WE ARE THE MANY FACES OF PLASTIC SURGERY
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Colleagues,

The art of clinical surgery is the ability to bring together multiple skillsets and disparate disciplines to manage individual patients. The researchers and teachers partner with our clinical surgeons to produce results which ultimately optimize the benefits for humanity. Now, and in the future, the multidisciplinary, translational approach will be key for making new discoveries and for delivering state of the art treatment of the surgical patient.

We are proud to share with you the first issue of “Surgical News”, the DeWitt Daughtry Family Department of Surgery’s newsletter. I am truly humbled by and proud of the accomplishments of our fine surgeons during this past year. To highlight a few of them:

- Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer worldwide. Our team of thoracic surgeons have initiated a lung screening program to help diagnose lung cancer while it is still potentially curable.

- The Ryder Trauma Center was recognized by the U.S. Army for improving medical outcomes for soldiers and others wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

- The Heart, Liver, and Kidney Transplant Programs were recognized as top transplant centers.

- Our newly appointed Vice-Chair for Research, Dr. Omaida Velazquez, is working to raise our departmental rankings in NIH funding even higher. In the last year, Surgery has jumped from 27th to 16th place of 87 nationally ranked departments of surgery.

I am pleased to provide you with a glimpse of our department’s achievements. I look forward to sharing more news during upcoming issues of our newsletter.

Sincerely,

Alan S. Livingstone, M.D.
The Division of Colon & Rectal Surgery
- John I. Lew, M.D.
- Steven E. Rodgers, M.D., Ph.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-4211

The Division of Cellular Transplantation
- Camillo Ricordi, M.D., Ph.D., MBA
- Marco Rucci, M.D., Ph.D., MBA
- Eliot R. Rosenkrantz, M.D., MBA
- Joseph M. Martinez, M.D.
- Alberto R. Iglesias, M.D.
- Leonardo J. Henriquez, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-2424

Miami Transplant Institute
Heart/Lung Transplant Surgeons:
- Si M. Pham, M.D., Director
- Eliot R. Rosenkrantz, M.D., M.B.A.
- Anthony L. Panos, M.D.
- Marco Rucci, M.D., Ph.D., MBA
Kidney/Pancreas Transplant Surgeons:
- George W. Burke III, M.D., F.A.C.S., Chief
- Gaetano Curcio, M.D., M.B.A
- Linda Chen, M.D.
- Junichiro Sageshima, M.D.

Life Alliance Organ Recovery Agency
- Susan S. Ganz, M.D., Medical Director
To contact, please call 1-800-232-2892

The Division of General Surgery
- Joe U. Levi, M.D., Chief
- Robert A. Korol, M.D.
- John I. Lew, M.D.
- Danny Sheeran, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-4211

The Division of Trauma & Surgical Critical Care
- Alan S. Livingstone, M.D., Chief
- Elia Avsar, M.D.
- Dido Franceschi, M.D.
- Frederick L. Moffat, M.D., MBA
- Meckler G. Moller, M.D.
- Steven E. Rodgers, M.D., Ph.D.
- Seth A. Spector, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-4902

Miami Transplant Institute, continued
Liver/Gastrointestinal Transplant Surgeons:
- Andreas G. Tsakis, M.D., Ph.D., Director
- David Levi, M.D.
- Seigo Nishida, M.D., Ph.D.
- Gennaro Selvaggi, M.D.
- Akin Tokun, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-355-5000

The Division of Oral Maxillofacial Surgery & Dentistry
- Robert E. Marx, DDS, Chief
- Gabriela Alboha, DDS
- Lawrence A. Armentano Jr., DDS, M.D.
- Daniel Atallah, DDS
- Odile M. Carro, D.M.D
- Leo S. Dorado, DDS
- Jesus A. Gomez, DDS
- Michael Peleg, DDS
- Yol Sawatari, DDS
- Martha Vega, DDS
To make an appointment, please call 305-689-6725

The Division of Pediatric & Adolescent Surgery
- Juan E. Sola, M.D., Chief
- Holly L. Nervele, M.D.
- Eduardo A. Perez, M.D.
- Patricia G. Morel, M.D.
- Yoh Sawatari, DDS
- Maritza Vega, DDS
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-2247

