CCHS Students Recognized at 1999 Honors Convocation

Graduating medical students at CCHS were recognized on May 14 at the 1999 Honors Convocation at the Four Points-Sheraton in Tuscaloosa. Departmental and special awards were announced as 18 graduates were recognized. Graduates of the University of Alabama School of Medicine completing medical school at the Tuscaloosa Program and their residency training destinations are listed on page 5.

Dean William A. Curry, MD, convened the gathering of graduates, families, and faculty. Cathy Gresham, MD, Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine and Director of Medical Student Affairs, presided at the 23rd Honors Convocation at CCHS recognizing graduating medical students.

The William R. Willard Award, the Dean’s Award, was presented to Jennifer Burdette, MD. This singular recognition, named for the founding dean of CCHS, is awarded annually to a senior medical student for outstanding contributions to the goals and mission of the college. Paul Roberts, MD, received the James H. Akers Memorial Award, chosen by members of the graduating class and given annually to the Tuscaloosa senior who best personifies both the art and the science of the practice of medicine. Chris Jahraus earned the Research Award (See p. 7.) Peter Chang, MD, a member of Alpha Omega Alpha, received the Scholastic Achievement Award for the highest grade point average during the clinical years at CCHS. Other graduates in the national medical honorary, Alpha Omega Alpha, are Chad Hammer, MD, Cheryl Hill, MD, Keith Hill, MD, and Mukul Mehra, MD.

The 1999 Community Medicine Preceptor Award was announced by the Behavioral & Community Medicine Department. Keith Sufferd, MD, a family physician in Tallassee, is 1999 Community Medicine Preceptor of the Year. He is a 1990 CCHS residency graduate practicing in Tallassee, Alabama. This annual award for teaching excellence and dedication honors the preceptor who exemplifies the principles of community/rural medicine in practice.

Philip Lackey, MD, received the “Student of the Year” award from the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center. The Larry Mayer Memorial Scholarship, which provides assistance for work in an underserved area of this country or abroad, was presented to a third-year CCHS student this year, John Waits. The award is given by the Mayes family in memory of Larry Mayes, a CCHS medical student who died in 1986 during rotation in Africa shortly before his graduation.

(Continued, p. 3.)

Departmental Awards

Community Medicine
Robert F. Gloor Award
Chandra McCall

Family Medicine Award
Jennifer Burdette
Alessandra Frye

Internal Medicine Award
Chandra McCall
William W. Winternitz Award
Alessandra Frye

Obstetrics & Gynecology
Pediatrics Award
Aleksandra Frye
Peter Bryce Award

Psychiatry
Pediatricians Award
Sara LeSturgeon

Surgery Award
Peter Chang

RWJ Grant to UA Will Help Alabama Children Get Health Insurance

The University of Alabama is preparing to lead the state in The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Covering Kids project, a national health access initiative for low-income children. The University of Alabama was awarded $983,000 over three years from the RWJ Foundation for “Covering Alabama Kids.”

John Wheat, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Community Medicine and Internal Medicine, UA College of Community Health Sciences, and Rex E. Culp, PhD, JD, Professor of Human Development and Family Studies and Research Chair in the UA College of Human Environmental Sciences, are co-leaders for the project. “Covering Alabama Kids” will involve state and local agencies and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation in joint efforts to increase numbers of children enrolled in health insurance programs, said Dr. John Wheat, who initiated Alabama’s collaborative proposal last spring. Dr. Culp and Dr. Wheat met with Governor Don Siegelman and his Children’s Commissioner, Pam Baker, in March and received their endorsement for the project.

(Continued on page 5)

John Wheat, MD, right, and Tracy Palmer, second from right, of the CCHS Department of Behavioral and Community Medicine, briefed Governor Don Siegelman and Cabinet member Pam Baker, Alabama Children's Commissioner, about the child health insurance initiative which has recently been funded by the RWJ Foundation. L-R, Dr. Rex Culp of the UA College of Human Environmental Sciences, who is co-leader investigator of the project, Commissioner Pam Baker, Governor Siegelman, Tracy Palmer, and Dr. John Wheat.
CCHS Authors Publish Article on Rare Surgical Cases Treated Here

Peter Nagi, a fourth-year medical student at CCHS (MSIV); Joseph C. Wallace, MD, Chairman of the CCHS Department of Surgery; Timothy W. Winkeler, MD, Associate Chair of Surgery; Thomas W. Oostland, MD, a clinical faculty member; and Paul Roberts, MSIV, were authors of an article published in Surgical Rounds, March 1999. The article, entitled "Parathyroid Carcinoma," discussed two cases involving this rare malignancy "which presented to our institution within four months of each other." In their discussion, the authors point out that parathyroid carcinoma is extremely difficult to diagnose preoperatively, but recognition of this condition during the operation offers the best chance for cure. Both patients were reported to be recovering without complications.

