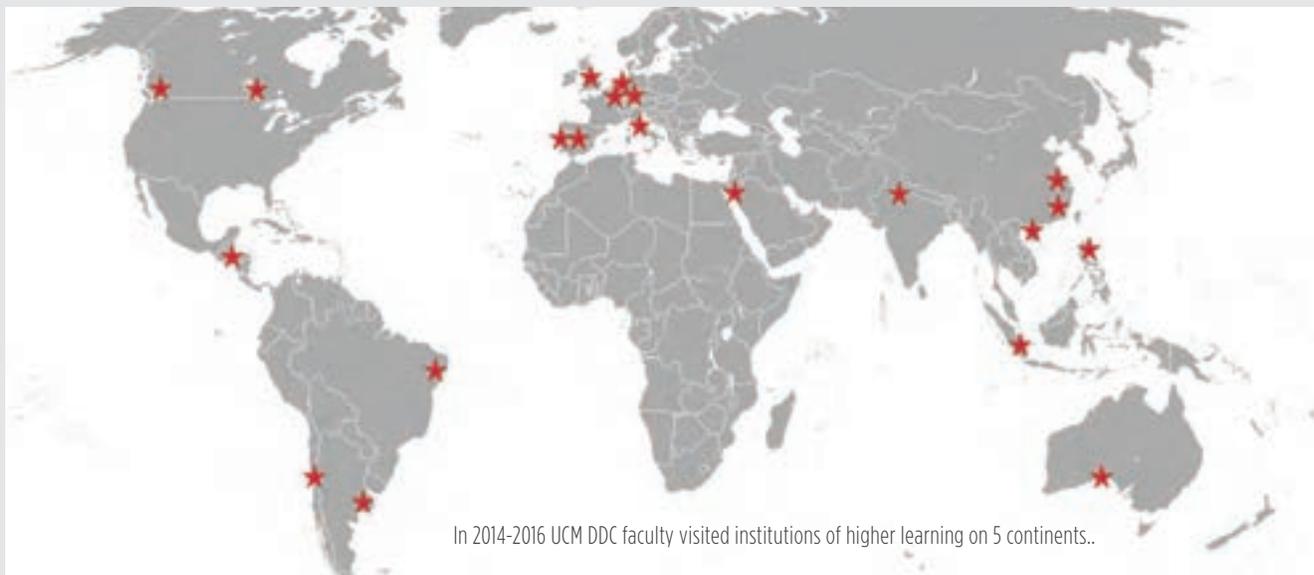




GUT INSTINCT

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL 2016 | Issue 2

A Newsletter of the Gastro-Intestinal Research Foundation and The University of Chicago Medicine Digestive Diseases Center



In 2014-2016 UCM DDC faculty visited institutions of higher learning on 5 continents..

THE GLOBAL REACH OF THE UCM DIGESTIVE DISEASES CENTER

The University of Chicago Medicine Digestive Diseases Center physicians take care of patients every day, but are also ambassadors, traveling near and far to teach, consult and collaborate. Last spring, the faculty and staff of the Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Center traveled to Israel to lead the inaugural Goldgraber Fellowship Reunion and Research Conference in Tel Aviv. This conference brought together five alumni of the distinguished Goldgraber Fellowship; University of Chicago Medicine presenters Eugene Chang, MD, Russell Cohen, MD, Joel Pekow, MD, and David T. Rubin, MD; and Israeli colleagues for a day-long meeting to discuss the latest research in IBD with physicians and students from the Israeli IBD Society.

Presentations included many topics, including updates on the microbiome in IBD, pouchitis and pathogenesis, fecal transplants, biologics and immunosuppressant use, colon cancer and dysplasia, and pregnancy and IBD, among many others. The most recent Goldgraber Fellow, Ayal Hirsch, MD, originally from Haifa, delivered a lecture on diet and nutrition in IBD. Honored guests Cheri Fox, Hayim Goldgraber, Avi Goldgraber, Naomi Goldgraber, and Miryam Goldgraber also attended to remember Moshe B. Goldgraber, for whom the Fellowship is named.

