

ARIZONA ARTHRITIS CENTER

UPDATE

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A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE, A CENTER OF HOPE

No. 25, Spring 2007

Disability Assessment Research Clinic Helps Care for Whole Person

For people who have arthritis, managing their medical needs is only one part of helping them adjust to what is often a life-altering chronic condition.

Arthritis afflicts many people at a young age while they are actively engaged in the workforce. Their level of disability is often exacerbated, unless they receive care



Charles J. Rastatter, EdD., director of Vocational Assessment, explains a work simulation to Joy LeBarge Johnson.

from physicians who have been trained to appropriately diagnose, treat or refer patients for effective early intervention. Unfortunately, too many people find themselves unprepared for the level of disability as well as the emotional and economic impact of arthritis on their families.

Helping people sort out their abilities, disabilities and vocational and benefit options is the important work of the Disability Assessment Research Clinic (DARC), an integral part of the Arizona Arthritis Center and the only comprehensive assessment center in Arizona that evaluates a person's medical, psychological and vocational abilities. The Tucson site includes the state-of-the-art ERGOS™ Work Simulator that measures all physical demands of work, including strength, range of motion, work endurance, and standing and sitting work tolerance.

The Arizona Arthritis Center Fellows rotate through the clinic to assess patients, giving these physicians the opportunity to learn how the disease affects the entire person.

A Clinic of Hope

“We are a clinic of hope. After an assessment session, we have a total picture of a person's life. We see how arthritis has affected their lifestyle, whether they have the ability to perform their job, whether they can be trained for a new vocation, and what benefits are available to help them minimize the economic impact on their families,” says David W. Smith, DEd, DABPS, FACFEI, clinic director.

In some cases, DARC is able to help a person make the transition from a physical job, such as bricklaying, to a vocational training program that leads to a more sedentary job that doesn't worsen the person's physical condition. In other cases, people are totally disabled, and DARC

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**ARIZONA
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One of eight 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 tissue diseases start and progress is the key to helping individuals with arthritis lead healthier lives.

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Lovell Foundation Funds Pilot Research on Mind-Body Study of Inflammation in Rheumatoid Arthritis

With a generous \$62,700 grant from the David C. & Lura M. Lovell Foundation, two Arizona Arthritis Center researchers are combining their psychosocial and immunology expertise to get a better understanding of the role oxytocin may play in reducing rheumatoid arthritis (RA) disease activity.

Oxytocin, known medically as Pitocin, is the hormone used to induce labor and lactation during childbirth. It occurs naturally in humans and animals, and research indicates it plays a role in mammalian reproductive, bonding and prosocial behaviors. In an animal model,

oxytocin reduced the harmful effects of sepsis, a massive inflammatory response similar to the inflammation seen in RA. Intrigued by these findings, Shelley Kasle, PhD, a research assistant professor who studies psychosocial influences on health, wondered if relational behaviors known to stimulate oxytocin production make people with RA feel better due to the potential anti-inflammatory effects of oxytocin.

Miranda Adelman, PhD, the research assistant professor who is providing the immunology expertise to the study, explains that inflammatory cytokines, such as Tumor Necrosis Factor-alpha (TNF- α), are essential to fight off invaders, such as infections and tumors, but also are responsible for joint inflammation in RA patients. Dr. Adelman will explore the possibility that oxytocin leads to an increase in the production of anti-inflammatory cytokines and reduction of inflammatory cytokines.

Is it possible that oxytocin reduces inflammation in RA patients? In their pilot study titled “Oxytocin: The Neuroendocrine Link Between Positive Relationships and the Inflammatory Response in Rheumatoid Arthritis,” Drs. Kasle and Adelman are seeking answers to the following questions about oxytocin and its role in RA:

- Why do people who report more mutuality—a positive quality of close relationships—also report better health? If we measure plasma oxytocin levels in women with RA who report different levels of mutuality in their relationships, will we find that oxytocin explains the differences in their health?
- Does oxytocin affect the immune system? Will we find that oxytocin stimulates RA patients’ immune cells to produce more anti-inflammatory cytokines?