Pediatriecs Department Provides Substance Abuse Information

A teaching program for parents and children on substance abuse prevention is available in the CCHS Department of Pediatrics. Dr. David Hedefinger, Chair of Pediatrics, acquired the slide show and lecture notes from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The talk and slides cover alcohol and cocaine abuse, inhalant abuse, marijuana, smokeless tobacco, and risks of tobacco use, he said. There is also advice on how to have healthy communication with children about substance abuse, TV and the family, and tips for parents of adolescents.

"This information is ideal for our faculty, residents, and students-- or others-- to use when they speak to school or church groups, PTA meetings, or community organizations," said Dr. Hedefinger. To borrow the program, call the Pediatrics Department, 348-1304.

Dr. Leeper Appointed to APHA Board

James Leeper, PhD, Chairman of Behavioral and Community Medicine, has been appointed to the Education Board of the American Public Health Association (APHA). The Board is charged with enhancing professional knowledge, increasing technological proficiency in delivery of education, and educating health professionals. Dr. Leeper has also been a member of the Science Board of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and has just completed terms of service as Chair of the Program Development Board, Co-Chair of the Joint Policy Committee, and ex-officio member of the Executive Board for APHA.

Wheat Brings Agromedicine Perspective to National Environmental Initiative

John Wheat, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and Community Medicine, is a member of the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation's new working group on educating health care providers about pesticide exposures. The work group for this national inter-agency initiative will develop a national implementation plan for pesticide education with practicing health care providers. Dr. Wheat attended the first meeting of the work group for the "Initiative on Pesticides and National Strategies for Health Care Providers" in Washington, D.C., May 5-7.

The work group is multidisciplinary and includes federal officials as well as representatives from key organizations and institutions in the field. Dr. Wheat, who is President of the North American Agromedicine Consortium, will work with the group to build on federal recommendations for improving the practice of primary care providers in preventing, diagnosing, treating, and referring patients exposed to pesticides. The strategic plan will set competencies, recommend methodologies, identify target audience(s), and project timelines.

Dr. Wheat chaired the spring meeting of the North American Agromedicine Consortium in April. The meeting, held in Nebraska, was the catalyst for a cooperative initiative there to create a state agromedicine program.

The Agromedicine Consortium, a bureau of the International Association of Agricultural Medicine and Rural Health, is a forum for physicians and other health care providers, veterinarians, university researchers, Extension and other educators, government officials, agribusiness representatives, and rural residents in the United States, Canada, and Mexico to exchange information about agricultural health and safety. The Consortium's Annual Meeting will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina, September 25-28, 1999. See announcement below.

CALL FOR PAPERS
North American Agromedicine Consortium

All aspects of Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries are invited. Topics may include: exposure assessment, injury/fatigue/sleeplessness, prevention and intervention (educational, engineering, and behavioral approaches), health care access and delivery, susceptible populations, community health, and diagnosis and treatment. Abstracts due August 6. Cash awards for the best student presentation and poster presentation will be presented at the meeting. For more information: Gregory Copeland, North Carolina State University, (919) 515-7169; e-mail: gcopeland@ncsu.edu
Dr. Mozley Retires

Paul David Mozley, MD, Chairman of Obstetrics and Gynecology, retires October 1, ending the academic phase of a long and interesting career in which he became a Life Fellow in both the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Psychiatric Association. Along the way, he also received a Presidential medal for his psychiatric reorientation work with POWs, including Jeremiah Denton; chaired a committee on Gender Dysphoria (Sex Change); started an obstetrical fellowship for family practice residents, and shared the cover of the journal, OB/GYN World, in 1984 with Bill Cosby, who played obstetrician Dr. Huxtable on the popular TV series. After a career which so far has taken him to Japan, Naples, and three medical schools, he plans to practice half time with CCHS-trained family physician, Phil Smith, in Sylacauga. Dr. Smith, a 1982 residency graduate and former OB/GYN fellow here, will deliver the babies, said Dr. Mozley, while he takes care of OB/GYN surgeries in the practice. Dr. Mozley and his wife, Dale, plan to divide their time between Sylacauga and a new home they are now remodeling in Fairhope, Alabama.

