

Med School Watercooler

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

Thursday, April 18, 2013

Senior Medical Students Return from Medical Mission Trip to Rwanda, Africa



The day after [Match Day](#), eight senior medical students at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine left for a month-long medical mission trip to Rwanda, Africa.

While there, they assisted local Rwandan and Congolese staff physicians at Kibogora Hospital, a roughly 230 bed self-supported facility in Eastern Rwanda that has two operating rooms and wards for internal medicine, pediatrics, surgery and OBGYN.

USA neonatologist Dr. Keith Peevy, NICU nurse Jamie Partain and USA trauma surgeon Dr. Jon Simmons were also members of the medical mission team.

Joseph Sewell, a senior medical student at USA, said he went to Africa because of the great need. "I have had a passion for Africa for a long time now, and I am grateful to have served there," he said.

Sewell spent most of the month on the internal medicine team, caring for adult patients admitted to the hospital.

"We were given much of the responsibility we will soon receive in residency, seeing patients each day and directing their care with our own patient care plans and orders," he said. "We practiced our ultrasound skills on patients, performed lumbar punctures, incised and drained abscesses, and took part in several other diagnostic tests."



USA senior medical students
Katy Lalor (left) and Laura Jelf (right)

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Sewell is entering residency in internal medicine with a plan to practice primary care medicine in both the inpatient and outpatient settings. He has dreams of future missions work, providing for the medical and spiritual needs of patients internationally and at home.



USA trauma surgeon Dr. Jon Simmons

Senior medical student Laura Jelf said her most memorable experience on the trip was autonomy in the operating room.

"Performing cases based on my own knowledge and experience was exciting, although being called Dr. Laura took some getting used to," she said. "Many of the physicians travel from the Congo to work at the hospital, and there is only one general surgeon there. It was nice to be able to help out and give them a break."

Jelf said the group treated a large range of conditions that you don't normally see in the United States, from malaria to advanced gastric cancer.

By traveling to Rwanda, the group encountered first-hand the lack of funds needed to properly care for patients.

"One of the most important things I learned on this trip was how to care for patients with incredibly limited resources," said Mary Margaret Clapp, another senior medical student at USA.

"Medicine in a third world country was a bit of a culture shock," Jelf added. "It shows you how wasteful we can be and why our medical costs are so high."

Jelf said that in Rwanda, they make do with what they have. "They are not picky or demanding, and they don't complain when problems arise," she said. "They simply find a solution."

Jelf said she hopes to take their creativity, attitudes and resourcefulness with her during her residency years and beyond. "It was great to see how knowledgeable they were at diagnosing – without the extra tests, CT scans and other technology that we use at home."

Clapp, who will be entering a family medicine residency, said she spent much of her time in the hospital, working on the neonatology and pediatrics team. She said her most memorable experience was holding a micropreemie while he took his last breaths, knowing she couldn't do anything to help him. *Read more about her experience [here](#).*

This year's trip was the second medical mission trip to Rwanda with senior medical students. A trip is already being planned for next year to the same location.

"I encourage everyone to go and serve his fellow man," Sewell said. "To quote Albert Schweitzer, 'I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.'"

To learn more about the medical mission trip, visit [the group's blog](#).

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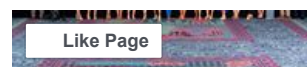
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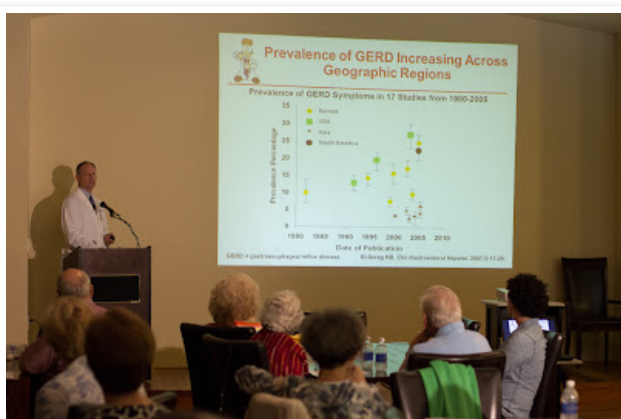




Posted by Med School Watercooler at 11:02 AM No comments: 

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

Med School Café - Expert Advice for the Community



This week, Dr. David Gremse, professor and chair of pediatrics at the USA College of Medicine, presented the April Med School Café lecture.


