

Resident Report

A newsletter for
SUNY Upstate Medical
University Residents
and Fellows

Spring 2009

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For more information
about the residency
programs at Upstate
Medical University
please visit:

www.upstate.edu/gme

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Pediatric Resident Studies Infant Exposure to Second-Hand Smoke

Pediatrics resident **Roopa Kanakatti Shankar, MBBS**, won one of two \$10,000 New Investigator Award (2007) grants from the Julius B. Richmond Center of Excellence for Children for research aimed at reducing children's exposure to second-hand smoke.

The study involved 31 infants who were seen by pediatric residents in the outpatient "continuity clinic" shortly after birth, then again at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months and 9 months.

The newborns' level of cotinine in the urine (a byproduct of nicotine metabolism) was measured, and the parents were counseled on the harmful effects of smoking cigarettes around infants.

No level of cotinine is deemed safe in newborns, Shankar said.

"I was astounded by the data," she said, citing counts of hundreds, even a thousand nanograms per milliliter. "That's a huge exposure."

Those numbers, said Shankar, gave residents some support when they talked to parents about the harm second-hand smoke can cause to infants, including ear infections and asthma.

"Some parents realized that what they were doing is not enough," Shankar said, referring to those who refrained from smoking inside their homes or cars. But even that doesn't prevent exposure to "third-hand smoke," harmful particles that cling to furniture and clothing.

The study also looked at whether educating parents was more effective if the residents were trained and if they were given feedback on the cotinine levels.

Shankar is still examining the results, and hopes to finish the project by June.

Two parents in the study agreed to be referred to the New York State "Quitline" to help them quit smoking, Shankar said, but she doesn't know if



Roopa Shankar, MBBS, is a pediatric resident in her final year at SUNY Upstate. She will leave this summer for Cincinnati Children's Hospital, where she has earned a fellowship in pediatric endocrinology.

any parents or family members of newborns quit.

Shankar said her study was a "pretty ambitious project," in part because it relied on obtaining urine samples from babies. She is grateful for the support from the clinic staff and research assistant Marsha Kernan, CCLS and her mentor, Donna Bacchi, MD, MPH.

Shankar hopes other researchers use her work as the basis for a larger, long-term study of children's exposure to second-hand smoke.

"I had not been passionate about the topic before, but the more I read about it, it's shocking how much morbidity it causes and motivates you to educate others," Shankar said.

Upstate Residents Shine at Symposium

SUNY Upstate medical residents took home four of the 11 awards given at the fourth annual Medical Society of the State of New York Resident and Fellow Section poster symposium in Rochester May 1.

SUNY Upstate residents won a first prize, a second prize and two honorable mentions. Sixty posters were presented by residents and fellows from 22 institutions in New York, and awards were given in two categories.

Brian D. Kubiak, MD, PGY-3 (Surgery), took first place in the Health Policy-Medical Education/Science/ Medicine category for "The Effect of Intra-abdominal Pressure on Esophageal, Plateau and Transpulmonary Pressures."

Surgery resident **Castigliano Bhamidipati, DO, PGY-2**, earned honorable mention in that category for his poster, "Robotic-assisted versus Median Sternotomy approach for Mitral Valve Repair: A single institution review."

In the Clinical Vignettes category, **Robert Hill, MD, PGY-3** (Ophthalmology), won second prize for his presentation, "The Incidence of Canalculitis Requiring Removal of SmartPlugs."

Ashmitha Srinivasan, MD, PGY-3 (Radiology) received honorable mention in the Clinical Vignettes category for her presentation, "Unusual case of chronic cough: A diagnostic dilemma."

A Question of Balance

Change is coming. As the graduate medical education (GME) community prepares to respond to the report from the Institute of Medicine (IOM), we are once again looking at what residents (and fellows) do that is of educational value. We speak frequently of the need to balance “service” and “education.” But how do we do that?

Clinical learning is a blend of work and study. How many times do residents need to see or care for patients with a particular condition to understand it? Does the fourth patient with acute appendicitis clinch it? Or does it take 40 patients with chest pain to gain the instincts, the knowledge, and the judgment to manage this presenting symptom well? Is the 100th patient with shortness of breath still someone to learn from? Or do they merely represent work to do?