Dr. Mozley grew up in Boaz, Alabama, and graduated from The University of Alabama in 1950. He did graduate work in Parasitology (UA) and Abnormal Psychology (University of Georgia) and then earned his MD from the Medical College of Alabama. He is certified by the American Board of Obstetrics & Gynecology and also certified in Psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry & Neurology.

Dr. Mozley completed his surgery internship and OB/GYN residency training in the U.S. Navy surgery at National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, and OB/GYN at Naval Hospitals in Corona and San Diego, California. He later trained in Psychiatry at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, the Washington School of Psychiatry, Washington, D.C., and the Naval Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

His appointments include: Residency in OB/GYN staff, Naval Hospital, Yokosuka, Japan, 1959-62; Head Gynecologist, Naval Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee, 1962-64, Director of Clinical Services and Operating Room, U.S. Hospital, Naples, Italy, 1966-69; Assistant Chief, Neuropsychiatry and Consultant Gynecologist, Naval Regional Medical Center, Portsmouth, Virginia, 1970-72, and Chief of Neuropsychiatry and Consultant Gynecologist, Naval Regional Medical Center, Portsmouth, Virginia, 1972-75.

He was Attending Obstetrician/Gynecologist and Director of Psychiatric Services at Medical Center Hospitals in Norfolk, Virginia, 1975-79, also serving as Consultant to Hampton Veterans’ Medical Center Hospitals. He was attending Obstetrician/Gynecologist and attending Psychiatrist at Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville, North Carolina, 1979-84.

He came to Tuscaloosa in 1984 and has been an attending Obstetrician/Gynecologist, DCH Regional Medical Center and Dale Memorial Hospital since then. He served as Chairman of the DCH Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 1986-90 and 1998-99, and he currently serves as president of the Capstone Health Services Foundation.

His academic appointments began when he was Research Assistant in Cellular Physiology, Medical College of Alabama, 1952-55. He was drafted as soon as he completed medical school, but he sought a career in academic medicine, he said, and prepared for that during his service in the Navy. He was on the faculty at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk with appointments in two Departments, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and Obstetrics and Gynecology. He became full Professor and Chairman of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. In 1979, he went to East Carolina University School of Medicine in Greenville, North Carolina, as Professor and Director of Undergraduate Education in the Department of OB/GYN and Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry.

Dr. Mozley was recruited to CCHS by Dean Wilmer Coggins, MD, and came to Tuscaloosa in 1984 as Professor and Chairman of OB/GYN with tenure. He also held an appointment as Professor of Psychiatry at CCHS and Professor and Associate Chairman, University of Alabama School of Medicine, Birmingham. He was the first CCHS department head to achieve the title of Chairman. Until then, the highest title here was Discipline Chief and all Chairmen were on the UAB campus.

Dr. Mozley’s professional memberships are numerous, including local, state and national associations and boards in his specialty areas. In addition to Life Fellow designation in OB/GYN and Psychiatry, he became a Fellow, American College of Surgeons, in 1965. He is a founding member and past president of the American Society of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynecology. He served as program chair for ACOG national professional meetings five times (1974-79).

Dr. Mozley has received awards for Clinical Research and “Outstanding Contributions to the Knowledge of OB/GYN” from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. He received several service medals during his Navy career including the Surgeon General’s Merit Award “in recognition of a distinguished career in service to his country” and the President of the United States’ Meritorious Service Medal for excellence in "Operation Homecoming" (Prisoners of War re-acclimatization and re-integration in 1972-73). He has written and lectured extensively with articles published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, JAMA, U.S. Medicine, Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality, Sexual Medicine Today, Medical World News, OB/GYN News, Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology, Contemporary OB/GYN, Archives of Gynecology, OB/GYN Observer, Audio Digest OB/GYN, and Journal of the American Board of Family Practice. He has also been President of the Capstone Health Services Foundation since 1998.

