

Med School Watercooler

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

Friday, March 6, 2020

Register Now: 18th Annual Regional Sickle Cell Conference



The USA Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center will host its 18th Annual Regional Sickle Cell Conference on Saturday, May 30. The event, "What's In Your Genes? The Promise of a Cure," is scheduled for 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Student Center Ballroom on the main campus of the University of South Alabama.

The one-day conference will feature national, regional and

local experts addressing the recent FDA approval of Adakveo and Oxbryta in the treatment of sickle disease and advances in gene therapy. A highlight of the conference will be to engage a sickle cell patient who has undergone gene therapy.

To register for the conference, visit cmetracker.net. For more information, email vgardner@health.southalabama.edu or call (251) 470-5893.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [11:21 AM](#) No comments:

Fast-growing uterine cancer may respond better to immunotherapy, study says

Research completed at the USA Health Mitchell Cancer Institute suggests that aggressive uterine cancer may respond better to immunotherapy than slower growing types. This research was recently published online in the international journal Gynecologic Oncology.

The study, led by Nathaniel Jones, M.D., a gynecologic oncologist at the USA Health Mitchell Cancer Institute, suggests that women with "high-grade" cancer of the uterus -- cancer that is significantly abnormal in appearance and often fast growing -- may benefit from therapy that helps the body's own immune system to recognize and fight cancer cells.

Cancer of the endometrium, or lining of the uterus, is the fourth most common cause of cancer among women and the most common gynecologic cancer. Immunotherapy has been shown to be effective against certain cancers, including melanoma, lung and bladder cancers. It tends to produce fewer side effects in patients than traditional chemotherapy.

"When women recur with uterine cancer, many times our treatment options are

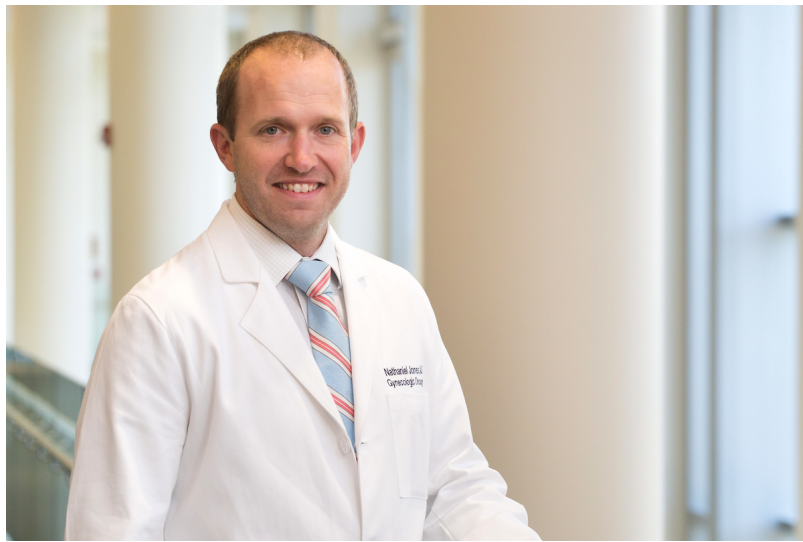
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Nathaniel Jones, M.D., a gynecologic oncologist at the USA Health Mitchell Cancer Institute, is studying immunotherapy for aggressive uterine cancer.

limited," said Jones, who holds a faculty position of assistant professor of oncologic sciences at the Mitchell Cancer Institute. "The good news is that most women with uterine cancer have an excellent prognosis and are cured with their initial treatment. However, women with aggressive high-grade tumors often time recur, and our research aims to expand and improve treatments available."

Jones said the researchers sought to identify biomarkers that could help physicians predict which uterine cancer patients may benefit from immunotherapy. "That's the hot topic -- trying to find a biomarker that is a predictor of response," Jones said.

The study involved more than 600 samples from cancer patients. Researchers used a molecular database to analyze tumors that ranged from low grade (with the best prognosis) to high grade (with the worst prognosis). They found that high-grade tumors had elevated levels of three biomarkers -- programmed death ligand 1 (PD-L1), tumor mutation burden (TMB) and microsatellite instability (MSI), indicating that these could be targets for immunotherapy. "Initially, we found that higher grade tumors have more immunogenic markers," Jones said. "Hopefully, this new information provides us with additional treatment options for women who have a poorer prognosis."

Jones said that further research is under way.

One current clinical trial available at the Mitchell Cancer Institute is enrolling patients with metastatic endometrial cancer in order to compare responses to immunotherapy with responses to traditional chemotherapy, he said.

In addition, researchers hope to explore whether black women have a similar response to white women when treated with immunotherapy. "We know that there is a disparity in outcomes with traditional treatment approaches," Jones said. "In order to answer that question, we need to ensure that clinical trial enrollment is representative of the patient population we treat. Increasing black participation is one of the fundamental components of our clinical trial research efforts."