The Division of Plastic, Aesthetic & Reconstructive Surgery
- Seth R. Thaller, M.D., Chief
- Morad Askari, M.D.
- Wrood M. Kassira, M.D.
- Hazeel S. Mir, M.D.
- John C. Oeltjen, M.D.
- Zubin J. Panthaki, M.D.
- Christopher J. Salgado, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-7500

The Division of Vascular & Endovascular Surgery
- Ohmaida C. Velazquez, M.D., Chief
- Ararat Bormak, M.D.
- Lee J. Goldstein, M.D.
- Jorge Rey, M.D.
- Handel R. Robinson, M.D.
- Marwan R. Tabbara, M.D.
To make appointment, please call 305-585-5284

The Division of Surgical Oncology
- Alan S. Livingstone, M.D., Chief
- Elia Avsar, M.D.
- Dido Franceschi, M.D.
- Frederick L. Moffat, M.D., MBA
- Meckler G. Moller, M.D.
- Steven E. Rodgers, M.D., Ph.D.
- Seth A. Spector, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-4902

The Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery
Cardiothoracic Surgery at JMH:
- Tomas A. Saladino, M.D., Chief
- Tammy M. Baxter, M.D.
- Doo M. Nguyen, M.D.
- Anthony L. Panos, M.D.
- Si Pham, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.A.H.A.
- Marco Rucci, M.D., Ph.D., MBA
- Eliot R. Rosenkrantz, M.D., MBA
- James F. Symes, M.D.
- Richard J. Turner, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-5271

Cardiothoracic Surgery at UMH:
- Donald B. Williams, M.D., Chief
- Roger G. Cardillo, M.D.
- Didier De Cannerie, M.D., Ph.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-2363

The Division of Cellular Transplantation
- Camillo Ricordi, M.D., Chief
- Norma Kenyon, M.D.
- Antonio Pileggi, M.D., Ph.D.
To contact, please call 305-243-6913

The Division of Colon & Rectal Surgery
- Laurence R. Sands, M.D., MBA, Chief
- Heudi Bahna, M.D.
- Floriano Marchetti, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-9110

The Division of Endocrine Surgery
- John I. Lew, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-4211

The Division of General Surgery
- Joe U. Levi, M.D., Chief
- Robert A. Korol, M.D.
- John I. Lew, M.D.
- Danny Sheeran, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-4211

The Division of Laparoendoscopic & Bariatric Surgery
- Nestor De La Cruz-Muñoz, M.D., Chief
- Jose M. Martinez, M.D.
- Alberto R. Iglesias, M.D.
- Leonardo J. Henriquez, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-2424

The Division of Liver/Gastrointestinal Transplantation
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- Seigo Nishida, M.D., Ph.D.
- Gennaro Selvaggi, M.D.
- Akin Tokun, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-355-5000

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- Steven E. Rodgers, M.D., Ph.D.
- Seth A. Spector, M.D.
To make an appointment, please call 305-243-4902

The Division of Trauma & Surgical Critical Care
- Nicholas Namias, M.D., MBA, Chief, Division of Trauma
- Danny Sheeran, M.D., Chief, Division of Surgical Critical Care
- Jeffrey S. Augenstein, M.D., Ph.D.
- Juan A. Aesensio-Gonzalez, M.D.
- Patricia M. Byers, M.D.
- Enrique Ginzburg, M.D.
- Fahim A. Habib, M.D.
- Edward B. Lineen, M.D.
- Mauricio Lynn, M.D.
- Antonio C. Martos Jr, M.D.
- Kenneth D. Stahl, M.D.
To contact, please call 305-585-1178

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Mankind has always sought self-improvement making plastic and reconstructive surgery one of the oldest healing arts. Plastic is derived from the Greek word “plastikos” which is defined as to mold or give form. There is evidence of treatment of facial injuries more than 4000 years ago. As far back as 800 BC, Indian physicians employed skin grafts for reconstruction. However, it is Dr. John Peter Mettauer of Virginia who is credited with the moniker as America’s first plastic surgeon. He is credited with performing the New World’s initial cleft palate operation in 1827 with instruments he designed. It was the forces of war that encouraged the significant and innovative plastic surgery developments to manage the shattered faces and extremities caused by modern weaponry. From these beginnings plastic surgery has expanded to include both a reconstructive and an aesthetic component.