Dr. Mozley has received teaching awards from medical students and residents: “Attending of the Year” award from Psychiatry Residents at Eastern Virginia and “Clinical Science Course Award” in OB/GYN from 1982 graduates of East Carolina University School of Medicine.

Dr. Mozley has served on the CCHS Faculty Advisory Committee and the Policies and Procedures Committee since 1984. He has been Coordinator, Professional Liability, for the College since 1985. He initiated the obstetrical fellowship for family practice residents in 1988, and he has been President of the Capstone Health Services Foundation since 1998.

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Research Initiative for Students and Residents Completes First Year

The Student and Resident Research Initiative has completed a successful first year. Funded for three years by a grant from the Lister Hill Society, the program enabled interested students and residents to become involved in research and provides them guidance in their projects. Elizabeth Rand, MD, Chairman of Psychiatry and Neurology, and James Leeper, PhD, Chairman of Behavioral & Community Medicine, serve as mentors to the current group of five students and one resident. They hope that this initiative will result in more projects to be considered for the annual student and resident research awards each year.

The Research Initiative format includes an informational dinner in the fall for interested incoming trainees and quarterly lunches for those who continue in the program. At the third quarterly meeting, trainees presented their projects to the group, sharing goals, successes, and difficulties. Drs. Rand and Leeper helped to bring out significant themes which would be of general interest and offered suggestions for overcoming obstacles.

We are preparing to survey incoming students and residents, as we did last year, about their interest in and preparedness for research. We will also do follow-up surveys with returning students and residents, said Dr. Rand. MariaKoach, Assistant Professor, Health Sciences Library.

Note: The monthly Research Lunch Series, resumes September 14. The series resides Tuesday, from 12:00 noon-1:00 p.m. in the Health Sciences Building, Room 424.

25th Anniversary of Residency Reunion for Residents Planned for August

To mark the 25th year of the Family Practice Residency, CCHS is inviting all graduates of the program to a dinner and evening of celebration this summer. Dr. Jerry McKnight, Chairman of Family Medicine and 1985 Residency graduate, said the event is tentatively planned for August 7th, and alumni will receive invitations as soon as the exact time and place have been finalized.

The College is also compiling information for an alumni souvenir booklet to give to each guest. Vicki Johnson, CHS Director of Advancement, who is planning the event, said she hopes the book will be a special remembrance for former residents.

Alumni will soon receive a questionnaire, which will be used to write profiles for the book with a request for pictures. Each graduate will be asked to report a photograph for an individual profile. Pictures from residency days at CCHS are also sought.

"This event is our first formal reunion," said CHS Dean William Curry, MD. "I look forward to honoring the family physicians who have proved the wisdom of those who founded this program."

CHCS Tests Effectiveness of New Antibiotic

CHCS is participating in a pharmaceutical study of the new antibiotic, gernifloxacin, for the treatment of community acquired pneumonia. The study is funded by SmithKline Beecham, one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world. William Curry, MD, is Principal Investigator for the study here, and Charles Taylor, Pharm D., is Co-Investigator. The project will analyze information from patients in North America and Europe.

Dr. Thomas McHatle (left), Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and his patient watch the movements of her baby on an ultrasound screen while he demonstrates state-of-the-art technology. Leuvse Jakeski, MD (second from left), a Lithuanian obstetrician who visited Capstone Medical Center to observe OB/GYN practice and learn more about the role of social work in medical settings, shadowed Dr. McHatle during a trip to Tuscaloosa in May. Dr. McHatle’s daughter Kristina, a student in the UA Social Work program, was his mother’s interpreter during her visit. She is standing behind the computer monitor which records and transmits the information from the ultrasound.

The equipment, located at Capstone, provides physicians and expectant parents the unprecedented opportunity to see the developing fetus and detect potential problems before delivery. It also allows for telemedicine consultations with specialists if necessary. Dr. Jakeski said obstetricians in her country do not have such sophisticated technology to use. Her visit was coordinated by Cynthia Tyler, Assistant Professor, UA School of Social Work, and Director of Social Work at Capstone Medical Center. Mrs. Tyler (standing behind the patient) said the visit was accomplished through the joint efforts of CCHS Dean William Curry and Social Work Dean Lucinda Roff and support from the Open Society Foundation. Dr. Jakeski also visited DCH Maternity Department and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, observed Social Work Services at Capstone, and visited in Fayette, "Learning about the way we provide services to surrounding counties was valuable for her," said Tyler.

