

## 'Strength in numbers' policy applies to residents



Dr. Sean Platt, Ophthalmology, is nearing the end of his term as elected resident representative on the Onondaga County Medical Society's executive council.

It was a year well spent, he said. By attending meetings, listening to speakers and going to Lobby Day in the state capital to advocate for physicians, Dr. Platt saw first-hand the importance of being informed.

Knowing the state's laws regarding medical practice – and how those laws could change either favorably or unfavorably – is crucial to protecting the patient and the profession, Dr. Platt said.

"It's important to present the issues and the facts from our side so lawmakers can make educated decisions," he said.

To keep up, residents should join professional organizations like the Onondaga County Medical Society, Dr. Platt said.

"It's good to stay informed, if not involved," he said. "As a small voice, you're often ignored. But if you have a larger voice, people will respond to what you say. There's strength in numbers."

Dr. Platt urges physicians to work together and give the profession a stronger presence.

"Your level of involvement can range from a passive role to active leadership," he said. "It's very easy to sign up, and most departments will cover the membership fees for their residents."

For more information on how to be involved, and benefits of membership, go to [mssny.org](http://mssny.org) and [oncms.org](http://oncms.org).

## Beyond the Doctorate Research Day

Save the Date! | March 11, 2015

## Upstate pediatric residents CATCH another grant



Pediatric residents Dr. Ryan Kwong and Dr. Vanessa Orrego have been awarded a grant from the CATCH Group, a national organization that coordinates school health programs in elementary and middle schools.

Drs. Kwong and Orrego's "Winter Wonderland" proposal is designed to address barriers to winter exercise in Central New York.

"Having been brought up in Canada, Vanessa and I have always embraced winter activities," Dr. Kwong said. "We would like to expose these children to the winter activities that we have grown to love, especially skating and sledding during this upcoming winter."

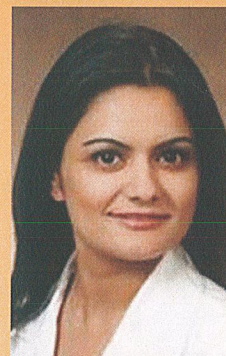
They credit the advice of fellow pediatric resident Dr. Steve Hicks, a former CATCH grant recipient, and Dr. Alicia Pekarsky, who served as faculty advisor. Contact Drs. Orrego and Kwong if you would like to help them this winter.

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

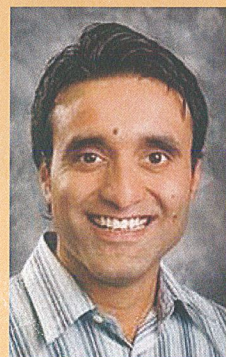
[www.upstate.edu/gme](http://www.upstate.edu/gme)

## In Memoriam

The Office of Graduate Medical Education offers its condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of two members of our Upstate family, Drs. Ali Kanchwala and Maria Javaid.



The married couple died in an Oct. 12 crash of a twin-engine plane outside of Chicago.



Dr. Javaid completed her core training at Upstate in 2004, then completed her Cardiology Fellowship here in 2007. She was an interventional cardiologist at Providence Medical Center in Kansas City.

Dr. Kanchwala completed his core training here in 2007 and then completed his Pulmonary/Critical Care Fellowship at East Carolina University. He was a colleague of the pilot, Dr. Tausif Rehman, at Stormont-Vail HealthCare in Topeka, Kansas. Dr. Rehman also was killed.

# UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY Resident Report

A NEWSLETTER FOR SUNY UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS | FALL 2014

## ENT resident makes research a priority

With eight published research studies, it's no surprise that Dr. Jennifer Villwock, a fourth-year resident in Otolaryngology, says she's results-oriented.

Dr. Villwock decided to specialize in ENT after enjoying her surgery rotation in medical school at Michigan State University. She specifically enjoyed head and neck surgery. And it offered fewer frustrations than primary care and patient non-compliance.

"I'm results-oriented," she said. "If I see a problem, I want to fix it."

Dr. Villwock uses the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project National (Nationwide) Inpatient Sample, a huge database that provides insight into how different treatments affect hospital costs, patient morbidity and mortality, and other factors.

"It's a nice retrospective approach we can use as a medical community," she said. "It's a great tool that gives us an idea of what's going on across the country."

In one study, Dr. Villwock looked at more than 59,000 cases involving treatment of epistaxis – nosebleeds. In patients with epistaxis severe enough to be admitted to the hospital, early intervention within the first 24 hours improved outcomes. In another study evaluating stroke patients, it was found that performing a tracheostomy early in treatment (within seven days) lowered incidence of pneumonia and reduced length of hospital stay and cost.