The honest answer is both. When there are good teachers (e.g. senior trainees or attending physicians) the 300th patient with hyperkalemia can still offer new depths of understanding, and nuanced appreciation of the situation. When the emphasis on education is omitted, it can be difficult to learn even from a patient who presents with an unusual diagnosis.

In recent years, leaders in GME have been striving to shift the balance toward education and away from an excessive emphasis on service. The new recommendations from the IOM have put our current standards in play. They are not suggesting a further reduction below the 80-hour duty limit. They are, however, asking that we ensure that any resident staying in the hospital longer than 16 hours has five hours of uninterrupted sleep. And the IOM suggests that there be no more than four night float shifts in a row, and any resident that has three or more night float shifts in a row needs to have 48 hours off. There are other items in the IOM recommendations as well – enhanced supervision and increased attention to safety in “handoffs” of patient care are just a few.

Change is coming. We don’t know yet how many of these recommendations will be adopted and what modifications we will have to make. There will be upheaval, anxiety and probably missteps. But if we manage the change correctly, we will preserve the best of residency training while making life better for trainees and safer for patients.

Sara Jo Grethlein, MD
Associate Dean, Graduate Medical Education



Sara Jo Grethlein, MD



Anesthesia

Brian Bannister
James Caswell
William Heino
Alexander Kleiner
Melissa Koshel
Kevin Nebab
Neal Puthumana
Binit Shah
See Wan Tham
Sumena Thongrod

Anesthesia – Pain

Jorge Fernandez-Silva
Angela Mahajan
Romer Mosquera
Mary Trusilo
Joanna Wroblewska

Dental

Alison Gomes
Ryan Maine
Stephen Sheffield
Kristi Soash

Emergency Medicine

Lawrence Cresswell
Sonya Daria
Spencer Ferrin
Timothy Fortuna
Gina Hayes
Joseph Lauro
Matthew Sarsfield
Jonathan Schiller
Katherine Schumacher
Alexander Volkov

Medicine

Steven Altmayer
Puneet Bains
Shazia Beg
Sam Benjamin
Namita Chittoria
Anjali Dahiya
Preeti Dube
Anurag Gandhi
Mamatha Gautam
Markus Gutsche
Rashmi Hottigoudar
Meera Kaphle
Sarah Lappin
Hemalata Maganti
Ashish Maskey
Riffat Meraj
Mauricio Obon Dent
Joshua Pinter
Jad Wakim

Medicine-Cardiology

Jesse Cone
Atilla Kayalar
Boban Mathew

Medicine-Endocrinology

David DiCesar

Medicine-Geriatrics

Abhishek Bose

Medicine-GI

Nilesh Mehta

Medicine-Hem/Onc

Uzma Athar
Juhi Husain

Medicine-Infectious Disease

Elias Ashame
Rajeev Yalamanchili

Medicine-Nephrology

Ameesh Garg
Samer Nasser

Medicine-Pulmonary/ Critical Care

Devin Bissoon
Ankur Puri

Neurology

Amandeep Dhillon
Amanda Hagen
Rajdeep Singh

Neurology-Neurophysiology

Edgar DePeralta
Stanley Penc
Rabia Rizwana

Neurosurgery

Donald Blaskiewicz

Ob/Gyn

Marc Duhaime
Ritu Dutta
Navpriya Oberoi
Canan Sahin-Kandemir
Steven Solano

Ophthalmology

P. Emmett Hurley
Jane Pan
Kris VanWagner

Orthopedics

Leslie Ann Donnelly
Richard Mostak
James Paci
Scott Schweizer
Everett Weiss

Orthopedics-Hand

David Goren
Hugo St-Amand

Otolaryngology

Seth Isaacs
William Losquadro
Timothy Minton
Craniomaxillofacial Reconstruction
Joshua Demke

Pathology

Paul Endres
LaQuita King

Pathology-Hematopathology

Ioana Tolocica

Pathology-Surgical

Conrado Zanardi

Pathology-Cytopathology

Allen Leung

Pediatrics

Imad Absah
Sean Button
Angelle Cresswell
Stephen De Waal Malefyt
Amy DiFabio
Kirti Kandalkar
Hazar Kobayaa
Joseph Riego
Roopa Shankar
Bashar Shihabuddin
Sharon Somekh Portnoy
Ramzi Souki
Andy Chun-Yao Wang

