



Dr. Jeffrey Lisse sees a patient at the AAC's University Physicians Healthcare clinic.

AAC Continues to Provide Rheumatology Care for Native American Patients

For more than two decades, physicians with the Arizona Arthritis Center (AAC) have conducted rheumatology clinics at Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities in Arizona and western New Mexico. During this time the AAC has provided consultative services to five of the largest tribes in the Southwest (Apache, Hopi, Navajo, Pima and Tohono O'odham).

While not as common as type 2 diabetes, certain rheumatic diseases – including rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis and reactive arthritis – frequently affect Native American populations. “Operating these on-site clinics allows us to serve a population in need with the latest in rheumatologic care and medications and furthers our educational mission as well,” says Jeffrey R. Lisse, MD, chief of the Section of Rheumatology in the Department of

“Operating these on-site clinics allows us to serve a population in need with the latest in rheumatologic care and medications”

Medicine at the University of Arizona College of Medicine and current director of the IHS clinics.

In Arizona, AAC faculty and fellows currently staff monthly rheumatology clinics at the Sells and San Xavier IHS facilities and the Gila River Health Care facility on the Gila River Reservation south of Phoenix. They also provide consultation for physicians staffing clinics in the northern part of Arizona and western New Mexico.

The clinics care for 75-100 patients each month. Physicians and fellows travel to the reservation and provide hands-on care to patients. In addition, patients are cared for at the rheumatology clinic at the UPH Clinics at Wilcox in Tucson. These include Native American patients referred from the El Rio Community Health Center in

Continued on p. 8

Calendar

Living Healthy

Living Healthy Tucson
University Medical Center (UMC)
🕒 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 3
Physical Activity:
The Key to Lifelong Health
Gail Riggs, MA, CHES

Wednesday, Dec. 1
Well-Being Through the Holidays
Rick Bass

Living Healthy Green Valley
Casa de Esperanza Community Center
🕒 10:15-11:15 a.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 19
It Only Hurts When I Move it:
Treating Achy Bones and Joints
Eric P. Gall, MD, MACP, MACR

Tuesday, Nov. 9
Everything You Always Wanted to Know About
Clinical Research But Were Afraid to Ask
Oscar Furet, RN, MPH

Tuesday, Dec. 14
Being Your Own Best Advocate
David Wayne Smith, DEd, DABPS, FAFCE

Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2011
Updates on Rheumatology Research:
From Bench to Bedside
Miranda Adelman, PhD

Living Healthy Active
UMC Wellness Center, Tucson
🕒 10:30 a.m.-noon

Saturday, Oct. 16
Yoga For Every Body
Catharine Sutherland

Saturday, Nov. 20
Breathing and Stretching for Health
Tracy Shake

Saturday, Dec. 18
Qi Gong
Oliver Wilson

Living Healthy Conference
UMC DuVal Auditorium, Tucson

Saturday, Jan. 15, 2011
Keynote Speaker: Paul Howard, MD

Topics and presenters are subject to change.
For more information about the Living Healthy
with Arthritis program, please call

(520) 626-5040

AAC Friends

Thursday, Nov. 4
Meet the Researchers
AAC Friends Fall Luncheon
Skyline Country Club

Thursday, Feb. 10, 2011
The Eva M. Holtby Arthritis
Conversations & Lunch
The Arizona Inn

For more information on AAC Friends' events,
please call **(520) 626-7901**

www.arthritis.arizona.edu



**Eric P. Gall, MD,
MACP, MACR**
Interim Director
Arizona Arthritis Center

A Message from the Interim Director

I am excited to continue my work as interim director of the Arizona Arthritis Center (AAC) and am eager to build upon our mission of providing outstanding clinical care, research and education.

The Center has had a busy and productive summer. The search for a nationally-renowned director is well underway. Our hunt for a development director is complete and we welcome Thom Melendez to the AAC. The Rheumatology Clinic welcomes S. Anita Narayanan, MD, assistant professor of medicine, as a new member in October, and Susan Knowles, MD, who began her fellowship in July.

Research papers have been accepted for the national meeting of the American College of Rheumatology in November; several grants have been received (as outlined in this newsletter) and new treatment studies will commence for lupus, gout, scleroderma, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. Our research on rheumatoid arthritis and stem cell cartilage growth is in high gear and very productive. We have appointed a new Scientific Advisory Board to foster collaboration among many disciplines and to guide our research endeavors.