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OnRounds • 5 • Spring 1999

Dr. Roger Lacy presents Psychiatry Award to Sara LeSturgeon.
The Rural Medical Scholars Program (RMSP) will be highlighted in a poster presentation at the 27th Annual Conference of the National Rural Health Association held in San Diego, California, May 27-29, 1999. Susan Guin, R.N., C.R.N.P., Coordinator of the program, and Rural Medical Scholars Lee Thompson and Randy Quinn will represent RMSP at the conference. John Hagen, Director of the Rural Alabama Health Education Center, which has offices in the CCHS Department of Behavioral and Community Medicine and works with the RMSP to develop community projects and field placements, will accompany them.

Thompson and Quinn are members of the third class of Rural Medical Scholars to enter the University of Alabama School of Medicine. They start UASOM this summer and will return to CCHS as third year medical students to complete their clinical training in Tuscaloosa. The first class of Rural Medical Scholars return to CCHS this summer to begin their clinical training as third and fourth year medical students.

The Rural Medical Scholars program was established at CCHS in 1996 as a joint effort between The University of Alabama and the University of Alabama School of Medicine. Ten qualified students from rural areas are chosen each year as Rural Medical Scholars, a highly selective pre-med program in which the students focus on issues related to community medicine and primary care in rural Alabama. Students with rural backgrounds interested in practicing primary care medicine in a rural area are eligible for RMSP. Admission to the program is based on high academic achievement, character, and leadership qualities. The program is supported by funding from the Alabama Legislature through the Alabama Family Practice Rural Health Board with assistance from UASOM (University of Alabama School of Medicine), and other organizations interested in rural health in Alabama.

For more information, contact the Rural Medical Scholars Program, CCHS, Box 870326, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0326. (205) 348-5892. E-mail: grantann@cchs.ua.edu.

Rural Medical Scholars Program Featured at National Conference

Rural Medical Scholars Program Special Features at National Conference

Rural Medical Scholars Program

Rural Medical Scholars Pipeline

Pre-college College Medical School Residency Fellowship

AHEC outreach at schools & community events Rural Medical Scholars Program Rural studies & fieldwork Clinical electives Summer options Rural, Family, and Community Medicine Clinical electives Summer options

Community-based Educational Programs including AHEC* and Extension Services

Primary Care, especially family practice

to be developed

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Recruitment Scholarships

*AHEC - Area Health Education Center

Rural Scholar Programs Shared with RWJ Grantees in Ten States

Rural Health Scholars and Rural Medical Scholars from UA accompanied Dr. John Wheat, Director of the Rural Scholar programs, and representatives of partner agencies in Alabama's Southern Rural Access Program planning grant to a meeting in Atlanta in March. Participants from ten states receiving Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funds to improve health care in the rural South attended the meeting to share ideas and strategies. The RWJ Foundation has made available $13.8 million over three years for the first phase of an effort to improve access to care in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, East Texas, and West Virginia. A broad consortium of stakeholders in each state must cooperate under this program to improve the health care system.

Rural Medical Scholars attending were Lee Thompson from Dale County, and Brian Valentine, Russell County, who start medical school this summer after a year of focused study of rural health issues. The conference allowed them to meet rural doctors and other health providers from several states and learn about how they are meeting the needs of their patients. Other rural scholars attending the meeting were Shameka Clark, a nursing student from Sumter County, and Callie Cason, a biology major from Monroe County, both 1996 Rural Health Scholars, and Audra Ford, a pre-med graduate student from Macon County.

Dr. Wheat was one of the speakers at the conference and presented an overview of the rural scholar programs and their importance in the "Rural Medical Pipeline," a concept which matches the "Rural Leader Pipeline" component of the RWJ Foundation guidelines for improving rural health care systems.

