

# Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Wednesday, February 3, 2016

## Three USA Medical Students Match in Military Programs



University of South Alabama fourth-year medical students, from left, Thomas Holcombe, Micah Bucy and Gabrielle Hood recently matched in early match programs in the military.

University of South Alabama fourth-year medical students Micah Bucy, Thomas Holcombe and Gabrielle Hood recently matched in early match programs in the military.

The majority of medical students go through the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) to find out where they will be doing their residency training following graduation, but students who wish to match in the military participate in a specialty match program that takes place months before Match Day in March.

Micah Bucy, from Pensacola, Fla., has served in the Air Force Reserves since 2013. Following graduation he will become a captain on active duty.

Bucy matched at David Grant United States Air Force Medical Center in Fairfield, Calif., where he will complete his residency training in family medicine. "I have been impressed by the military's desire to make their physicians as well-rounded as possible so they can provide medical care in any area of the globe," Bucy said. "Some of the more unique opportunities I will have while learning family medicine in the Air Force include credentialing in battlefield, acupuncture and practicing wilderness medicine at national parks." Bucy found the military's Health Professions Scholarship Program to be a great opportunity to not only pay for his medical education, but also to serve his country by helping care for those who have served in the military and their families.

Gabrielle Hood, from Jasper, Ala., has always been passionate about interacting and building relationships with people. She has also been intrigued by the challenges that come along with studying medicine and science. "When I

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reflected on the two passions I have, I knew I wanted to practice medicine." Hood said. She did not come from a military family, but when she heard of the different programs the military had to offer, she instantly knew that it was the route she wanted to take to start her medical career.

Hood matched at Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, N.C., where she will complete a family medicine residency. With the help of great mentors and having a variety of resources within the military medical field, Hood said she has been able to achieve her dream profession. "It has been a great journey so far," Hood said. "I cannot wait to start my career at Camp Lejeune taking care of our brave sailors, marines and their families." Hood hopes to one day practice in a small, rural town similar to the town where she grew up shadowing physicians. Following graduation, Hood will be promoted to lieutenant.

Thomas Holcombe, from Dallas, Ga., will continue his family tradition of serving in the military. Holcombe has several family members who are currently active or have previously served in the military. "I have always wanted to join the military to do my part in the service of this nation," Holcombe said.

Holcombe matched at Navy Medical Center Portsmouth in Portsmouth, Va., where he will complete a general surgery residency. He found that he has benefitted greatly from the opportunities the military has given him. "I have met many excellent men and women in my officer training as well as on my away rotations at the naval hospitals," Holcombe said. "I am extremely proud to join the tradition of naval officers and the Medical Corps." Following graduation, Holcombe will be promoted to lieutenant.

During Honors Convocation in May, Bucy, Hood and Holcombe will take the military oath of office and receive their new military rank, coinciding with completion of their medical degrees.

The remainder of the USA College of Medicine Class of 2016 will find out where they matched on Match Day, March 18, 2016. The event will take place at the Mobile Convention Center in downtown Mobile.

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## Dr. Rizk Announced President Elect of Middle East Fertility Society



Dr. Botros Rizk, professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and a reproductive endocrinologist with USA Physicians Group, recently became president elect of the Middle East Fertility Society (MEFS), the most prestigious organization in the Middle East devoted exclusively to reproductive medicine.

MEFS is a 22-year-old professional society whose mission is to improve fertility care of couples in the Arab world and Middle East through the transfer of medical knowledge and the promotion of scientific

research.

Dr. Rizk, who also serves as director of reproductive endocrinology at USA, was named president-elect for the organization this past year and will serve a two-year term as president beginning in November 2017.

Every two years, the society's board considers several international candidates for presidency and makes a decision based on academic careers and achievements.

Dr. Rizk, who was one of the founding members of the MEFS, said he was very honored and excited to be selected. "There is so much potential for development of the society, as well as for collaboration," he said.

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As president, Dr. Rizk will be responsible for creating a plan for the strategic development of the society to serve both patients and members with infertility. "One of the most important goals is to make infertility treatments available to patients worldwide who don't currently have the resources available, as well as to direct research in the field where we could have simplified treatment with an increased success rate."

