, and Howard Edenberg, PhD, focus their work on identifying genes underlying alcohol-seeking behaviors, alcohol abuse and alcoholism in both humans and rodent models.

IARC scientific co-directors are David Crabb, MD, and Richard Rose, PhD.

New clinic focuses on macular degeneration

The IU Department of Ophthalmology has announced the opening of the Indiana University Macular Degeneration Research Center and Clinic. Directing the center and clinic will be Ronald Danis, MD, associate professor, Thomas Ciulla, MD, assistant professor, and Alon Harris, PhD, associate professor.

Macular degeneration is the leading cause of irreversible visual loss in the U.S. At the new research center, all phases of macular degeneration will be studied, including vascular autoregulation and blood flow. Studies underway include a randomized trial of intra-vitreous injection of triamcinolone acetonide, a potent corticosteroid with antiangiogenic properties.

Drs. Danis and Ciulla also have received IRB approval for radiation therapy trials. When indicated, conventional laser treatments and subfoveal surgery also are performed.

In a clinical and research institute devoted entirely to this disease, an intensive teaching program for patients and their families is possible, maximizing understanding of the disease and knowledge of available options.

In addition to their clinical studies, Drs. Danis and Ciulla are investigating new therapeutic treatment modalities in the laboratory using a realistic and reproducible porcine model of neovascular tissue formation. Photodynamic therapy, using photosensitizing dyes, and intravitreal injection of drugs which inhibit abnormal blood vessel formation are just two of the areas under investigation.

BRIEFS

New directors

Edwin Harper, PhD, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, and **George Rawls, MD**, assistant dean, were named co-directors of the Masters in Medical Sciences Program, formerly known as the Post-Baccalaureate Program, at IUSM. The appointment was effective Sept. 1.

Robert B. Jones, MD, PhD, professor of medicine, has been appointed associate dean in the School of Medicine. His responsibilities include oversight of the compliance program for physicians at IUSM.

Endowed chairs

The Trustees of Indiana University approved two appointments for endowed chairs at IUSM during their meeting Dec. 5. The appointments were retroactive to Dec. 1.

Evan Farmer, MD, professor and chairman of the Department of Dermatology, was appointed the Kampen-Norins Professor in Dermatology.

The Kampen family established the chair in memory of the late husband and father and in honor of Mr. Kampen's physician and friend, Arthur L. Norins, MD, former chairman of the department.

Merrill Benson, MD, professor and chairman of the Department of Medical and Molecular Genetics, was appointed the A. Donald Merritt Professor in Medical and Molecular Genetics.

Dr. Merritt's widow, Doris Merritt, MD, professor emeritus of pediatrics and special assistant to the chancellor for research and graduate education, along with family, friends, former residents and associates contributed to the endowment.

Web helps Canadian family find Riley expert

The Information Superhighway is becoming less and less of the "road less traveled." Just ask Barry Eppley, MD, assistant professor of plastic surgery.

A resourceful family in Canada used the Internet to access cleft lip and palate information on the web at <http://www.widesmiles.org>. The site details a surgical procedure perfected at Riley Hospital. The family took the information to physicians at Children's Hospital of British Columbia, who contacted the manufacturer of the medical instruments used in the procedure, who in turn contacted Dr. Eppley.

The family was insistent that the Canadian physicians use this technology and have Dr. Eppley come and assist with the surgery on 4-year-old Peaches. So, over the Fourth of July weekend, Dr. Eppley used resorbable plates and screws to reconstruct the orbit and maxilla for the child, who suffered from bilateral oro-ocular facila clefts.

"The procedure went fine and she's doing great.," said Dr. Eppley of Peaches.

And, Dr. Eppley added, if you want to see before pictures of Peaches, they can be found on the same web site, <http://www.widesmiles.org/gallery/peach/>.

Information on innovative procedures can be found on the new IUSM plastic surgery web page at <http://www.iuplasticsurgery.com>.

Food Court goes smoke-free

The recently organized IU Nicotine Dependence Program staff is doing more than just counseling those interested in nicotine cessation.

Deborah Hudson, program coordinator, said her office received numerous complaints about the air quality at the Food Court in the University Place Conference Center. A petition with 550 signatures was presented to the management, who decided that beginning Jan. 1 the Food Court will be smoke- free.

As a show of support for the decision, Ms. Hudson said she hopes that IUSM faculty, staff and students make a point of visiting the Food Court for lunch the first week of the New Year.

Each year nearly 420,000 Americans die from smoking-related illnesses. In Indiana 3,000 people die each year from smoking-related cancers and another 3,000 die from other smoking-related respiratory diseases.

Among all states, Indiana has the sixth highest rate of deaths related to smoking. It ranks second behind Kentucky in prevalence of smokers.

Individuals interested in enrolling in the tobacco cessation program may do so by calling 278-3981. Arden Christen, DDS, and Stephen Jay, MD, are co-directors of the program.

Awards presented to Community Ed

The Community Education Department at Riley Hospital recently received several awards.

An award of Commendation from the National Safety Council was presented to the department at the 25th Annual Awards Banquet for the Community Safety Division, which was held in Chicago. The award recognized the Tiller 7 Safe House Project, a collaborative effort with the Pike Township Fire Department, that teaches children about fire safety.

Community Education's Bike Safety Program received an honorable mention at the U.S. Secretary of Transportation's Community Partnership Awards program which was part of the National Moving Kids Safely Conference in Washington, D.C.

The third honor for the department went to staff member Kentgin Gearhart, project manager for the Mobile Teaching School Bus Project. Gearhart was honored by the National Association of Pupil Transportation for his leadership in the education of safe and proper school bus transportation for preschoolers and children with special health care needs. He received the Kinedyne Corporation's 1997 Special Needs Transportation Award at the NAPT annual conference in Indianapolis.

Scope will take an intermission and will not publish on Dec. 29 and Jan. 12 in recognition of winter break and the brief suspension of special academic activities and events at IUSM.

<http://www.medicine.indiana.edu>