Posted by [Med School Watercooler](#) at [11:20 AM](#) No comments:

Thursday, March 5, 2020

Mark Your Calendar: Upcoming grand rounds

Mark your calendar for the following grand rounds:

Orthopaedic Surgery Grand Rounds

"Anterior Hip Replacement"

J. Grant Zarzour, M.D., Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic

7 to 8 a.m. Friday, March 6

- 05/24 - 05/31 (4)
- 05/17 - 05/24 (2)
- 05/10 - 05/17 (5)
- 05/03 - 05/10 (3)
- 04/26 - 05/03 (3)
- 04/19 - 04/26 (2)
- 04/12 - 04/19 (5)
- 04/05 - 04/12 (4)
- 03/29 - 04/05 (3)
- 03/22 - 03/29 (3)
- 03/15 - 03/22 (3)
- 03/08 - 03/15 (2)
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- 02/23 - 03/01 (6)
- 02/16 - 02/23 (4)
- 02/09 - 02/16 (3)
- 02/02 - 02/09 (5)
- 01/26 - 02/02 (4)
- 01/19 - 01/26 (5)
- 01/12 - 01/19 (6)
- 01/05 - 01/12 (4)

- 2019 (245)
- 2018 (236)
- 2017 (231)
- 2016 (206)
- 2015 (205)
- 2014 (241)
- 2013 (232)
- 2012 (245)
- 2011 (262)
- 2010 (247)
- 2009 (88)

Strada Patient Care Center, 1st Floor Conference Room
 Contact: Rhonda Smith at (251) 665-8251
 or rhondasmith@health.southalabama.edu

Cardiology Grand Rounds

"Cardiorenal Syndrome"

Emad Al Jaber, M.D., Nephrologist, Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine, USA College of Medicine
 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, March 6
 USA Health University Hospital, Cardiology Conference Room
 Contact: Angela Hunt at (251) 471-7923 or arhunt@health.southalabama.edu

Neurology Grand Rounds

"Stroke Management Guideline Updates 2020"

Steve M. Cordina, M.D., Associate Professor of Neurology, USA College of Medicine
 8 to 9 a.m. Tuesday, March 10
 USA Health University Hospital, 2nd Floor Conference Center
 Contact: Heather Kelly at (251) 445-8292 or hdkelly@health.southalabama.edu

Surgery Grand Rounds

"Oncolytic Viral Therapy"

John Stewart, M.D., Physician Executive for Oncology Sciences, University of Illinois Health
 7 to 8 a.m. Friday, March 13
 USA Health University Hospital, 2nd Floor Conference Center
 Contact: Tyronda Rogers at (251) 445-8230
 or tmrogers@health.southalabama.edu

Cardiology Grand Rounds

"Anticoagulation in A Fib"

Bassam Omar, M.D., Cardiologist, Professor of Internal Medicine, USA College of Medicine
 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, March 13
 USA Health University Hospital, Cardiology Conference Room
 Contact: Angela Hunt at (251) 471-7923 or arhunt@health.southalabama.edu

Medicine Grand Rounds

"Bleeding Ponies, Bloating Cattle, Breathless Climbers: Hearts and Lungs Under Duress with Hypoxia and Exercise"

Erik R. Swenson, M.D., Professor of Medicine and Physiology, Department of Veterans Affairs
 8 to 9 a.m. Thursday, March 19
 USA Health University Hospital, 2nd Floor Conference Center
 Contact: Linda Ching at (251) 471-7900 or lching@health.southalabama.edu

Pediatric Grand Rounds

"Unconscious Bias Training"

Franklin Trimm, M.D., Associate Dean of Diversity and Inclusion, Assistant Vice President for Medical Affairs, USA College of Medicine
 8 to 9 a.m. Friday, March 20
 Strada Patient Care Center, 1st Floor Conference Room
 Contact: Nicole Laden at (251) 415-8688
 or nicoleladen@health.southalabama.edu

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [10:16 AM](#) No comments:

Tuesday, March 3, 2020

Med School Café to address spine care

The March Med School Café will feature Richard Menger, M.D., M.P.A., assistant professor of neurosurgery and chief of complex spine surgery with USA Health. He will discuss when and when not to have spine surgery.

The lecture will be held Friday, March 27, at the USA Health Strada Patient Care Center. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m., and the presentation will begin 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, contact Kim Partridge at kepartridge@health.southalabama.edu or (251) 460-7770.

Med School Café is a free community lecture series sponsored by USA Health. Each month, faculty and physicians share their expertise on a specific medical condition, providing insight on the latest treatments available.



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Father's illness shaped his future: M2 looks to internal medicine or neurology



Medical student Arslan Arshad works out in the USA Student Recreation Center on campus.

When Arslan Arshad was growing up in Saudi Arabia, his father contracted a rare neurological disorder that stumped the doctors. "He was losing sensation from his feet up, and he was losing his balance," said Arshad, a second-year medical student at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. "All of his tests were coming back negative."