"He was the only other speaker besides the Governor of Georgia to have an encore," said Audra Ford, "but more importantly, an entourage that represented the impact of his programs."
Jahraus Receives Student Research Award

Christopher Jahraus is the recipient of the 1999 Medical Student Research Award. He was chosen for the honor by the Research Committee of the College of Community Health Sciences. The award recognizes his research, presentation, and publication accomplishments.

Jahraus, a senior medical student at CCHS who will graduate in December, presented "Utility of C-Reactive Protein (CRP) in Infectious and Other Disease States" at the Alabama Academy of Science and presented "Unrealized Utility of C-Reactive Protein" to the Larry Mayes Society, a CCHS informal gathering of students and faculty. He has also worked extensively with Dr. Robert Picerno, Professor of Internal Medicine, to prepare an article on the same topic for a refereed journal.

His article, "Clinical Presentation and Treatment of a Salmonella breedenyi Epidemic in Shelby County, Alabama" (coauthored by Harry L. Phillips, MD) will be published in Southern Medical Journal. This article is the result of his work during his third year Family Medicine and Community/Rural Medicine rotations in Columbiana. During these rotations he also assisted in initiating a study of bone loss in rural elderly women. In addition, Jahraus has collaborated with Guillermo Godoy, MD, in the study of novel use of epinephrine in neonates. Their article, "Endotracheal Administration of Epinephrine in the Treatment of Neonatal Pulmonary Hemorrhage," is in review for Pediatrics: The Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

-Martha Cook

Notes from Alums

McCormick's Advice for Preceptors Stems From Personal Experience

Dr. Sam Gaskins reports that 1979 residency graduate Louis H. McCormick, MD, is the author of "Precepting Preclinical Students," an article in Family Medicine (April, 1999). Dr. McCormick provides advice for working with first- and second-year medical students in an office-based practice. A preceptor for Louisiana State University Medical Center, he has a solo practice in Franklin, a small, rural community 120 miles from New Orleans. He emphasizes the importance of community contacts for the students and how talking to patients helps strengthen a student's confidence and acquire the skills necessary to obtain patient histories.

"Students feel that if you just spend enough time with a patient, then you will ask the right questions and ultimately diagnose and cure them. ...it is fun being reminded of the days when I felt the same way. Students' perspectives are wonderful antidotes for cynicism," said Dr. McCormick in his article. The article is on the internet at http://stfn.org.

1990 Chief Is Now Medical Missionary

Ray Brown, 1990 Chief Resident, and his family have moved to the country of Chad in East Africa. Dr. Brown is a medical missionary for his church, says his friend and Dallas, Texas, colleague, Tom Winkler, MD.

Brandons Adopt Infants

Dr. and Mrs. John Brandon (Residency class of 1981) announce "the arrival of our children on March 19, 1999, from the Republic of Moldova (in Eastern Europe)." Dr. Brandon, a family physician in Gordo, Alabama, shared this photo and a note to friends and colleagues:

"Walker Daniel Brandon (born October 11, 1997) and Hannah Claire Brandon (born February 4, 1998) were welcomed into the family by their parents and sisters, Brooke and Nathalie. Grandparents are Dr. and Mrs. Earl Brandon of Tuscaloosa."

Alumni Update

University of Alabama School of Medicine
Tuscaloosa Program
UA College of Community Health Sciences

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Home Phone: ____________________________
Office Phone: ____________________________

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CCHS Studying PTSD

CCHS is conducting a double-blind, placebo-controlled drug study for Eli-Lilly at the Capstone Medical Center with patients who have post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). There is a currently approved pharmacologic treatment for PTSD. Many studies have shown that some patients benefit from serotonergic agents like Prozac, Paxil, and others.

"Our study is one prepared by the Eli Lilly Company to try to demonstrate to the FDA that Prozac is an effective treatment for PTSD, and that PTSD should be listed in the PDR as an indication for using Prozac," said Elizabeth Rand, MD, Principal Investigator.

Capstone is one of 30 national sites participating in the study. In a double-blind placebo-controlled study, she explained, some patients (20%) get a fake or placebo pill while others (80%) get active drug—either 20 mg or 40mg—and neither the patient or the study staff know who gets drug and who gets placebo. During the 3-month active phase patients are seen about every 3 weeks and monitored for symptoms, side effects, drug use, and other things. Those who complete the 3-month active phase and improve are eligible for phase 2, which lasts six months.