His new role also involves serving as a liaison between the Middle East Fertility Society, the American Society of Reproductive Medicine, and the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology. This is similar to the role he had in the past as chair of the international membership committee for the American Society of Reproductive Medicine.

Dr. Rizk has served on the editorial board for the Middle East Fertility Society Journal for the past 20 years. In addition, he has been invited to be a guest speaker for the society on several occasions.

Dr. Rizk, a world-renowned infertility specialist and reproductive endocrinologist, completed his fellowship training at the prestigious Bourn Hall Clinic in Cambridge, England, under the mentorship of Dr. Robert Edwards, Nobel Laureate in Medicine for achieving the world's first in vitro fertilization baby. He was on faculty as senior registrar/lecturer at Cambridge University from 1990-1993. His publications include 20 medical textbooks and more than 400 published manuals, review articles and abstracts.

Dr. Rizk pioneered ovarian stimulation protocols for in vitro fertilization while he worked in London from the 1980's through 1993. He led the research in the investigation of the pathophysiology of ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome. Dr. Rizk is a skilled surgeon with great expertise in robotic laparoscopy and advanced hysteroscopy.

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## Patients Needed for Colonoscopy Sedation Drug Study



The University of South Alabama Digestive Health Center is in need of patients who are scheduled to undergo a colonoscopy and over the age of 18 to participate in a study on a new sedation drug.

Dr. Brooks Cash, professor of internal medicine at the USA College of Medicine and a gastroenterologist with USA Physicians Group, is investigating the effectiveness of a study drug in producing sedation during a colonoscopy. The purpose of the study is to evaluate remimazolam as a replacement for the commonly used amnesia producing medicine called midazolam.

During a colonoscopy, a physician inserts a flexible camera into the large

intestine to detect the presence of abnormalities such as inflammation or polyps in the colon. The colonoscope allows the physician to screen for colon cancer, obtain tissue samples and deliver any necessary treatment. Dr. Cash said all average risk people should routinely undergo a colonoscopy beginning at age 50 for colorectal cancer screening.

Since the camera is several feet long, the exam can be uncomfortable to patients. Dr. Cash said sedation increases the accuracy and safety of the procedure, while allowing patients to be more comfortable during the exam.

The standard practice for colonoscopy sedation includes a combination of midazolam and fentanyl. Midazolam produces amnesia while fentanyl helps to promote pain control. "One of the issues with this combination is the length of time that it can take for some patients to become sedated," Dr. Cash said. "Another issue is the prolonged recovery time that some patients have, which can result in feeling woozy or sedated throughout the remainder of the day."

The current research study will evaluate the effectiveness of remimazolam, a new version of midazolam. "The advantage that remimazolam has over midazolam is that it is metabolized very quickly by enzymes throughout the body," Dr. Cash said. "Because of that, it has a very rapid onset and its effects go away very quickly, allowing patients to regain full function and awareness much faster."

Adults over the age of 18 who are scheduled to undergo a colonoscopy may qualify to participate in the study. Eligible participants cannot be on any chronic narcotic pain medications or benzodiazepines. All participants will receive sedation for the colonoscopy by study drug or by FDA-approved medication. Participants will receive compensation for time and travel.

For more information, call the USA Digestive Health Center at (251) 660-5555.

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## Feb. 4 DSS to Feature Dr. John Zhang

This week's Distinguished Scientist Seminar at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine will feature Dr. John Zhang, professor of the departments of anesthesiology, neurosurgery, physiology and pharmacology and director of the Center for Neuroscience Research at Loma Linda University School of Medicine in Loma Linda, Calif.



The lecture, titled "Precision Translational Stroke Research," will take place Feb. 4, 2016, at 4 p.m. in the first floor auditorium of the Medical Sciences Building on USA's main campus.

Dr. Zhang earned his medical degree at Chongqing University of Medical Sciences in Chongqing, China, and his Ph.D. in experimental surgery at the University of Alberta in Alberta, Canada. His interests are cerebral vasospasm after subarachnoid hemorrhage, molecular biology, histology, gene expression, gene therapy, and animal models.

*The lecture series is comprised of distinguished scientists from other academic institutions who are invited by the USA College of Medicine basic science departments to present a seminar showcasing their latest research findings. Faculty, staff and students are strongly encouraged to attend.*

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