Our program at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine began in 1964 when Dr. Dean Warren appointed Dr. Gil Snyder first chief of our division. He was then followed by the long-tenure of Dr. D. Ralph Millard who made tremendous contributions to the field of cleft lip, nasal reconstruction, and aesthetic surgery. In 1995, Dr. Seth Thaller assumed the position of Professor and Chief of the Division. Since that initial selection our plastic surgery program has evolved into a carefully crafted blend of excellence in patient care, educational initiatives, and original clinical and basic science. Our nationally renowned program centered on shared efforts has produced seminal papers, developed pioneering techniques, and shared knowledge throughout the world.

The Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery team frequently evaluates patients that have sustained either congenital, post surgical extirpation or traumatic injuries that may have either limited or interrupted the routines of their daily life. Our faculty possess the capacity to restore and enhance these lives through a broad range of procedures including breast surgery, body contouring, limb salvage surgery, burn reconstruction, reconstructive microsurgery, reconstructive surgery, hand and upper extremity, pediatric plastic surgery, body contouring following massive weight loss and cosmetic surgery. Our faculty has received comprehensive training in all facets of plastic, reconstructive, and aesthetic surgery. Often thought of as “the other plastic surgeons” due to the extensive expertise and experience in reconstructive surgery, our faculty is well versed in all of the invasive and non-invasive aesthetic procedures. As members of an internationally recognized academic medical center, patients may be assured our faculty will be able to utilize cutting edge procedures and technology to enhance our clinical results. Our faculty members are often at the forefront of developing and enhancing many of these techniques.

The University of Miami Division of Plastic Surgery maintains a basic science laboratory that is dedicated to advancing scientific knowledge that will translate to clinical applications in improving wound healing, skin aging and skin rejuvenation. Our Laboratory for Skin Rejuvenation and Gender Differences in Wound Healing continues to evolve and develop new approaches for our research. Our affiliation within the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine provides the laboratory with an unparalleled breath of available research collaborations. Such partnerships allow us to develop cutting edge and innovative ideas that will enhance the clinical practice of plastic surgery.

The primary focus of the laboratory has been the effects of steroid hormones in the skin. Advancing age steroid hormone deficiencies are more prevalent today. This eventually becomes detrimental to the normal physiologic process of wound healing. Impaired wound healing, especially in the elderly population can result in significant clinical morbidity. Continued advances in the field of basic science research are even more vital in this current environment of restricted resources.

Previous experiments from our lab have clearly delineated the positive effects of estrogen on wound healing in a diabetic mouse model. We are extending our laboratory studies to evaluate the potential role of other steroid hormones. Another hormonal agent has great promise for future clinical applications. We plan to utilize novel techniques for further examination of various additional agents. They could possibly be administered as potential anti-aging substances. In an effort to continue our promising dynamic research, we welcome individuals within the University or industry to partner with us.
To make a patient appointment, please call 1.800.432.0191 or visit www.uhealthsurgery.com

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY NIH RANKING CLIMBS TO NEW HEIGHTS

According to an analysis of NIH funding, with $5.42 million, the Department of Surgery jumped from 27th to 16th in one year, in a national group of 87 peer divisions. This year, five Miller School departments—cell biology and anatomy, biochemistry and molecular biology, surgery, psychiatry and behavioral sciences, and microbiology and immunology—either rose by at least five spots, or increased by $1 million or more in funding.

ARMY TRAUMA TRAINING CENTER MARKS A DECADE BY THANKING MILLER SCHOOL LIFE-SAVERS

Marking the 10th anniversary of the Army Trauma Training Center (ATTC) at the Ryder Trauma Center, the U.S. Army recognized the contributions of Kenneth G. Proctor, Ph.D., professor of surgery, anesthesiology and biomedical engineering, and Jeffrey Augenstein, M.D., Ph.D., professor of surgery and Director of the William Lehman Injury Research Center, for improving medical outcomes for soldiers and others wounded in war zones.

One of the busiest trauma centers in the nation, the Ryder Trauma Center opened as the official training center for the Army’s Forward Surgical Teams a month after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. To date, 93 surgical teams – more than 2,300 physicians, physician’s assistants, nurses and soldiers – have rotated through the intensive two-week program, which includes team-building exercises, a mass casualty exercise, and clinical rotations in trauma intensive care and surgical units.