Pediatrics-Infectious Disease

Maria Moro

Physical Med & Rehab

Annie Mar
Jose Miro
Proshat Nikou

PM&R – Peds

David Kanter

Psychiatry

Carolina Arevalo
Raman Arora
Evan DeLucia-Deranja

Psychiatry-Child

Sreekanth Chava
Rebecca King

Psychiatry-Forensic

Dan Cotoman
Syed Mahmud

Psychology

Matthew Goldfine
June Gruber
Susan Lambert
Erin Roland
Nicholas Sibrava
Monique Winnett
Susan Wnuk

Rad Oncology

Michael Hsie
Anna Shapiro

Radiology

Mark Baesl
John Fan
Hui Li
Daniel Wolbrink

Radiology-Neuro

Shveta Trikha

Radiology-Nuclear

Syed Amin

Surgery

Wageeh Azer
F. Kyle Corrie
Joseph DiRocco
Salil Gulati
Jorge Posadas
Benjamin Sadowitz
Stacie Smith
Sarah St. Louis

Urology

Mark LaSpina
Suresh Potluri

Dr. Bala Davuluri Starts Over



Bala Davuluri, MD

After working more than 20 years as a pediatrician in India, Bala Davuluri, MD wanted to break out of his routine. He wanted to grow as a physician and felt a big step was necessary.

"The advances flooding the medical field are so massive, I feel it would be wonderful if I could start my medical education all over once again," Davuluri wrote in his personal statement on the AMCAS application.

He did just that.

Davuluri is now in his third year in the neurology residency program at SUNY Upstate.

He had asked himself how he could consider such a seemingly risky expedition.

"Essentially I wanted a change," he said in an interview at University Hospital. "In human life, repetition and monotony give a sense of security and reduce stress. But changes bring in the excitement and challenges that make life meaningful."

In India, Davuluri was treating large numbers of patients and relying too much on "intuition, assumptions and presumptions," he said.

"Over the years I was drifting away from scientific medicine," he said. "To be relevant to the needs of my patients, I needed to learn and unlearn a lot ... and learning was always my passion."

Davuluri said that in spite of the vastly different cultures, patients in India and the U.S. share similar anxieties about their health and the basic nature of the doctor-patient relationship is the same.

Davuluri said the first year of residency was stressful, even for his younger, American-born colleagues. But with support and encouragement from staff and family – and adherence to a healthy diet and exercise – Davuluri, who is 56, said he has stayed healthy throughout.

After he completes his residency in 2010, Davuluri may seek yet another change in scenery. "My initial thought was to go back to India," he said, but after two years he realized he had become "attached to the system here."

The Midwest may be his next destination.

Davuluri's daughter, who had come to the United States two years earlier than her father to do her residency, is now a physician in the Milwaukee area. Davuluri may look to settle near there and become part of a general neurology practice.

2008-2009 GME Award Winners

UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING BY A RESIDENT OR FELLOW

Dr. Marvin Mata, Pediatrics

UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH BY A RESIDENT OR FELLOW

Dr. Nick Bennett, Pediatrics-Infectious Disease

UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONALISM BY A RESIDENT OR FELLOW

Dr. Christina Geatrakas, Radiology

UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PEER-SELECTED AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK BY A RESIDENT OR FELLOW

Dr. Debanik Chaudhuri, Medicine-Cardiology

Dr. Denzil Harris, Medicine-Cardiology



Nicole Viccari, MD and Lt. Ryan Jack

Nicole Viccari, MD, a radiology resident at SUNY Upstate, served in the U.S. Navy from 2002 to 2008. This photo of Lt. Viccari and ship dentist Lt. Ryan Jack aboard the USS Seattle in the Persian Gulf was taken after the ship had left the United Arab Emirates en route to Iraq. The average outdoor temperature that summer was 110 degrees, and the engine room temperature where the photo was taken averaged 120 degrees, Viccari said. "Due to the heat, we had a lot of heat stress injuries to treat," she said.

Viccari is a PGY-2 resident in her first year of radiology.