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THE GLOBAL REACH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO DIGESTIVE DISEASES CENTER

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

Anna Gomberg

Administrative Director, IBD Center



Faculty, staff and friends of the University of Chicago Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center at Jerusalem's Western Wall (Photo: R. COHEN)

After the conference, the faculty and staff of the IBD Center toured the Old City of Jerusalem and visited the many historic sites that make Israel a rich cultural epicenter and sacred setting the world over.

The meeting served as a fitting tribute to the memory of Joseph B. Kirsner, MD, PhD, and Moshe B. Goldgraber, MD, beloved founding fathers in the field of gastroenterology whose friendship spanned decades, and whose sterling international reputations endure to this day.

“This conference represents a great collaboration between the University of Chicago IBD Center and the Israeli IBD Society, and is one of the most important means we have to build research collaborations. I've already heard ideas for about twenty new publications from participants.” said David T. Rubin, MD, one of the Co-Directors of the conference. While a highlight in a banner year for the University of Chicago Medicine Digestive Disease Center (UCM DDC), this conference represents only one of the many ways the UCM DDC faculty's work reaches a global audience. Members of the UCM DDC are routinely invited to present research at many institutions of higher learning all over the world.

In 2015, Sonia Kupfer, MD, traveled to Sao Paulo, Brazil for

DID YOU KNOW?

- » Recent research estimates that 1 in 200 to 1 in 250 people in North America have IBD
- » IBD incidence rates are increasing in other parts of the world, including Asia and Australia, where these diseases used to be uncommon.
- » Large differences in the microbiome and diet exist between different regions, which may account for some of this variation.

an international meeting on inherited colorectal cancer. Andres Gelrud, MD, visited Curitiba, Brazil; Punta Cana, Dominican Republic; Santiago, Chile; San José, Costa Rica; and will travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina in June 2016 to deliver for a live endoscopy course. Vani Konda, MD, presented at the Confocal Laser Endomicroscopy conference in Lisbon Portugal in April 2015, and at the International Society of Diseases of the Esophagus in Singapore in September 2016. Karen Kim, MD, will travel to Beijing and New Delhi in 2016. The Beijing Center program will focus on liver cancer and viral hepatitis and the New Delhi conference will focus on establishing a cancer disparities and public health infrastructure for cancer prevention.

PHYSICIAN PROFILE: KAREN KIM, MD

Anne Ford

Karen Kim, MD, doesn't blow up cars or hurl herself off roofs like the guys on *MythBusters*. But her work as a demolisher of dangerous health-care legends in the Asian American community surely has the potential to save more lives than anything on television.

As director of the recently launched Center for Asian Health Equity, a partnership between The University of Chicago Medicine and the Chicago-based Asian Health Coalition, Dr. Kim seeks to remedy Asian health disparities such as low colorectal-cancer screening rates. Its work that often entails exposing and clearing up cultural myths.

"For example, some Asian communities think that cancer is a death sentence, so why screen for it, because you're going to die from it anyway," Dr. Kim says. "They don't understand that colon cancer can be prevented. So we've done media campaigns around that." Too, the Center recently received a \$3.5-million federal grant from the CDC to increase colorectal cancer screenings in underserved communities.

Part of the Center's work also entails helping the larger medical community understand the particular health needs of Asian-Americans, who constitute the fastest growing racial group in the United States.

"Unlike the Hispanic population, the Asian population in the United States will continue to be largely foreign-born," Dr. Kim points out. "It means that the traditional barriers that exist now, like language and cultural competency, will continue to be very, very prevalent."

It means, too, that physicians who work with Asian patients will likely continue to see a high rate of gastric and liver cancers, as these cancers are much more prevalent in that community than among the majority of Americans. That's due to a variety of factors including virally mediated cancers as well as food choices. Unfortunately, screenings for both hepatitis B and gastric cancer aren't routinely performed in the United States.

That's in part why the Center's work includes policy advocacy. "There need to be policies so that high-risk populations can have timely access to preventative services, including cancer screening," says Dr. Kim. "There's no good collective voice for Asian Americans, particularly in the Midwest, to make sure that we are represented in the funding climate. We need to not only collect data, evaluate data, and implement studies, but we also have to do the advocacy. It's exhausting, but there's such a need for it."