The Living Healthy lectures at University Medical Center (UMC) have been so well attended that we have added a monthly session in Green Valley in collaboration with the Casa de Esperanza Community Center. The movement-oriented "Living Healthy Active" sessions at the UMC Wellness Center begin Saturday, Oct. 16. We are renewing our partnership with Canyon Ranch with an Arthritis Week, "Thriving with Arthritis," Oct. 10-17. We also are starting new collaborations with the UA Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health to ensure that our research makes an impact in both the prevention and management of the more than 100 types of arthritis affecting more than 46 million Americans.

The Friends of the Arizona Arthritis Center have been very busy with events detailed in this newsletter (see p. 5). We had a Fall Basketball Tip-Off Luncheon with a team update keynote address by UA coach Sean Miller, and Lute Olson was there as well. An exciting golf tournament honoring former coach Olson and attended by many former Wildcat basketball players will be held May 6 and 7, 2011, at the Ventana Canyon Golf and Racquet Club. Desert Diamond Casino continues to be the tournament's sponsor.

I'm happy to be part of the Arthritis Center at this exciting time – a time of reconnecting with old friends and looking forward to new collaborations. Your support of the Arizona Arthritis Center is both appreciated and needed. Please feel free to call on me at any time to discuss the Center's mission and activities. I always am available and happy to chat.

Fall Edition, October 2010

One of nine Centers of Excellence at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, the Arizona Arthritis Center is dedicated to biomedical research into the causes and treatments of more than 100 forms of arthritis. Understanding the ways that arthritis, bone and connective diseases start and progress is the key to helping individuals with arthritis lead healthier lives.

Arizona Arthritis Center Update

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Miranda K. Adelman, PhD

Miranda Adelman, PhD, left, and Samuel Schluter, PhD.

Funding Awards Include Ongoing Support and Grant for Interdepartmental Research

The Southwestern Clinic and Research Institute (SCARI) has continued its support of research by Miranda K. Adelman, PhD, on autoimmune diseases, and the Arizona Biomedical Research Commission (ABRC) has awarded a collaborative team of researchers at the Arizona Arthritis Center (AAC) and the Departments of Immunobiology and Pharmacology a grant to study immune events associated with pain.

SCARI, which was instrumental in establishing the original research laboratory at the AAC, continues its support of vital research at the center by awarding Dr. Adelman a grant renewal. This is the seventh grant awarded to Dr. Adelman by SCARI to support ongoing studies on the causes and mechanisms of autoimmune disease, particularly systemic lupus erythematosus and rheumatoid arthritis. Dr. Adelman describes the SCARI board of directors as “true heroes who remain dedicated to the Arizona Arthritis Center, its research and education programs.” Thanks to SCARI support, the data generated from the studies has led to several research publications, state funding and the advancement of Dr. Adelman’s career.

Dr. Adelman describes the SCARI board of directors as “true heroes who remain dedicated to the Arizona Arthritis Center, its research and education programs.”

The Arizona Biomedical Research Commission (ABRC) recently awarded a three-year research grant to the collaborative research team of Dr. Adelman; Samuel Schluter, PhD, research associate professor with the Department of Immunobiology and a member of the Arizona Arthritis Center; Nafees Ahmad, PhD, professor with the Department of Immunobiology; and Eva Varga, PhD, research assistant professor with the Department of Pharmacology. The

objective of the project is to investigate the immune suppressive events associated with activated opioid receptors, which are involved in pain pathways. Dr. Schluter explains: “Opioid receptors are activated when the body’s natural antibodies and analgesic molecules (endorphins), as well as many narcotic therapies, bind opioid receptors.” This research will lead to a more thorough understanding of immune events associated with pain and pain mechanisms and potentially to the development of new non-narcotic therapies for the treatment of pain. ABRC grants, which are extremely competitive, are funded by the Arizona tobacco tax.



AAC Scientific Advisory Board Established

An Arizona Arthritis Center (AAC) Scientific Advisory Board is being established by Eric P. Gall, MD, AAC interim director. "It has been my vision to try to reestablish some of the interdisciplinary cooperative activities that seem to have been lost and were an important part of the Arthritis Center over the years," Dr. Gall explains.

The purpose of the Scientific Advisory Board will be to understand the ongoing issues in the areas outlined above at the University of Arizona and its affiliate institutions and in the communities of Arizona. "By understanding what we all do, we can explore the opportunities for collaborative activities and interdisciplinary efforts," Dr. Gall explains.