“We have grown from a series of PowerPoint-based lectures to a nearly lecture-free, mobile curriculum allowing more hands-on, clinically based teamwork building,” Garcia noted at the ceremony. “We have developed the most realistic, challenging mass casualty exercise that has greatly enhanced the life-saving capabilities of the surgical teams, and Dr. Augenstein for being ‘instrumental’ to the overall success of the ATTC.”

The program, under the leadership of Si M. Pham, M.D., professor of surgery and director of Cardiopulmonary Transplantation, achieved excellent results. Three years after receiving a transplant, 93 percent of heart recipients at the Miami Transplant Institute are still alive, compared with 82 percent across the nation. Patients on the heart transplant wait list also have a higher chance of receiving a transplant than at other centers, and after transplants they are able to return home sooner (nine and a half days versus 14 days nationally).

“Dr. Proctor and Augenstein with the Commander’s Public Service Award for providing important trauma research to the U.S. Department of Defense and for helping to establish the curriculum for the Forward Surgical Teams that train at Ryder before deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan. Dr. Proctor was recognized in particular for developing a ‘premier mass casualty training exercise’ that has greatly enhanced the life-saving capabilities of the surgical teams, and Dr. Augenstein for being ‘instrumental’ to the overall success of the ATTC.”

Who Is At Risk?

- Individuals who are former or current smokers with pack year history greater than 15 years. How do I calculate my pack year history? Multiply the number of packs smoked per day times the number of years smoked. (1/2 pk = 0.5, 1 pk = 1, 1 ½ pks = 1.5, etc). If this number is greater than 15, you are at risk for lung cancer.
- Family history of lung cancer
- Asbestos exposure
- Radon exposure
- Significant second hand smoke exposure

LUNG CANCER AWARENESS

Did You Know...

That an estimated quarter of a million Americans will be diagnosed with lung cancer in 2011? Over 150,000 will lose their lives to this devastating disease. In Florida alone, over 10,000 individuals will die this year from lung cancer. Lung cancer is the number one cause of cancer death in the country and the second leading cause of death from all causes.

The thoracic surgeons at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine are working to change these statistics. We know that early detection of lung cancer leads to increased survival, and that the reason for poor survival from lung cancer is a delay in diagnosis. Up until now, no method for lung cancer screening has proven to be effective. However, a study just released by the National Cancer Institute showed a 20% improvement in survival from lung cancer with screening by CT imaging.

If you are concerned about your risk of lung cancer and would like to consider screening, please call Ana at University of Miami Sylvester Cancer Center at 305-243-5302 or 877-243-1056.

DR. ADAM WILLIAMS RECEIVES THE VIVIAN YOUNG AWARD

Congratulations to surgical resident, Dr. Adam Williams who received two prestigious research awards from the American Heart Association. His published manuscript in Circulation Research was awarded the best research of the year and he was also awarded the Vivian Young Award as an outstanding young investigator. It is a great accomplishment for Dr. Williams as well for his research mentor, Dr. Josh Hare, and his chair, Dr. Alan Livingstone.
Surrounded by family, friends, colleagues, and University leadership, Dao M. Nguyen, M.D., was named B. and Donald Carlin Chair in Thoracic Surgical Oncology at a ceremony hosted by Alan S. Livingstone, M.D., Chairman of the DeWitt Daughtry Family Department of Surgery.

Recounting the late Don Carlin’s belief that “great institutions invest in people and buildings,” UM President Donna E. Shalala acknowledged B. and Don Carlin as “two individuals who thought deeply about giving back through strategic investments in the South Florida community.”

This endowed chair, generously established by the Carlins and the B. Carlin Foundation ensures sustainable academic excellence and offers many benefits to the recipients, University, and donors. “Esteemed scholars and physicians receive the recognition they deserve,” Shalala said. “The University of Miami reaps the benefits and prestige of recruiting the best of the best, and generations of students gain the benefits of learning from world-class professors—year after year.”

Addressing the crowd, Miller School Dean Pascal J. Goldschmidt, M.D., acknowledged that “some of the best physicians and scientists in the world” were assembled in the room that night. “Dr. Nguyen is among the best of the best and represents the type of exemplary leadership that makes UM a leader in research,” Goldschmidt said.