"I'm now busy preparing for next year when I start taking call on my own," she said. "There is a lot to learn, but radiology is a very fun and rewarding field."



LEFT TO RIGHT: Debanik Chaudhuri, Shea Eckardt, Denzil Harris, Marvin Mata, Joel Portnoy, Emmett Hurley, Nick Bennett

Dr. Shea Eckardt, Medicine-Pulmonary/Critical Care

Dr. P. Emmett Hurley, Ophthalmology

Dr. Joel Portnoy, Otolaryngology

EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM DIRECTOR AWARD

Rolf Grage, MD, Radiology

EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR AWARD

Barb Anthonson, Psychiatry-Child

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Going the Extra Miles

Three Upstate residents earned the praise of the nurse manager of University Hospital's Transplant Unit 5B for their handling of a recent situation.

Nurse manager Mary Martinez, RN MSM, said 5B had a patient who needed an open MRI at a facility in Manlius.

When the outside facility stated they could not complete the test because they couldn't transfer the patient from stretcher to exam table, Brian Butzen, MD (PGY-2 Orthopedics) volunteered and enlisted Mason Stilwell, MD (PGY-4 Orthopedics) and Landon Jones, MD (PGY-1 Emergency Medicine) to help. The three traveled to the facility to assist with the transfer.

"Dr. Butzen was instrumental in organizing this test and remained calm and professional when obstacles occurred," Martinez said. "At all times his main priority was the patient. These residents truly went above and beyond to ensure the patient received the care he needed."

The *Resident Report* is published for the Graduate Medical Education office each spring and fall, and its mission is three-fold:

1. To publicize the positive accomplishments of our residents and fellows;
2. To help recruit medical students to Upstate for their residency;
3. To communicate important information from the Graduate Medical Education office to residents and fellows.

If you have any suggestions for future issues of the *Resident Report*, please contact Sue Henderson-Kendrick, administrative director of the Graduate Medical Education office. She can be reached at 4-5136 or henderss@upstate.edu.

Physicians: Unite to Protect Yourself — and Your Patients

Bryant P. Carruth, MD, a PGY-2 resident in Ophthalmology, was recently elected resident representative to the executive council of the Onondaga County Medical Society. Carruth urges physicians to recognize that they are part of a changing health care system. To protect their patients — and themselves — physicians should avail themselves of advocacy organizations monitoring these changes.



Carruth

Residency shouldn't prepare us exclusively to be great clinicians and surgeons. Hours spent on the floors, in the operating room, in the clinic and in the library are absolutely necessary, but they aren't sufficient to make a great doctor.

We demand more of ourselves, and our patients expect more of us.

Change in the American health care system is inevitable. As decisions are made, the voices of insurance companies, trial lawyers, politicians and hospital groups will be heard. Physicians and patients need to be heard as well, but to do that we must be educated and organized.

I recently traveled to Albany with members of our county and state medical societies to hear from and meet with legislators regarding the condition of health care in New York State.

This was an enlightening experience — it taught me that we as physicians are the underdog. We are too busy, we don't have enough numbers and we don't have enough money, or time, to lobby properly.

We care for our patients by learning, practicing and being available but we also need to learn about the larger political and health care environments in order to efficiently use our scarce resources. Further, we need to be able to protect ourselves and defend our own interests.

There are groups out there helping doctors to organize, educate and defend ourselves as well as the rights of our patients. The Onondaga County Medical Society and the Medical Society of the State of New York are two such organizations.

Both of these organizations advocate on behalf of physicians in matters great and small. From helping individual practitioners advertise or instituting EMR in small practices, to lobbying the State Health Commissioner and governor on behalf of all doctors, these groups are invaluable.

Change in the American health care system is certain. Physicians have already taken an oath to devote our lives to medicine, and I believe that includes having our voices heard in the discussions on how the future of health care will play out.

We don't all need to be leaders, we don't all need to meet with politicians, and we don't all have to be experts in health care policy. We do all need to stand and be heard together and we can't wait until we have finished training and "have more free time" to do it.

I urge you to learn more about and join these organizations. Their web sites are <http://www.oncms.org/> (Onondaga County Medical Society) and <http://www.mssny.org/> (Medical Society of the State of New York). You can also feel free to contact me with any questions at carruthb@upstate.edu.