Dr. Villwock cited the importance of working with and relying on experienced surgeons at Upstate for her research.

"Their take on raw data is different, more of a clinical picture and intuitively knowing what's important," she said. "They have a sense from their experience, and they help make sure the findings are interpreted in a clinically relevant way."

Clinically relevant information, especially studies involving tens of thousands of patients, is important information for physicians at the bedside, as well as public health professionals looking at larger trends, Dr. Villwock said.

One drawback of such large database studies, she cautioned, is that there are many patient-specific factors that cannot be accounted for, such as patient and family preferences and the clinical acumen of the treating physician.

In addition to her eight published studies, Dr. Villwock is working on an unpublished study of "computational fluid dynamics" in cadavers. She's collaborating with Upstate's Robert Kellman, MD, and engineering graduate students at Cornell University.



The study involves taking CT scans to obtain a three-dimensional model of the nasal airway, running simulations to determine how much resistance to airflow exists, and determining whether airflow can be improved using a commercially available product. The next step will be using this same process to evaluate the impact of different surgical approaches on the nasal airway.

"It's humbling working with the master's and PhD-level engineering students at Cornell," Dr. Villwock said.

It's also important for residents doing research, she said, to have a project that they're interested in tackling. "It's a great way to learn more, in addition to reading the literature, and make it relevant to you," she said.

"There's so much we're responsible for learning, it can otherwise be overwhelming at times."

- Dr. Villwock gave podium and poster presentations last month at the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. The presentations involved her research into pituitary tumors and outcomes following resection.

- She is applying for a fellowship in rhinology, which involves sinus and skull base surgery.

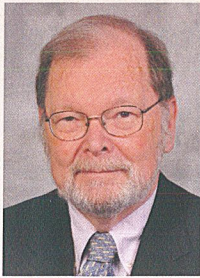
- She and her husband, Mark Villwock, Clinical Research Coordinator for the Department of Neurosurgery, had their first child, Ruby, in June. Sleep has been more elusive than usual. "It helps having a very supportive significant other," she said.

- Dr. Villwock also enjoys the company and support of her fellow ENT residents. "We spend a lot of time together," she said. "I have 15 built-in friends."

- Earlier this year, Upstate's ENT team of Dr. Villwock, Dr. Lindsay Sobin and Dr. Kristin Jones finished in second place at the ENT "Resident Bowl" at the combined Otolaryngological sections meeting in Miami, Fla. Upstate had the only all-female team in the competition.



CLER: Our First Experience



William Grant, EdD

In July we underwent a site visit conducted by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education under their new system. In this case the review visit was focused at the institutional level's "Clinical Learning Environment." The purpose of this visit was to employ a global focus on the entire learning environment in which resident learning occurs. The new review process replaces the older institutional review which often focused mainly on educational capacity (how many books in the library, what is the patient mix and volume). The new focus is on how well the institution assures that programs prepare an individual to independently practice medicine in his or her specialty. A team of three visitors representing the ACGME spent 2.5 days interviewing institutional leadership, administrators, Chairs, program directors, faculty, residents and fellows. A total of 147 individuals from Upstate participated in the various discussions. The ACGME team also spent time on the various services talking with residents, fellows, nurses and other staff.

At this time the ACGME has not completed its first review of all institutions in its primary focus -- those institutions with two or more residency programs. Of the 245 institutions, they had only completed about 150 at the time of our visit. As a result the report they prepared does not include any national comparative data. That information will not be available until sometime in 2015. The CLER visit gathered information on each of six areas of interest of the ACGME. The following are some highlights from the ACGME site report. In the area of Patient Safety it is reported that 95% of residents/fellows indicated they believe the hospital provides a safe, non-punitive environment for reporting errors, near misses and unsafe conditions. The overall sense of a safe culture for reporting errors was consistent among faculty members, program directors and staff. Under Healthcare Quality faculty, program directors and residents knew of the hospital's priorities of decreasing readmissions, reducing healthcare disparities and increasing patient satisfaction/improving the patient experience. Residents and fellows identified the institutional priorities in Transitions of Care to include improvement in change-of-duty hand-offs, use of electronic hand-off tools,

communication with consultants, and multidisciplinary discharge planning. Supervision is reported as being clear and effective with attendings always available and with clear information and guidelines as to knowing when a resident or fellow is able to perform a specific procedure with or without direct supervision. All individuals were clearly aware of the New York State and ACGME requirements regarding Duty Hours, Fatigue Management and Mitigation but also expressed concerns including: decreased continuity of care, fragmented schedules and education, lack of a sense of ownership of patient's care, and potential impacts on independent practice. In regard to Professionalism issues, residents and fellows report that they have received various educational experiences on professionalism and that the hospital provides a supportive, non-punitive environment for bringing forward concerns regarding honesty in reporting. At this point the ACGME does not use the CLER visit information for citation or direct programmatic or institutional accreditation decisions. We are pleased with the report and deeply appreciate all who so candidly participated in the visit.