Nguyen’s research focuses on eradicating lung cancer, the number one cause of death among cancer patients. “I am honored to witness the University of Miami had been instrumental in training 10 of Israel’s top trauma surgeons. “There is no doubt in my mind that UM/Jackson Health System’s Ryder Trauma Center is the premiere trauma center in the United States, and there’s no finer physician I can think of to help us build on that kind of international recognition.”

“Ryder is the best of the best when it comes to trauma care,” President Shalala continued, “and endowments like the Zeppa Chair in the Division of Trauma allow UM to recruit the best of the best, like Dr. Namias.”

Accepting the chair, Namias reflected, “If medicine is a noble profession, then trauma is the noblest of the lot, requiring flexibility, snap judgment, and razor-sharp focus—all in the face of chaos. But no job could be nearly as rewarding.” Thanksing his wife Beth and their three children, Nicholas, Chloe and Lily, for their patience and support, Namias also acknowledged his early career in medicine, working alongside Robert Zeppa, M.D., the late chief of surgery at Jackson Memorial Hospital, chairman of the Department of Surgery at UM and chief of trauma, for whom the chair is named. “He was a giant to me,” Namias said, “dedicated to answering questions and expanding minds. Picking up that legacy, I hope to expand trauma education for faculty and staff, increase trauma resources across UHealth, and expand community outreach through education programs in trauma.”

“Dr. Robert Zeppa died unexpectedly and too soon some 15 years ago,” Livingstone said. “At that time, his colleagues and surgeons he mentored set out to establish an endowed chair in Zeppa’s memory. More than 80 residents and other donors managed to raise more than $500,000 for this worthy cause. Because of their dedication and support, we’re taking trauma surgery to a whole new level and putting UM/Jackson on the global map—where it rightly belongs.”

Individuals
1. Dao Nguyen, M.D.
2. Frederick Moffat, M.D.
3. Andreas Tzakis, M.D.
4. Seth Thaller, M.D.
5. Eli Avisar, M.D.

Divisions
1. Surgical Oncology
2. Cardiothoracic Surgery
3. Burns
4. General Surgery
5. Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
NEW CLINICAL FACULTY

Dr. Haaris S. Mir
Dr. Haaris S. Mir received his medical education from Dow Medical College in Karachi, Pakistan in 2001. He completed a 5-year general surgery residency in 2007 at Temple University in Philadelphia and was board certified by the American Board of Surgery in 2008. Dr. Mir went on to complete a fellowship in hand and microsurgery at the renowned Christine M. Kleinert Institute in Louisville, Kentucky, where the first hand transplant was performed in North America. Following his hand surgery training, Dr. Mir completed a one-year burn and reconstructive fellowship in 2009 at Indiana University and a plastic and reconstructive surgery fellowship at Indiana University in 2011.

Dr. Mir’s interests span the entire spectrum of plastic surgery with primary interests in hand surgery including congenital hand deformities, chronic wrist pain, burned hands, cosmetic and reconstructive breast surgery, reconstructive and cosmetic surgery of the trunk and body, reconstructive burn surgery, burn scar contracture releases and reconstructive surgery after massive weight-loss.

Dr. Wrood Kassira
Dr. Wrood Kassira is an assistant professor of clinical surgery in the Division of Plastic, Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery. Dr. Kassira graduated from the University of Miami with a bachelor of science in biology. She was accepted into the highly competitive Medical Scholars Program at the University of Miami School of Medicine where she earned numerous accolades, including Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society and Iron Arrow. Immediately following graduation, Dr. Kassira completed a residency in general surgery followed by a residency in plastic and reconstructive surgery at Jackson Memorial Hospital/University of Miami. Dr. Kassira then traveled to New York and completed a fellowship in aesthetic surgery at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. Dr. Kassira’s interests include facial rejuvenation, facelift, blepharoplasty, rhinoplasty, autologous fat grafting, body contouring, abdominoplasty, breast reduction, breast augmentation, post-trauma reconstruction, microvascular surgery, and breast reconstruction, including prosthetic and autologous based reconstruction.