As a sixth-grader, Arshad had become accustomed to getting ready answers to science questions from his father, a radiologist, and his mother, an obstetrician-gynecologist. This time, they had no answers, and neither did the physicians they consulted. "We went to a lot of doctors," he said. "All of them were dumbfounded."

Eventually, his father was given immunoglobulin therapy, a mixture of human antibodies, with the hope that it would address what could be an autoimmune disorder. Fortunately, the hypesthesia, or numbness, stopped spreading.

Arshad said this formative experience engaged his mind in medicine and led him to seek it as a career. "It shaped a large part of my life," he said.

After immigrating with his family to Gulfport, Miss., Arshad finished high school at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science in Columbus, Miss. He then

became an academic standout as an undergraduate at South, where he majored in chemical and biomolecular engineering with a minor in biomedical sciences. He also received early acceptance to the USA College of Medicine.

Arshad was one of the first students at South to be named a Goldwater Scholar by the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation. In his sophomore year, 271 scholars were selected by academic merit from a field of 1,107 students.

As an engineering major, he also conducted research on hyperspectral imaging technologies with Silas Leavesley, Ph.D., and Thomas Rich, Ph.D., who have dual appointments in USA's engineering and medical colleges. As a second-year medical student now, he attends classes in the same building where he worked on the project -- developing a new type of camera for use in colonoscopies.

Arshad hopes to apply similar skills in internal medicine or neurology. "I like critical thinking -- the puzzle part of solving cases," he said. "All cases are, in a way, like unsolved puzzles."

When he's not watching recorded lectures and taking notes, Arshad uses his free time to lift weights. An avid soccer player, he served as a midfielder for a co-ed medical school team that took South's intramural championship in 2019. Now there's not much time for team sports as he prepares for the USMLE Step 1 exam, which tests basic scientific principles.

Nonetheless, Arshad has proven himself as a leader. While at South, Arshad founded Omega Chi Epsilon, a chemical engineering honor society, and the Biomedical Engineering Society. In 2018 he joined with fellow medical student Dala Eloubeidi to form a new interest group at the College of Medicine -- the Muslims in Medicine group -- to foster clinically relevant discussions around the Islamic faith.

"We saw a possibility for fellowship for Muslim students and education for our peers and colleagues," he said. So far, the group has hosted a presentation to medical students focused on mental health for physicians and patients, and how faith can contribute.

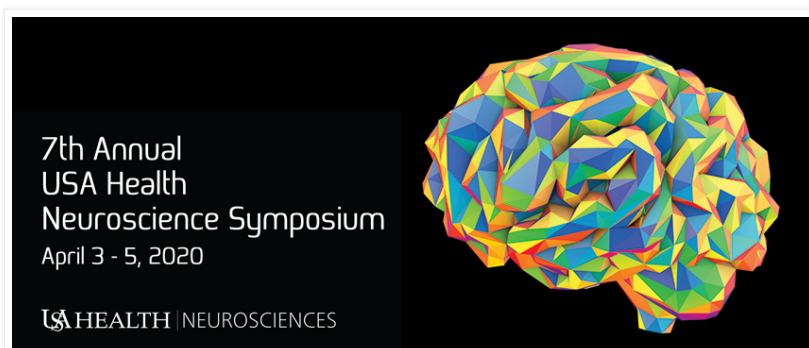
"Faith has always been a part of my life. It's been what gives me direction and a lot of comfort and peace," he said. "I'm also a big fan of learning. The more educated you are, the more you're benefiting yourself, and you can benefit other people as well."



Posted by [Med School Watercooler](#) at [2:27 PM](#) No comments:

Monday, March 2, 2020

Register Now: USA Health Neuroscience Symposium 2020



USA Health's seventh annual Neuroscience Symposium will be held April 3-5 at the Pensacola Beach Hilton.

The symposium is open to all healthcare professionals. It will provide updates and reviews of important neurological topics, and it will also cover clinical competencies of knowledge, performance, and improving patient outcomes. Topics include Parkinson's disease, seizures, stroke, neurosurgery, and multiple sclerosis.

William Kilgo, M.D., assistant professor of neurology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, will serve as the symposium's course director.

Guest speakers will be Stephen Krieger, M.D., associate professor of neurology at Mount Sinai Health System in New York, and Deborah Friedman, M.D., professor of neurology and neurotherapeutics and the department of ophthalmology at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

USA College of Medicine faculty speakers include Bassam Bassam, M.D., professor of neurology; Elias G. Chalhub, M.D., professor of neurology; Daniel Dees, M.D., assistant professor of neurology; William Kilgo, M.D., assistant professor of neurology; Robert Kobelja, M.D., assistant professor of neurology; Richard Menger, M.D., M.P.A., assistant professor of neurosurgery and chief of complex spine surgery; Elizabeth H. Minto, M.D., assistant professor of neurology; Dean K. Naritoku, M.D., chair of neurology and professor of neurology and pharmacology; Juan Ochoa, M.D., professor of neurology; and Rebecca Sugg, M.D., associate professor of neurology.

[Click here for more information and to register.](#)

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