

# Med School Watercooler

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

Thursday, June 25, 2015

## Med School Café - Expert Advice for the Community



Dr. Kenneth Rettig, professor emeritus of pediatrics at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and a pediatric endocrinologist with USA Physicians Group, presented the May Med School Cafe lecture, "Civil War Medicine."

During the talk, Dr. Rettig explored how the Civil War helped to move American medicine from a poorly organized "cottage operation" to a more modern model. His lecture coincided with the opening of the Mobile Medical Museum's new exhibit, War and Medicine, which will be on display through Oct. 2, 2015, in the Mary Elizabeth and Charles Bernard Rodning Gallery on the third floor of the USA Marx Library.

*The next lecture will feature Dr. Anathasekar Ponnambalam, associate professor of pediatrics at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and a pediatric gastroenterologist at the USA Children's Specialty Clinic. His lecture, titled "Celiac Disease: Myths and Facts," will take place June 30, 2015, at the USA Faculty Club. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m., and the presentation begins at noon. The Med School Café lecture and lunch are provided free of charge, but reservations are required. For more information or to make reservations, call Kim Partridge at (251) 460-7770 or e-mail [kepartridge@health.southalabama.edu](mailto:kepartridge@health.southalabama.edu).*

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## Dr. Alexeyev Appointed Associate Editor of Journal

Dr. Mikhail Alexeyev, associate professor of physiology and cell biology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, recently was appointed associate editor for medically oriented papers for the journal Mitochondrial DNA.

Dr. Alexeyev's responsibilities include reviewing submitted papers, assigning formal reviewers and making final decisions regarding the acceptance or rejection of papers for publication.



The journal is published by Informa Healthcare. The scope of the journal includes descriptive papers on DNA sequences from mitochondrial genomes and analytical papers in the areas of population genetics, medical genetics, phylogenetics and human evolution that use mitochondrial DNA as a source of evidence for studies.

Mitochondrial DNA also publishes manuscripts that examine population genetic and systematic theory that specifically address the use of mitochondrial DNA sequences, as well as papers that discuss the utility of mitochondrial DNA information in medical studies and in human evolutionary biology.

To view the journal, visit <http://informahealthcare.com/loi/mdn>.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at 9:30 AM No comments:

## Class of 2017 Medical Students Receive White Coats



The University of South Alabama College of Medicine held its annual White Coat Ceremony for the Class of 2017 at the USA Mitchell Center on June 20, 2015.

During the ceremony, rising third-year medical students were cloaked with white coats, the traditional dress of physicians for more than 100 years.

For students, the White Coat ceremony serves as a reminder of the importance and responsibility they take by dedicating themselves to the care of patients. During the ceremony, the students in unison took the Medical Student Oath, a promise to uphold the human aspects of medicine, such as sensitivity, compassion and respect for patients.

Select students, residents and faculty were also inducted into the [Gold Humanism Honor Society](#) at the ceremony. Inductees are selected for practicing patient-centered medical care with integrity, compassion and altruism. Election to this organization is by vote of medical students.

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Each year, the USA Medical Alumni Association sponsors this event.

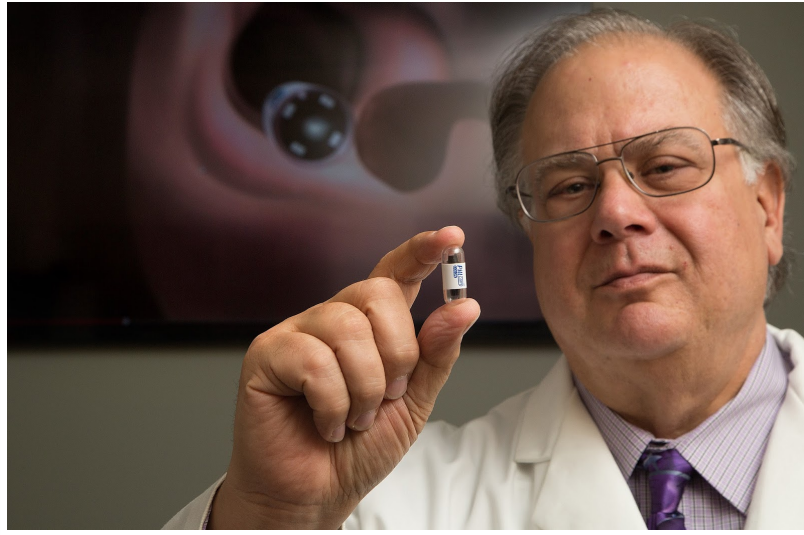
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## Gut Check: Pill Camera Takes Digestive Tract Tour



In 2002, a technology was released that allowed physicians to see inside a patient's small intestine by having them swallow a pill-sized camera. At the time, it had limitations – primarily, it couldn't reach further into the digestive system to examine the colon, or large intestine. Now, physicians with the University of South Alabama Physicians Group can visualize the entire gastrointestinal tract using a new technology called PillCam COLON. USA is one of only 17 centers across the country that offers this technology.

"Thirteen years ago we introduced video capsule endoscopy for small bowel. Amid the enthusiasm, patients also wanted a video capsule to study the colon," said Dr. Jack Di Palma, director of the University of South Alabama Digestive Health Center and professor of internal medicine at the USA College of Medicine. "Today we can offer that technology to patients."

With PillCam COLON, developed by Given Imaging, physicians are able to visualize the colon to monitor and diagnose disorders of the gastrointestinal tract without sedation or invasive endoscopic procedures. The technology uses a tiny camera contained in a disposable capsule that naturally passes through the digestive system.

While colonoscopy is still the gold standard for colon cancer screening, Dr. Di Palma said the new technology can be used for patients who have had an incomplete colonoscopy or for those who cannot tolerate a colonoscopy for screening.

Undergoing a complete colon evaluation is extremely important for the detection of polyps, small clumps of cells that form in the lining of the colon that can become cancerous over time. The accuracy of PillCam COLON is comparable to other colonoscopy alternatives for detecting polyps.

Similar to the preparation for colonoscopy, doctors may recommend a clear liquid diet the day before the exam and laxatives the night before and morning of the exam. The technology works like this: first, sensors connected to a belt are attached to the chest and abdomen. The patient wears the belt while it captures images transmitted from the camera and stores them in a small computer. The

computer stores the pill's journey through the gut, snapping two pictures per second. Images are later downloaded and viewed on the physician's desktop computer.

After the exam, a colonoscopy may be recommended to remove and treat any findings such as polyps, if present.


Currently, PillCam COLON is not covered by insurance and costs \$1,750. For more information, call (251) 660-5555.

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