Dr. Morad Askari
Dr. Askari received his medical doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh Medical School. Prior to his graduation, he spent a year as a research fellow in the Tissue Engineering Center in Carnegie Mellon University. He completed the 6-year residency program in plastic and reconstructive surgery at the University of Southern California Los Angeles County Medical Center in Los Angeles. Following residency, Dr. Askari went on to complete the orthopedic fellowship in hand and micro-vascular surgery at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, before joining the faculty at the University of Miami.

As a plastic surgeon, Dr. Askari has special interest in reconstructive microsurgery, breast reconstruction, maxillofacial trauma, oncological reconstruction, body contouring operations, and aesthetic surgery of the breast and the face. As a hand surgeon, he focuses on all traumatic and non-traumatic bony and soft tissue problems of the hand, arthritis, and arthroscopy. He has a special interest in brachial plexus reconstruction and peripheral nerve problems as well as reconstruction of the paralyzed face.

Dr. Eduardo Perez
Dr. Eduardo Perez is an assistant professor of clinical surgery in the Division of Pediatric Surgery. Dr. Perez obtained his medical degree at the Universidad Central de Venezuela Luis Razetti in 2002. He was accepted at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine as a general surgery resident and completed this training in 2008. During his training, he also completed a post-doctoral associate degree in research with the Division of Surgical Oncology. Following his residency graduation, Dr. Perez completed a minimally invasive training in Texas Endosurgical Institute in 2009 and completed his fellowship training in pediatric surgery at UT Southwestern in Dallas, Texas in 2011. Dr. Perez also participates in clinical and outcomes research and specializes in minimally invasive, robotic assisted surgery, needlescopic surgery and single incision laparoscopic surgery.

Dr. Heidi Bahna
Dr. Bahna is a University of Miami alumnus, and completed her undergraduate degree in biology and religious studies. Prior to attaining her medical doctorate from New York Medical College, she trained as an Emergency Medical Technician at UCLA. She completed rigorous general surgery residency training at Temple University in Philadelphia, one of the busiest Trauma centers in the Northeast. Dr. Bahna then spent a year as a minimally invasive surgery research fellow at Orlando Regional Medical Center and completed a colon and rectal surgery fellowship at the Colón and Rectal Clinic of Orlando. She recently joined the University of Miami and serves as the Associate Director of the Colonic and Rectal Residency Program.

Dr. Bahna has given numerous presentations in several local and national meetings. As a minimally invasive colon and rectal surgeon, she offers laparoscopic and hand assist techniques in the treatment of complex colorectal pathology. Dr. Bahna has special interest in pelvic floor disorders, fecal incontinence, inflammatory bowel disease, colon and rectal cancer, and benign anorectal conditions.

Dr. Jorge Rey
Dr. Jorge Rey joined the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine as an assistant professor of clinical surgery. Dr. Rey earned his medical degree at Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia. He completed his general surgery residency in New York Medical College and then completed his fellowship training in vascular surgery in Albany Medical Center.

Dr. Rey is board certified vascular surgeon and a fellow of the American College of Surgeons. He also serves as member of several honorary vascular societies. Dr. Rey maintains a strong commitment to advancing the field of vascular surgery through innovation, research and training. While Dr. Rey enjoys and practices all components of general vascular surgery, he specializes in aortic surgery, carotid disease, peripheral vascular surgery, thoracoabdominal surgery and thoracic outlet syndrome.

Dr. Lawrence Armentano
Dr. Lawrence Armentano earned his undergraduate degree from Santa Clara University in California and his D.D.S. degree from New York University. After dental school, he returned to California to complete his OMF’S residency at the University of the Pacific/Highland Hospital in Oakland. After residency, he completed a fellowship in tumor and reconstructive Surgery at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital. He then enrolled in medical school at the University of Miami and attained his M.D. degree, followed by one year of general surgery residency. His clinical interests include pathology, reconstructive surgery, and trauma. His main research interests are in the area of bisphosphonate-induced osteonecrosis of the jaws, growth factors and tissue engineering.

Dr. Handel Robinson
Dr. Handel Robinson joined the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine as an assistant professor of clinical surgery.

Dr. Robinson earned his medical degree at Emory University. He completed general surgery training at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York and then a vascular surgery fellowship at Albany Medical Center.

