

Med School Watercooler

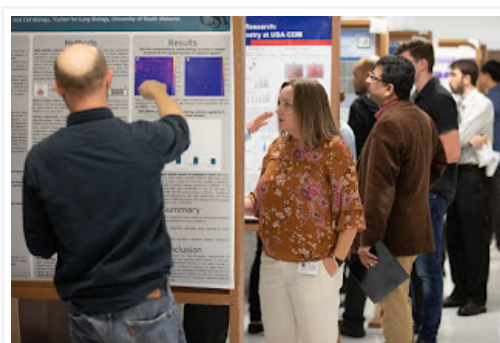
NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Virtual COM Research Forum set for Dec. 11

The USA College of Medicine Research Forum highlights outstanding biomedical research under way in the medical school and its partners. Graduate students in the Basic Medical Sciences Program and postdoctoral fellows will present their research at the 2020 COM Research Forum.

The forum is set for 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11. This year's forum will be a virtual format in the Canvas portal.



This year's forum will be a virtual format.

Exceptional projects and presenters will be highlighted in two categories: Best Graduate Student Presentations (1st, 2nd and 3rd place) and Best Postdoctoral Fellow Presentation.

All BMS graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty of the USA College of Medicine automatically will be registered to the Canvas portal COM Research Forum. Others interested in participating should contact Angie O'Neal at aoneal@southalabama.edu to gain access to the Canvas portal for this virtual forum.

For details, visit the [COM Research Forum web page](#).

Audia receives grant to study pneumonia, inflammation and sepsis

With a long-term goal of developing new therapeutic and diagnostic procedures to improve the outcomes of critically ill patients with pneumonia and sepsis, Jonathon P. Audia, Ph.D., professor of microbiology and immunology, received \$50,000 through the 2020 College of Medicine Faculty Intramural Grants Program Research Awards.

He and other University of South Alabama collaborators will use the funds to further investigate the molecular pathogenesis of pneumonia, inflammation and sepsis using his established *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* lung infection models.

Pioneering, interdisciplinary research efforts spearheaded through the USA College of Medicine Center for Lung Biology have produced evidence to suggest that Gram-negative and Gram-positive bacterial pneumonia triggers production of cytotoxic amyloids in the lung as a pathological mechanism that underlies organ failure and decreased mental function.

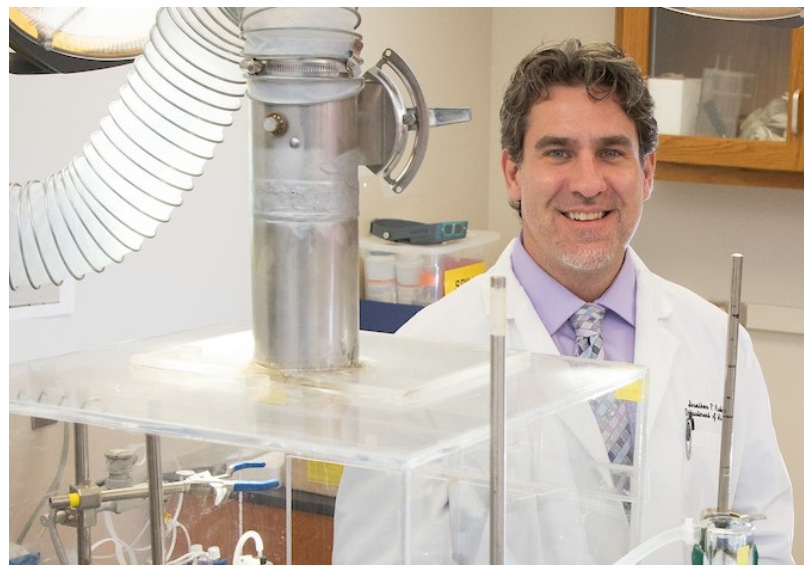
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- ▶ 2023 (11)
- ▶ 2022 (249)
- ▶ 2021 (269)
- ▼ 2020 (191)
 - ▶ 12/27 - 01/03 (1)
 - ▶ 12/13 - 12/20 (6)
 - ▶ 12/06 - 12/13 (2)
 - ▶ 11/29 - 12/06 (5)
 - ▼ 11/15 - 11/22 (3)
 - Virtual COM Research Forum set for Dec. 11
 - Audia receives grant to study pneumonia, inflammat...
 - Mark your calendar for upcoming grand rounds
- ▶ 11/08 - 11/15 (5)
- ▶ 11/01 - 11/08 (5)
- ▶ 10/25 - 11/01 (5)
- ▶ 10/18 - 10/25 (6)
- ▶ 10/11 - 10/18 (5)
- ▶ 10/04 - 10/11 (3)
- ▶ 09/27 - 10/04 (6)
- ▶ 09/20 - 09/27 (3)
- ▶ 09/13 - 09/20 (1)
- ▶ 09/06 - 09/13 (4)
- ▶ 08/30 - 09/06 (3)
- ▶ 08/23 - 08/30 (5)
- ▶ 08/16 - 08/23 (4)
- ▶ 08/09 - 08/16 (3)
- ▶ 08/02 - 08/09 (4)
- ▶ 07/26 - 08/02 (6)
- ▶ 07/19 - 07/26 (3)
- ▶ 07/12 - 07/19 (2)
- ▶ 07/05 - 07/12 (5)



Jonathon P. Audia, Ph.D., professor of microbiology and immunology, is investigating the molecular pathogenesis of pneumonia, inflammation and sepsis.

While amyloids are well-known causes of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, the links between pneumonia, amyloids and neurocognitive dysfunction is an emerging field of interest, Audia said.

As part of an ongoing National Institutes of Health funded study on the role of inflammasomes in protecting the lung during pneumonia and sepsis, Audia's research team made the serendipitous discovery that caspase-1 is able to detoxify amyloids, negating their negative effects. Caspase-1 is a component of inflammasomes that promotes harmful inflammation in the body.

"This new avenue of research in my lab is due in large part to the efforts of Nicole Housley who developed the key biochemical and cell biology assays that laid critical ground work," Audia said.

The proposed studies represent a new collaboration between Audia's research group and the laboratory of David Weber, Ph.D., professor of physiology and cell biology.

Audia said the new collaboration will allow an extension of the biological relevance of the study by investigating the vascular pathology induced by the *P. aeruginosa* infection model.

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Mark your calendar for upcoming grand rounds

OB-GYN Grand Rounds

"Evaluation and Management 2021"

Tammy G. Heim, director of physician education and compliance, ACS

7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 20

Children's & Women's Hospital, Atlantis Room

Contact: Heather Glass at 251-415-1492 or hglass@health.southalabama.edu

Cardiology Grand Rounds

"Atherosclerosis and Inflammation"

Amod Amritphale, M.D., assistant professor of internal medicine, USA College of Medicine

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 20

University Hospital, Cardiology Conference Room

Contact: Donna Gregory at 251-471-7923 or dgregory@health.southalabama.edu

- ▶ 06/28 - 07/05 (2)
- ▶ 06/21 - 06/28 (4)
- ▶ 06/14 - 06/21 (3)
- ▶ 06/07 - 06/14 (2)
- ▶ 05/31 - 06/07 (3)
- ▶ 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)
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- ▶ 03/22 - 03/29 (3)
- ▶ 03/15 - 03/22 (3)
- ▶ 03/08 - 03/15 (2)
- ▶ 03/01 - 03/08 (6)
- ▶ 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)

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