The lecture, titled "The Ups and Downs of GERD," had a total of 36 attendees.

During the talk Dr. Gremse discussed gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), a chronic digestive disease that occurs when stomach acid flows back into the esophagus.

The next Med School Café lecture will feature Dr. Thomas Leytham, a family physician who recently joined the USA Knollwood Physicians Group. The event will take place May 22, 2013, at the USA Faculty Club on USA's main campus.

If you are interested in attending, email kepartridge@usouthal.edu for more details. To learn more about the lectures, [click here](#).



Posted by Med School Watercooler at [12:37 PM](#) No comments: 

April 25th DSS to Feature Dr. Ann Richmond

The next Distinguished Scientist Seminar at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine will feature Dr. Ann Richmond, professor of cancer biology and medicine at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.


The lecture will take place April 25, 2013, at 4 p.m. in the Medical Sciences Building auditorium on USA's main campus.

Dr. Richmond's research interests include transcriptional regulation of chemokines and the role of chemokines in chronic inflammatory conditions, wound healing and tumor progression.



She earned her master of natural science degree in zoology and physical sciences from Louisiana State University and her Ph.D. in developmental biology from Emory University.

To learn more about Dr. Richmond's research, [click here](#).

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [9:24 AM](#) No comments: 

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

USA Medical Student Among Winners of National Medical Students Competition



Monica Kumar, a first-year medical student at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, was recently among the five winners in the American College of Physicians' 2013 National Medical Students Competition.

Kumar was selected for her abstract submission titled "Liraglutide (GLP-1 Receptor Agonist) is a Useful Adjunct with Insulin in the Treatment of a Rodent Model of Type 1 Diabetes."

As a winner, Kumar was invited to give a podium presentation during the 2013 Internal Medicine Conference in San Francisco on April 13.

Kumar, who earned her undergraduate degree in bioengineering from the University of Washington (UW), said the abstract was based off her work at the 2012 National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases' (NIDDK) Medical Student Research Program in Diabetes at UW.

She said her research could potentially allow Type 1 diabetics to better control the negative side effects of taking insulin, a hormone that is essential for the treatment of Type 1 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is a chronic disease in which there are high levels of glucose, or sugar, in the blood.

"While insulin improves glycemic control, it also increases the risk of hypoglycemia and weight gain," Kumar said. "Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists are currently used for the treatment of type 2 diabetes through their actions to increase insulin secretion and reduce both glucagon secretion and food intake."

In this study, Kumar examined whether the GLP-1 receptor agonist, liraglutide, is useful in the treatment of a rodent model of type 1 diabetes. "What we found suggested that liraglutide used in combination with insulin decreased food intake and weight gain in addition to controlling hyperglycemia," she said.

Kumar said winning the American College of Physicians' 2013 National Medical Students Competition will enhance her experience during medical school at USA.

"It has encouraged me to apply for other research competitions and to expand my interest in the field of diabetes," she said.

According to Kumar, her involvement in the sixth annual USA College of Medicine Research Forum in 2012 helped her get to this point.


"The research forum was a wonderful opportunity because I got to present the research I have been doing at UW with faculty at USA via an oral presentation and a poster," she said. "After the presentation I received great feedback from

my professors at USA, and it has increased my interest in studying diabetes.”

Kumar will return to the University of Washington again this summer to participate in the 2013 NIDDK Medical Student Research Program in Diabetes.

To learn more about the National Medical Students Competition, [click here](#).

To view Kumar's research poster, [click here](#).

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