The AAC's original success as a National Institutes of Health-funded multipurpose center was propelled by the interdisciplinary connections, cooperative activities and relationships between the AAC, academic leaders at the Arizona Health Sciences Center and community leaders.

"I believe that members of this scientific advisory board will be helpful both to me and to a new director in moving forward with the mission of the center"

Individuals serving on the AAC Scientific Advisory Board also will play an important part in the future of the AAC by helping establish a framework for the center's next director.

The overall goal of the Arthritis Center is to provide interdisciplinary research, educational activities and community service in the areas of arthritis, rheumatic disease, musculoskeletal medicine and autoimmune disease.

Beginning in September, board meetings will be held every two to three months. As board members become acquainted with one another and begin to explore potential collaborative efforts, the schedule will become more regular. "I believe that members of this scientific advisory board will be helpful both to me and to a new director in moving forward with the mission of the center," says Dr. Gall.

Department of Economic Security Awards Five-Year Contract to DARC

The Disability Assessment Research Clinic (DARC) at the Arizona Arthritis Center has received a five-year contract from the Department of Economic Security (DES) to review the medical reports of people applying for services from the state of Arizona's Vocational Rehabilitation Program.



David Wayne Smith, DEd, DABPS, FACHE, director, DARC.

David Wayne Smith, DEd, DABPS, FACHE, director of the DARC, and Stanley Levin, MD, research specialist with the AAC, will review objective medical evidence in order to help the DES decide whether a person will be able to return to work with proper rehabilitation or if he or she is too disabled to continue working.

Dr. Smith feels this service is very important to the state of Arizona in light of the current budget deficit. "I feel we are helping the state make better-informed decisions," says Dr. Smith. "If we are able to rehabilitate a person and keep them employed, we are saving the state money."

Dr. Smith began the first outpatient rehabilitation center in Arizona in 1960 and created the master's program for rehabilitation at the University of Arizona. Dr. Levin was a very successful gynecologist in Tucson for many years. When he retired from private practice, he joined Dr. Smith in the DARC, examining severely disabled persons.

Contact the Disability Assessment Research Clinic, (520) 626-2982.

Meet Our New Friends Board Members

by Joan Ardern, chair, Arizona Arthritis Center Friends Board

It is my pleasure to introduce three new Friends Board members, Linda Carolan, Tracy Shake and Belle Tom. Each brings her unique experience and talent to our board, while all three share a passion for and understanding of the non-profit world and the Arizona Arthritis Center.



Ms. Carolan not only will be a new member of the Friends' Board but also has agreed to be our board secretary. Because of her extensive background in public relations, Ms. Shake is heading up the PR committee. Ms. Tom will be working on Friends' events. The Friends Board welcomes our new members with open arms.

The Friends of the Arizona Arthritis Center is gearing up for a fun-packed 2010/2011 year. Here is this year's schedule:

Thursday, Nov. 4

Meet the Researchers: AAC Friends Fall Luncheon
Skyline Country Club

Thursday, Feb. 10, 2011

The Eva M. Holtby Arthritis Conversations & Lunch
Arizona Inn

If you have an interest in becoming a Friend of the Arizona Arthritis Center or in supporting any of several committees, please call our information line, (520) 626-7901, and leave your name and phone number for the membership committee.

Getting to Know Us: Meet Julie Johnson

Julie Johnson, senior program coordinator, oversees the Clinical Research Unit (CRU) at the Arizona Arthritis Center (AAC). She provides oversight and management of support

staff who recruit research participants.

A Minnesota native, Julie moved to Tucson in 1991. Shortly thereafter, she began working at the CRU, assisting research coordinators with recruitment materials and data collection.

During her early years at the AAC, Julie also traveled

with physicians and medical staff on many Indian Health Service visits.

Currently the program coordinator for the CRU, Julie works closely with AAC physicians in selecting studies and determining their feasibility. She follows strict protocols to ensure that the objectives specified for each project are accomplished in accordance with the established guidelines, while helping maintain accurate documentation of all procedures. She works with the UA Institutional Review

Board to maintain the safety and well-being of all research subjects.

Julie currently supervises multiple clinical trials. "It is exciting to be involved in the beginning stages of cutting-edge therapies for autoimmune disease. For some of our study patients, these treatments have made a profound positive impact on their quality of life," she says.

