Transplant Nephrology at VCU Medical Center

Transplantation medicine/nephrology, an exciting subspecialty of medicine, is a growing field due to the significant growth in the population of patients with chronic kidney disease and the myriad of medical problems attendant to this growing and aging population.

Historically, transplantation was long the purview of surgeons; but with the advent of cyclosporine in the mid-1980s and with the attendant increase in the prevalence of hypertension, hyperlipidemia and acute renal failure in the post-transplant patient population, nephrologists were recruited in most programs to attend to the care of this extremely complicated patient population. Over the past 10–15 years, the waiting list for kidney transplantation has grown with over 60,000 patients now waiting nationally on the cadaveric kidney waiting list. This translates into waiting times of in excess of five years in most cases.

These prolonged waiting times have required transplant physicians to come up with strategies to provide acceptable organs to waiting individuals in a more timely manner. These strategies have included the use of living unrelated crossmatch-compatible donors and extended criteria cadaveric donors (usually over age 50, hypertensive and with intracerebral hemorrhage as the cause of death).

There are many exciting developments on the horizon in the field of kidney transplantation, many of which are in place at the Hume Lee Transplant Center here at the VCU Medical Center. HIV was once an absolute contraindication to organ transplantation. Now with the use of HAART regimens, organ transplantation may be offered. The Transplant Program at the VCU Medical Center now has a 12-exam-room state-of-the-art clinic with four infusion stations on Gateway 7 and an inpatient unit on Main Hospital 9th Floor with 23 monitored step-down beds and plans for a four-bed intensive care unit to care for immediate post-operative transplant patients. We currently have over 200 patients on the active waiting list for kidney transplantation and perform over 100 kidney transplants annually at VCU Health Care Systems. Almost half of the kidneys transplanted here are living donor kidneys. Our patient and graft survival statistics are equal to or better than national averages in spite of a patient population which is predominantly uneducated, African American and highly sensitized – all considered risk factors for poor survival. Our success is due in large part to the dedication, hard work and boundless energy of all the members of the Transplant Team...

Contributed by Anne King, MD, Clinic Director
Dr. Shaun Ruddy Receives ACP Mastership

Dr. Shaun Ruddy will be awarded Mastership of the American College of Physicians at the 2005 Annual Session in San Francisco in April. Although Mastership technically is a class of membership, it is handled as an award. Mastership in the American College of Physicians is bestowed upon select Fellows in recognition of exceedingly stellar career accomplishments and service to the College.

Dr. Ruddy is one of three Virginians receiving the award this year. There are approximately 15 physicians in the state with Mastership and now two in the Department of Internal Medicine at VCU, Dr. Ruddy and Dr. Richard Wenzel, Department Chair. Dr. Ruddy is a world-class clinical investigator, teacher and scholar. His textbook on Rheumatic Diseases is the ‘bible’ worldwide, and the College has recognized his many contributions,” said Dr. Wenzel.

Faculty Profile: Anna Vinnikova, MD

Dr. Anna Vinnikova, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, joined the faculty in 1999. She graduated from the First Pavlov Medical Institute in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1990. She completed her Postdoctoral Research, Residency and Nephrology Fellowship at VCU, and was a recipient of the Veterans Administration Career Development Award from 1998–2001.

Although primarily a clinician, Dr. Vinnikova actively engages in basic as well as clinical research. She has an ongoing research collaboration with the Department of Physiology in the area of taste transduction mechanisms. Her research interests are in molecular characterization of ion channels and transporters involved in salt and sour taste. This collaboration has resulted in the identification of a sodium-hydrogen exchanger in taste receptor cells and elucidation of its role in sour taste adaptation. More recently, their collaborative effort has led to the discovery of a novel salt taste receptor. This research was published in highly respected scientific journals such as Journal of Physiology (London), Journal of General Physiology, Journal of Neurophysiology, and others.

Dr. Vinnikova is a principal investigator in an industry-sponsored trial (Nephros Therapeutics), which examines clinical application of a Renal Tubular Assist Device, a filter lined with cultured renal tubular cells, in continuous veno-venous hemofiltration. She is also a member of the team that has developed a Vascular Access Database – a computerized database tracking results and quality indicators of the VCU Medical Center Vascular Access Program. Since 2001, Dr. Vinnikova has served as Medical Director of the Dialysis Vascular Access Center and has worked closely with Transplant Surgery to improve the access care for our dialysis patients.

She is an active and effective clinician, who continues to find research support for her projects, both at NIH and industry. In February 2005, Dr. Vinnikova has expanded her career to being a mom to her twin boys Samuel and Nicholas.

Dr. Anna Vinnikova

Dr. Shaun Ruddy

The Department of Internal Medicine is announcing the incoming intern class for 2005. As a program, we continue to maintain our standards of excellence. “We started the recruiting process with one goal in mind – quality – and I am confident we attained this goal,” said Dr. Stephanie Call, Director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program. “I am proud of our incoming intern class, and I know we will really enjoy working together.”

“Fourteen of our incoming interns have a second degree in addition to their MD,” said Dr. Richard Wenzel, Chair of the Department. “Our goal is clear – to move from a top-30 to a top-20 housestaff program in the next 5–6 years.”

Categorical Medicine

Darryn Appleton, MB, ChB, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Anup Bhushan, MD, Saint Louis University School of Medicine

Andrew Binder, MD, Drexel University College of Medicine

Farn Hui Chan, MD, Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine, Canada

Bo Chao, MD, MS, University of Minnesota-Minneapolis School of Medicine

Kyoung Chong, MD, PhD, Marshall University School of Medicine

Aaron Fox, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Neal Greenfield, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Victoria Harr, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Justin Haught, MD, West Virginia University School of Medicine

Alice Herify, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Thomas Iden, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Jill Jinks, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Jeremy Katcher, MD, University of Missouri–Columbia School of Medicine

Anit Mankad, MD, UMDNJ–Robert Wood Johnson Medical School–Camden

Caroline Marin, MD, MS, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Shejal Patel, DO, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine

Henry Pham, MD, University of California–Davis School of Medicine

Tahir Shaikh, DO, New York College of Osteopathic Medicine

Jared Shpley, MD, Drexel University College of Medicine

Sherri Taylor, MD, University of Maryland School of Medicine

Medicine/Pediatrics

Gary Fang, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Catherine Garrett, MD, University of Kentucky College of Medicine

Chad Greer, MD, MS, Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University

Nicole Swarinston, MD, Loma Linda University School of Medicine

April Guminsky, MD, EDM, Medical University of South Carolina

College of Medicine

Preliminary Medicine

Arul Abraham, MD, PhD, MS, The Chicago Medical School at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science

Adembami Adeyiga, MD, University of Virginia School of Medicine

Drew Rawcombe, MD, University at Buffalo State University of New York School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

Joel Braun, MD, MS, Ohio State University College of Medicine and Public Health

Rebecca Clary, MD, MS, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Benjamin Cramer, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Byrd Davenport, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Tami Engelman, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Kerrin Fox, MD, University of Texas Southwestern Medical School at Dallas

Jeffrey Guppill, MD, MA, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

(continued on page four)
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