Internal Medicine Fellow and Resident Win Top Awards for Research

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The top presentations were given awards at the end of the program. We are proud of the performance given by the Internal Medicine fellows and residents who participated in the competition. Dr. Shakil Khan of the Cardiology Division won the award for best fellow research presentation. Dr. Antonio Abbate won two awards for resident presentations – one for his oral presentation, one for a poster presentation.

Michelle Kienholz: Effective Grant Writer in the Department of Internal Medicine

Starting July 1, Michelle Kienholz, Director of the Women’s Health Research Core, will provide medical writing and editing services to the Division of Endocrinology onsite on Sanger 7. She will help faculty and fellows working with John Nestler, the Division Chair, prepare competitive grant applications and manuscripts for peer review.

Michelle has worked since 2001 on a part-time basis helping VCU researchers with their grant applications and teaching an NIH grantwriting workshop. In 2005, she was hired full-time into the Office of the Vice President for Research as Director of the Women’s Health Research Core.

She has provided general grantsmanship assistance over the past five years but recognized that greater gains in faculty development and funding success could be realized through focused onsite support. After considering several factors in selecting the inaugural groups, she chose to work with the Division of Endocrinology and the Department of Family Practice as the pilot sites for this new model of research development.

Prior to joining VCU, Michelle worked as a medical writer/editor in Boston at the Massachusetts General Hospital and the New England Deaconess Hospital and later in the Northern Neck on a freelance basis for many years. She has authored books on hypertension, men’s health and using the Internet to research medical topics, and has co-authored several articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

Dr. Richard Wenzel Assumes Leadership of International Society

On June 19th, 2006, in a ceremony in Lisbon, Dr. Richard Wenzel, MD, MSc, began a two-year tenure as President of the 35,000-member International Society for Infectious Diseases. One hundred six countries were represented at the Lisbon meeting.

The ISID is especially committed to infectious diseases and emerging pathogens in third-world countries. The Society owns and edits an International Infectious Diseases surveillance system called ProMed, that has 10,000 hits a day and identified the SARS outbreak two weeks before the World Health Organization knew of its appearance. Furthermore, ISID provides grants for physicians in the third world to visit active laboratories for excellent training and collaboration.
Annual Housestaff Awards

In late May, the Department of Medicine celebrated the accomplishments of the Internal Medicine residents this academic year and honored the graduating residents in the annual Housestaff Awards Ceremony. The ceremony was also used to honor the outstanding faculty in the Department. Notably, the housestaff published and presented over 100 pieces of scientific work this year, including case vignettes, regionally and nationally presented research abstracts, manuscripts and book chapters. “This volume of scholarship from physicians in training is a remarkable measure of the extraordinary quality of our housestaff,” said Richard P. Wenzel, MD, MSc, chair of the Department.

Traditional awards honoring the housestaff and the faculty for their skills and talents in teaching, scholarship, clinical and leadership roles were awarded as follows:

Riffert Award for Outstanding Intern: Winner: Nicole Kelleher-Linkoms, MD, MS Finalist: Alice Herlihy, MD

Outstanding Second-Year Resident: Winner: Antonio Abbae, MD Finalist: Kristin Miller, MD

Higgins Award for Outstanding Third-Year Resident: Winner: Venkat Ramachandran, MD Finalist: John Port, MD

Arthur Klein, MD Award (Awarded to the resident who best demonstrates the healing value of carefully listening to patients, and explaining the causes, course and outcome of their disease): Winner: Doug Johnson, MD Finalist: Sarah Beth Harrington, MD

Excellence in Scholarship Award (Senior Award): Winner: Brian Porter, MD, PhD, MPH

DOM Faculty Award for Excellence in Residency: Winner: Sue Wolver, MD Finalist: Doug Johnson, MD

Recognition for Excellence in Teaching Award: Winner: Paul Arnold, MD Finalist: John Tedrow, MD

Othran Muren, MD Award for Outstanding Fellow: Winner: Sarah Hellewell, MD Finalist: Dan Carl, MD and Steve Zouzoulis, MD

Outstanding Ward Attending: Winner: Frank Fulco, MD Finalist: Alan Dow, MD, MSHA

Outstanding Attending in an ICU or Subspecialty Service: Winner: Alpha (Berry) Fowler, III, MD Finalist: Lisa Brath, MD

VCU Graduate Makes Generous Donation to Department of Medicine

Dr. Robert T. Mendle, who earned his MD here in 1973, returned to his native California to set up his internal medicine practice. But he has continued to stay in touch with his alma mater. Recently, he’s become interested in the work of the Thomas Palliative Care Unit and has donated over $60,000 in the last two years to support its work. “One of the toughest challenges physicians face is helping patients come to terms with serious diseases and end-of-life issues,” he has said. “That’s why I was eager to support the medical school’s efforts surrounding palliative care.”

In late May, Dr. Mendle returned to Richmond. Visiting the Thomas Palliative Care Unit was high on his list of priorities. While rounding with the unit’s health care team, he had the opportunity to learn more about some of its unique approaches to care. “As a general internist, I’m aware of the huge need for palliative care,” said Dr. Mendle. “So much of what I do daily comes right from the medical school, and I am very happy that I am able to return something to my alma mater.”

“Dr. Mendle supported the Thomas Palliative Care Program Fellowship from the beginning, and made it possible for us to train some of our best fellows. We are all in his debt, literally and figuratively. He has been an inspiration to all of us in how good works can be multiplied and continued,” said Dr. Tom Smith, medical director of the program.

Annual Housestaff Awards

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CLINICAL ACTIVITIES: LETTERS

Dr. Kenneth Ellenbogen received the following letter:

“Dear Dr. Ellenbogen,

I am writing to thank you for your skilled and concerned care of my wife. Your accurate diagnosis, quick follow-up and the effective ablation have made a tremendous difference in her life. I think the word ‘debilitating’ accurately described her condition before you treated her. She seems to gain confidence with each day. I remind her that you told me you had found the problem and ‘stayed on it.’ We both smile at that description and what it has meant to her.

You are indeed, as Webster says, ‘a person skilled in the art of healing’ and further, ‘one who exerts a salutary influence.’ Thank you for being her doctor.”

Annual Housestaff Awards

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Recognition for Excellence in Teaching: Lisa Brah, MD Stephanie Call, MD, MSPH Nedumkallel George, MD Richard Wenzel, MD, MSc Leanne Yanni, MD

Three new awards were presented this year:

Most Skilled CPC Diagnostician/Presenter: Winner: Anne Lipke, MD

Residents who guessed the most correct diagnosis based on CPC Protocol review ahead of time:

Darryn Appleton, MB, SHd (Intern) Bo Chao, MD (Intern)
Paty Husbach, DO (Senior Resident) Sarah Beth Harrington, MD (Senior Resident) Venkat Ramachandran, MD (Senior Resident)

Excellence in Teaching by a Non-Physician Educator: Winner: Patricia Fulco, Pharm.D. Finalist: Kim Varnay, Pharm.D.

We are now accepting submissions for Between Rounds, the Department of Internal Medicine’s annual publication of poetry, prose, art and photography. The deadline for submissions is Friday, September 29. Please be sure to proofread submissions carefully. Text files should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents. Digital photos should be submitted as TIFs or JPEGs at a minimum of 4”x6” and 300 dpi.

Please send all work to the Department of Internal Medicine:
Attn: Katia Clod-Svensson
Box 980663
Phone (804) 828-5738
Email kativa@hsc.vcu.edu
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