With more than 18 years of service with the AAC and more than 30 years in the health-care industry, Julie brings a solid, stable background to the CRU, but always is ready to

grow and try new ideas. She truly is appreciated by her staff, who enjoy her courteous, fun, friendly demeanor and exemplary work ethic. "I enjoy interacting with University personnel, physicians, study coordinators and sponsor

representatives and seeing these interactions create the network that is necessary to launch a clinical trial," says Julie.

In her free time Julie enjoys movies, landscaping and traveling.

To learn more about research studies, please call (520) 626-8219.



"It is exciting to be involved in the beginning stages of cutting-edge therapies"



LIVING HEALTHY WITH ARTHRITIS

Living Healthy with Arthritis is the AAC's monthly community education program made possible through the Susan and Saul Tobin Endowment.

The program includes a monthly lecture on the first Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. and an annual conference in January at University Medical Center in Tucson. The 2011 Living Healthy Conference on Saturday, Jan. 15, will feature a keynote address by Paul Howard, MD, president of Arthritis Health, Ltd., an integrated medical practice dedicated to the care of adults and children with arthritis, metabolic bone and autoimmune disorders.

Beginning in October, Living Healthy Green Valley and Living Healthy Active will become regular monthly events. Living Healthy Green Valley is a collaboration with the Casa de Esperanza Community Center and will be held on the second Tuesday of each month from 10:15-11:15 a.m. Living Healthy Active, a collaboration with University Medical Center's Wellness Center, will be held on the third Saturday of each month from 10:30 a.m.–noon.

A full calendar of events is listed on the inside cover of this newsletter. These activities are free (except the Living Healthy Conference). We appreciate your pre-registration. For more information or to register, please call (520) 626-5040 or email livinghealthy@arthritis.arizona.edu. Our website, www.arthritis.arizona.edu, is a great way to stay current with the Living Healthy program.

Sarkar Lab Aims to Understand the Causes of Rheumatoid Arthritis

The immune system is complex, consisting of a variety of cells and molecules which act in concert to provide protection from infections, mediate healing and regulate cancerous cells. During an autoimmune inflammation, such as rheumatoid arthritis, the well-coordinated immune system goes awry and produces inflammation in the joints. The cause of the immune dysfunction remains unknown.

The laboratory of Sujata Sarkar, MD, assistant professor of medicine, is focused on two research projects in rheumatoid arthritis:

The first aims to answer the question: Why do some individuals develop arthritis while others do not? To this end, Dr. Sarkar is utilizing a genetically identical model of arthritis, with a wide variation in the severity and onset of arthritis. She has identified certain immune molecules which are different in arthritic and non-arthritic conditions and in the time it takes to express these molecules and lead to the development of arthritis. Dr. Sarkar also is seeking to answer this question in patients with rheumatoid arthritis by studying the interaction of genes, smoking and immune activation.

In the second project, Dr. Sarkar is working to understand the role of an inflammatory factor called IL-17. In the past decade, tumor necrosis factor (TNF), which is required for normal immune function, has been shown to be abnormally increased in rheumatoid arthritis. Therapies designed to regulate TNF have significantly improved quality of life in patients with this condition. However, a significant number of patients do not respond to such treatment, or have a partial response or a response that weakens over time, suggesting that there are other immune molecules or cells capable of mediating joint inflammation, either in the presence of TNF or in place of it. In animal models of arthritis, IL-17 has been shown to mediate inflammation and cartilage and bone destruction with the same intensity as TNF. Dr. Sarkar is studying the role of IL-17 in mediating inflammation in rheumatoid arthritis as well as the immune events that lead to the IL-17 response and the mechanisms that suppress IL-17.

These studies, funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Arthritis National Research Foundation, will lead to a better understanding of the cause of rheumatoid arthritis and the development of new therapies.



Sujata Sarkar, MD

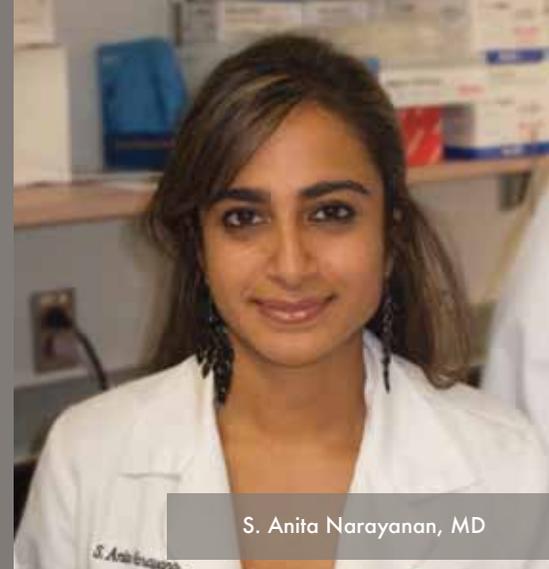
Rheumatology Clinic Welcomes Dr. Narayanan

The Section of Rheumatology and the Arizona Arthritis Center (AAC) welcome S. Anita Narayanan, MD, assistant professor of medicine. Dr. Narayanan began seeing patients in October.