Surgery resident's paper a winner at ACS competition

Surgery resident Dr. Mikki Kollisch took first place at the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma Resident Paper Competition in Philadelphia earlier this year. "The truth is, the award is a lab win," said Dr. Kollisch. "I am working in an amazing basic science lab with a spectacular primary investigator, Gary Nieman." Residents are encouraged to submit clinical and basic science research papers to the annual competition. The top papers for Upstate New York move on to Region 2, one of the competition's 17 regions encompassing the U.S., Canada, the military, South America and Australia. At the regional level, the top basic science and clinical science papers and presentations are chosen. Of these two, one is chosen to go on to the national competition.

Dr. Kollisch's paper, "Airway Pressure Release Ventilation (APRV) Reduces Alveolar Duct Micro-Stress/Strain in Acute Lung Injury," won first place in the basic science research category in the national competition. The paper is the same one she presented at Upstate's Beyond the Doctorate Research Day this year. Patients with acute lung injury may need breathing assistance with mechanical ventilation, but the ventilator itself may be harmful to the lung if set inappropriately. Many of the parameters set and targeted on the ventilator do not accurately reflect where or how the gas is being delivered to the micro-anatomy of the lung. Dr. Kollisch and her colleagues in the Nieman lab conducted studies using the APRV ventilation method, and have shown that it protects the lung from additional injury while offering a better distribution of gas to the lungs,

reducing lung tissue damage. "In this paper, we described a novel histologic technique to assess how the gas is distributed to the alveoli (the primary gas-exchange unit of the lung) and conducting airways, utilizing different ventilator modes," Dr. Kollisch said. "In particular, we found that APRV optimizes gas distribution to the alveoli and minimizes distribution to the conducting airways even in an injured lung." For patients who have already suffered trauma, it makes more sense to use a ventilator strategy less likely to cause additional injury, she said.



Mikki Kollisch, MD

continued on next page

Graduate Medical Education Awards May 2014

"Through these awards, we recognize the residents' teamwork, teaching and research, and try to honor what they do for us — and, more important, what they do for our patients."

William Grant  
Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education

PROFESSIONALISM  
Dr. Alisha Hemraj  
Department of Medicine

TEAMWORK  
Dr. Alison Martin  
Department of Pediatrics

RESEARCH  
Dr. Steve Hicks  
Department of Pediatrics

TEACHING  
Dr. Sravani Mudumbi  
Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Dr. Rahul Nayyar  
Department of Radiology

PROGRAM COORDINATOR  
OF THE YEAR  
Lisa Carroll  
Department of Medicine-Cardiology

PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
OF THE YEAR  
Dr. Imad Nsouli  
Department of Urology

BEYOND THE DOCTORATE  
RESEARCH DAY  
Dr. Bryanna Emr  
Department of Surgery  
(Best Oral Presentation)

Dr. Amritpal Nat  
Department of Medicine  
(Best Poster)



The 2014 Graduate Medical Education Awards Ceremony took place in Weiskotten Hall May 29. In left photo, Teaching Award winner Dr. Rahul Nayyar, Radiology, with nominator Dr. Michele Lisi and Dr. William Grant. In right photo, Research Award winner Dr. Steven Hicks, Pediatrics, and Teamwork Award winner Dr. Allison Martin, Pediatrics, with nominator Dr. Ibraheem Al Shareef.



Dr. Nelli S. Lakis, Pathology, won the Jerry Smith Infectious Diseases Pathology Award for best poster at the 2013 United States & Canadian Academy of Pathology meeting in Baltimore. Lakis worked with professors Dr. Jerrold L. Abraham and Dr. Donald Blair on a 20-year old case of an immuno-suppressed man with expanding skin lesions over the right flank. The virus was classified as a novel archetypal poxvirus, an ancestor to poxviruses known today.

Surgery resident's paper, continued

Dr. Kollisch said the Upstate Critical Care Laboratory, led by Nieman, is a pinnacle of innovative research and medical student/resident education at Upstate. Associate Professor Nieman and the laboratory managers, Josh Satalin and Kathy Snyder, are dedicated to mentoring students and residents and teaching them how to think critically, she said. Every resident that has gone through the lab has been successful publishing numerous papers, presenting at high impact conferences and winning research awards. The success of the residents is a tribute to the cultivating environment and research prowess provided by Nieman and the lab, Dr. Kollisch said.