On the community engagement side, the Center is partnering with



Karen Kim, MD

FAST FACTS

- » *About one in 20 Americans will be diagnosed with cancer in the colon or rectum in their lifetime.*
- » *Colon cancer screening rates are lowest in Asian American populations among ethnic groups, while mortality rates are highest among African Americans.*
- » *Illinois' Asian population has grown 39 percent since 2000.*

more than 50 community organizations, health clinics, hospitals, and other stakeholders to help improve population-level health outcomes.

One of those community engagement efforts has resulted in the Bridgeport Free Clinic, a collaboration between UChicago's Pritzker School of Medicine and the Chicago neighborhood of Bridgeport, the home of a large and growing population of Chinese immigrants. The clinic offers interpretive services in Cantonese, Mandarin, and Spanish; is staffed by UChicago physicians and medical student volunteers; and makes referrals to two nearby federally qualified health centers.

"While the clinic is doing a huge service to the community, it's also doing a huge service to our faculty," Dr. Kim points out, "because working there helps them understand things like how to use culturally competent approaches to health care among communities who do not speak English and who have unique screening requirements.. It's very rewarding."

"SOME ASIAN COMMUNITIES THINK THAT CANCER IS A DEATH SENTENCE, SO WHY SCREEN FOR IT? THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT COLON CANCER CAN BE PREVENTED."

THE GLOBAL REACH OF THE UCM DDC

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Russell D. Cohen, MD, presented in Munich for the Biosphere meeting in March, 2015; and in Rome, in May, 2015. And Digestive Diseases Center Co-Director David T. Rubin, MD, crisscrossed the globe in 2015-2016, traveling to Tel Aviv, Israel; Barcelona, Spain; London, England; Vienna, Austria; Beijing, China; Taipei, Taiwan; and Amsterdam, The Netherlands for invited lectures.

In addition to frequent flyer miles, these visits earn many dividends for the international reputation of the University of Chicago Medicine Digestive Diseases Center and the GI Research Foundation, and establish the global research partnerships necessary to find cures for complex digestive diseases.

Perhaps an even a greater honor, every year the UCM DDC hosts



Physician trainees from Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong

many international visitors for supervised rotations and observations, providing training that allows these physicians to bring cutting-edge medical techniques to their home institutions. In the summer of 2015, one such group of physicians from Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong spent a week observing the processes and procedures of our hospital and clinics.

“IBD is becoming more and more common

in Asia, and access to latest medical therapies and procedural techniques is very needed in our hospitals.” explained Dr. Tsung-Chun Lee, one of the visiting physicians “We are very grateful to the IBD Center for this opportunity, and hope to return again.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

GASTRO-INTESTINAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL BALL SATURDAY, JUNE 4

Premiere annual gala to raise money for digestive disease physicians and researchers at UChicago Medicine.

Tickets: giresearchfoundation.org

EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

An evening seminar featuring the multidisciplinary team from the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center. *Free.*

ibcenter.uchicago.edu

ABOUT THE GASTRO-INTESTINAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION:

A non-profit dedicated to raising funds to support the physicians and scientists at The University of Chicago Medicine Digestive Diseases Center in their efforts to provide outstanding care, train future leaders and perform innovative clinical and laboratory research in order to treat, cure and prevent digestive diseases.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO DIGESTIVE DISEASES CENTER

is a collaborative, multidisciplinary network of physicians, researchers, and allied health professionals who share a legacy of innovation and a common purpose: to improve the lives of patients who suffer from digestive diseases.

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NEWS IN BRIEF: UCM DDC awarded multi year research partnership from Takeda Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

The UCM DDC will work to establish a unique patient physician digital platform that communicates real-time disease status, collates environmental, molecular, genetic and microbiome factors for each patient and creates a system for identifying personalized IBD therapy.

“We are very grateful for Takeda’s vision and support in accelerating novel research of and care for people suffering from IBD,” said David T. Rubin, M.D.

NEWS IN BRIEF: Celiac Center’s Annual Spring Flours a Gluten Free Success

More than 300 guests gathered in Preston Bradley Hall at the Chicago Cultural Center on Friday May 6th to raise much-needed funds for The Celiac Center at the premiere gluten-free gala of the year. Some came from as far as Canada and California to support the cause and enjoy the freedom of eating out without worry, a luxury for those with celiac disease. In the absence of a cure, the only treatment for celiac disease is adherence to a strict, lifelong gluten-free diet.