Dr. Narayanan participated in an integrated BS/MD program. She graduated from Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, in 2001, with a bachelor of science degree in integrated life sciences. She received a doctor of medicine degree from Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine in Rootstown, Ohio, in 2005.

She completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at the University of Arizona in 2008 and finished her rheumatology fellowship at the AAC in 2010.

Her interests include the Rheumatology Health Tracker, a Web-based rheumatology registry, which is being used at the Rheumatology Clinic to capture and analyze patient-and physician-reported outcomes electronically. She also has been involved in several clinical trials for rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, gout and osteoarthritis.



S. Anita Narayanan, MD

AAC Welcomes New Development Director



Thom Melendez

Thomas (Thom) Melendez has joined the Arizona Arthritis Center after serving two years as associate director of development for the BIO5 Institute, where he successfully garnered support from corporations and individuals to support education and outreach programs. Prior to his development duties he was BIO5's coordinator of education and outreach programs that include on-campus internships as well as high school experiences for students across Arizona.

Thom earned his bachelor's degree in education from the University of Arizona in 1989 and

joined the Arizona Department of Economic Security where he quickly advanced into management. In 1998, he began a nine-year appointment as a third-grade teacher at Esperanza Elementary in the Sunnyside Unified School District. During his time in the classroom he earned his masters in educational leadership with distinction from Northern Arizona University. His passion for the progress made possible through education and scientific research will serve him well as he facilitates support for the Arizona Arthritis Center and the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the UA College of Medicine.

New Fellow



Susan Knowles, MD

The Section of Rheumatology and the Arizona Arthritis Center welcome first-year fellow Susan Knowles, MD.

Dr. Knowles received her undergraduate degree in biology from the University of Nevada, Reno. After completing medical school at the University of Nevada School of Medicine, she moved to Tucson to pursue residency training in internal medicine. She served as chief medical resident and was the recipient of the Department of Medicine's Humanism in Medicine award before beginning her rheumatology fellowship in 2010.

Did You Know?

Scientists estimate that about 1.3 million people, or about 0.6 percent of the U.S. adult population, have rheumatoid arthritis.

Lute Olson
GOLF TOURNAMENT

To Benefit the
Arizona Arthritis Center

May 6 and 7, 2011
at the Ventana Canyon
Golf and Racquet Club

We Can't Do It Without You!

Whether you become a member of the AAC Friends for \$45 a year; enjoy the Lute Olson Golf Tournament for \$250; or have the resources for a major gift or an endowed chair, your support and commitment help the Arizona Arthritis Center educate people about arthritis and research ways to improve diagnosis and treatment. Together, by contributing to the best of our ability and means, we can fight this debilitating disease.

To help the AAC in its mission to cure arthritis, please use the attached envelope to make a donation, or contact the development office at the Arizona Arthritis Center, (520) 626-7902

RHEUMATOLOGY CLINIC

University Physicians Healthcare (UPH) Clinic at 535 N. Wilmot

Outstanding patient care from our rheumatology specialists, who also teach and conduct research to discover new treatments and improve diagnosis.

No referrals are necessary except when required by insurance. Most insurance plans are accepted.

To make an appointment, please call (520) 694-4000.

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Professor of Medicine

Eric P. Gall, MD, MACP, MACR
Interim Director, Arizona Arthritis
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Rafael Grau, MD
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S. Anita Narayanan, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine

Sujata Sarkar, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine

Cindy Straw, ANP
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Shane Smith, BS

"Rheumatology Care for Native American Patients" continued from p. 1

Tucson and patients who need infusions of state-of-the-art medications.

The AAC is proud to be a part of this partnership between the UA and the IHS clinics in the Southwest. As the AAC faculty continues to grow, they will begin to operate clinics in the northern part of Arizona, as well.

*Front cover photo: Mark Thaler, Biomedical
Communications, Arizona Health Sciences Center.*

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