Dr. Robinson has published articles on a variety of vascular topics. His training and experience bring a unique perspective and focus to our vascular team. Dr. Robinson’s scope of practice includes a wide spectrum of general vascular surgery procedures, including aortic surgery, thoracic outlet syndrome, carotid disease, peripheral vascular surgery, and thoracoabdominal surgery.

To make a patient appointment, please call 1.800.432.0191 or visit www.uhealthsurgery.com
A
s we all are aware, cancer is a devastating and traumatic disease. Still today, the most effective treatment is surgery. The primary goal of the Molecular Oncology Program is to understand in molecular detail the mechanisms that drive the development of cancer. By gaining this knowledge, we will be able to develop new therapeutics that will increase cure rates and lessen the burden for our patients. Your continued support is critical for our quest to reach our objectives and deliver the research we need to develop a new standard of care for cancer treatment.

Recruitment

We are happy to announce the recruitment of Dr. Xin-Hai Pei, M.D., Ph.D to the Molecular Oncology Program and the Division of surgical Oncology. Dr. Pei comes to us from the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center at University of North Carolina. Dr. Pei’s research interests focus on the regulation of stem cells by key cell cycle regulatory proteins. Importantly, it is these very proteins that are commonly found to be mutated in many human cancers. Dr. Pei adds a significant dimension to the Molecular Oncology team and his research will undoubtedly uncover new insights to therapeutic intervention in cancer treatment.

Program Highlights

This last year we saw tremendous success in our program. Our faculty have applied for and been awarded research grants from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Florida Bankhead Coley Fund. These projects all began as just ideas that required generous philanthropic funding to initiate the research and develop the projects. Our faculty continues to publish their work in top scientific journals and present at major national and international meetings. Their work is having a major impact in the understanding and treatment of cancer.

Research Project Initiatives

Several new project initiatives began last year that show significant promise. With the help of our supporters, we in the Molecular Oncology Program and the Division of Surgical Oncology believe that these projects will undoubtedly develop into full programs that can be funded by the NCI/NIH and will greatly impact cancer treatment in the future.

The incidence of esophageal cancer is one of the fastest growing in the western world. Currently, the division is involved in studies to impact current treatment in combination with surgical intervention. Last year, the Molecular Oncology Program joined forces with our surgeons to initiate studies on esophageal cancers to identify key regulatory genes that drive formation of these tumors. Our work has revealed that several genes we know to be involved in the development of cancer have somehow become active in these tumors. Our goal is to determine what pathways are involved and determine the critical targets.

Lung cancer remains one of the leading causes of death from cancer. Although, some argue that quitting smoking is the answer to reduced incidence, we realize that we need to combat this disease as we do any other without bias. To meet our goals, we have assembled a group of surgeons and scientists interested in various lung diseases, which lead to different types of lung cancer. Our current focus is to develop the collaborations that will ultimately result in team research focused on developing cures for lung cancer.

Drug Discovery Core

Last year we shared our vision of establishing a Drug Discovery Core to facilitate the discovery of small molecules that could ultimately lead to the development of novel therapeutics. Although, there has been exciting support for this initiative we continue to depend on your help to make this initiative a reality. Currently we have several collaborative research efforts to identify new anti-cancer drugs. Tumors and cancer cells depend on the activity of normal proteins that have somehow become defective. When these proteins are defective we call them oncoproteins. These proteins drive cancer formation. For example, we are targeting the Notch and Hedgehog oncoproteins. Notch and Hedgehog are genes that are very important for human development however, in cancer they are potent oncoproteins. This is a new class of therapeutic target and one our program has substantial expertise in. In fact, we now know that these oncoproteins are critical for the development of many human cancers.

We cannot emphasize enough how important your support is to helping us fight cancer. We cannot support our research efforts by depending on the NIH or other government agencies alone, there is simply not enough federal investment to meet the demand and it is not getting better. We are a dedicated group of surgeons and scientists with one goal: to find the cures for cancer and to ease the burden on our patients, friends and families. We are grateful for your continued support and we are always available to present our research to you. So please arrange an appointment to visit our labs and learn how your generous gifts are helping to find the cure for cancer.

Molecular Oncology Program Faculty

Anthony Capobianco, Ph.D., Director
Xin-Hai Pei, M.D., Ph.D.
David Robbins, Ph.D.

To contact, please call 305-243-5318 or 305-243-5816.