Beyond having PTSD, patients in the study must be 18-65 years old, not pregnant, not have certain other mental illnesses, not be active or past drug users, not have any other serious physical or medical illness, and not be on any other psychoactive drugs or in psychotherapy except simple supportive treatment.

Patients who are interested in being in the study are screened for eligibility through a telephone interview. If they seem eligible, they come in for a physical exam, lab tests, and several lengthy questionnaires. If they are accepted and want to participate, they get their pills (drug or placebo) at a second visit. At each visit they get a urine sample for drug screening, and answer brief questionnaires. All patients sign a consent, but of course are free to drop out at any time. All evaluations and treatment are free, all medications are free, and they earn $25 for each visit. Medical problems arising during the study may be taken care of at Lilly’s expense. As a result of the trauma, the individual must experience symptoms for at least a month in the following three categories:

- They must have re-experience the event through either flashbacks, nightmares, recollections, psychological distress at exposure, or physical distress at exposure. They must have at least three symptoms of avoidance: avoiding thoughts of the trauma; avoiding related activities; having amnesia; decreased interest in things; sense of detachment; decreased affect; or a sense of fore-shortened future.
- PTSD sufferers must also have at least two symptoms of arousal (insomnia, irritability, poor concentration, hypervigilance, or exaggerated startle response).

Who gets PTSD?

PTSD is best known for occurring in combat situations. It was called "shell shock," also "soldier’s heart," "combat neurosis" and "psychic fatigue" in the early days. However, it can be related to many other types of trauma such as kidnapping, terrorism, torture, being held hostage, incarceration, severe accidents or violent personal assault (i.e., sexual assault, robbery or mugging) and natural disasters such as tornadoes, volcanoes, hurricanes, etc. Or the trauma may involve witnessing serious injury or death of another person due to violence, or even learning of sudden death or, for example, of a child's life threatening illness.

Community rates of exposure to trauma are 40-80%, but community-based studies reveal a lifetime prevalence for PTSD of only 1-14%, indicating that most people exposed to trauma do not develop PTSD. Vulnerability has to do with severity, duration and proximity of the trauma, in part, and certain risk factors, such as lack of social support, history of depression or anxiety, and previous exposure to trauma.

What is PTSD

The APA's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (IV, 1994) sets out precise criteria for PTSD: the traumatic stress that the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted by must be an event that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others; and the person’s response must have involved intense fear, helplessness or horror.

As a result of the trauma, the individual must experience symptoms for at least a month in the following three categories:

- They must have re-experience the event through either flashbacks, nightmares, recollections, psychological distress at exposure, or physical distress at exposure.
- They must have at least three symptoms of avoidance: avoiding thoughts of the trauma; avoiding related activities; having amnesia; decreased interest in things; sense of detachment; decreased affect; or a sense of fore-shortened future.
- PTSD suffers must also have at least two symptoms of arousal (insomnia, irritability, poor concentration, hypervigilance, or exaggerated startle response).

Types of PTSD

PTSD is not diagnosed until one month after the trauma. Similar symptoms in the first month may represent acute stress disorder.

There are three types of PTSD:

- Acute (lasting less than 3 months)
- Chronic (lasting more than 3 months)
- Delayed (starting 6 mo. after event

There are common associated features such as anxiety or a Releasing Factor (CRF) is released from the hypothalamus. But in PTSD circulating cortisol is low; glucocorticoid receptors are more and more responsive, and there is increased sensitivity of the Hypothalamic-Pituitary Axis (HPA) to negative feedback inhibition.

What is the Cause?

Although PTSD is called a stress disorder, the neuroendocrine alterations in PTSD are quite distinct from those found with other kinds of chronic stress and depression. In both cases (81% of patients with PTSD have another disorder, especially Bipolar Disorder, Unipolar Depression, and Anxiety Disorder, and Substance Abuse. In most cases (81%), this other disorder also began after the trauma.

What is the Treatment?

The goal is to provide the patient with a renewed sense of control and a constructive world view, a shift from victim to survivor to thriver. Treatment should include: 1) safety first and basic needs; 2) early identification and education; 3) providing the opportunity to describe the trauma as fully as possible and 4) treatment of comorbid disorders.