Currently, Dr. Kasle conducts “The Couples and Arthritis Study,” an ongoing study of health outcomes and relational mutuality, a positive quality of engagement during important couple conversations in married/partnered rheumatoid arthritis patients. Dr. Kasle will recruit 24 women who are enrolled in the ongoing study to participate in this oxytocin pilot project. Half of the women will be selected because they indicate they have high levels of mutuality in their relationships. The other half will indicate low mutuality. “It’s important to note that mutuality does not reflect how much people love each other, but how they relate to each other. It’s possible to have low mutuality and still be madly in love,” explains Dr. Kasle.



Shelley Kasle, PhD, and Miranda Adelman, PhD, combine their psychosocial and immunology expertise in a mind-body study.

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Please Join Us!

SAHBA/Lute Olson Auction
Thursday, April 19
5:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Randolph Golf Complex
600 S. Alvernon Way, Tucson
(Free parking in adjacent lot)

Cost: \$25 per person (not tax deductible).

Meet Coach Lute Olson, Coach James Rosborough and the Wildcats; bid on autographed jerseys and basketballs, vacation and golf packages, dinner certificates and many other great items and services from fine local businesses and artists -- even bid on a player or coach to play golf in your group on Saturday. Buffet dinner and drinks included.

**SAHBA/Lute Olson
“Lunch with Lute”**
Friday, April 20
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar
6360 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson
(southeast corner of Campbell and Sunrise)

Valet parking provided courtesy of SAHBA. \$100 per person; \$175 per couple; \$850 table of 10. Limited to 125 seats. (Tax-deductible donation: \$45 per person; \$65 per couple; \$300 for table of 10.) This event sells out; advance payment required to reserve seats.

Coach Lute Olson shares his post-season thoughts on the team in a private setting and stays after lunch for photos and autographs.

**SAHBA/Lute Olson
Golf Tournament**
SATURDAY, APRIL 21
7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
(19th Hole Party At Noon)

Randolph Golf Complex,
600 S. Alvernon Way, Tucson

\$200 per individual golfer, \$700 per foursome, \$1,000 per foursome with tee sign, \$500 for tee sign. (Tax-deductible donation: \$65 per individual golfer, \$160 per foursome, \$460 per foursome with tee sign, \$320 for tee sign.) Fee includes golf shirt and boxed lunch. This event sells out; advance payment required to reserve a spot in the tournament.

Join Coach Lute Olson, his coaches and players on the course, and at the popular 19th Hole Party for more auction items and raffle prizes.

For reservations and more information on any of these events, please contact the Arizona Arthritis Center, (520) 626-7901. All proceeds benefit the Arizona Arthritis Center.

Help Continue the Legend 20TH Annual SAHBA/Lute Olson Celebrity Auction, Lunch and Golf Tournament

The Arizona Arthritis Center is proud to celebrate 20 years of support from SAHBA and Lute Olson for the upcoming three-day event benefiting arthritis research at The University of Arizona College of Medicine.

Since it was founded in 1987 by the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association (SAHBA), the event has raised more than \$1.5 million for the Arizona Arthritis Center.

The event honors the memory of the late Saul Tobin, local home builder, generous philanthropist, Life Director of the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association and Chair Emeritus of the Arizona Arthritis Center, who, until he died in 2005, tirelessly built the relationship between the Arizona Arthritis Center, SAHBA and UA Men's Basketball Coach Lute Olson.

“The golf tournament, lunch with Lute, and auction have been major events for our family every year,” says Susan Tobin, Saul Tobin's wife and part of his inspiration for becoming involved in the fight against arthritis.



Susan and Saul Tobin helped establish the SAHBA/Lute Olson event, which honors Saul's memory.

Mrs. Tobin, who was diagnosed with arthritis at age 15, is happy to see that the auction and relationship to UA basketball has helped to inspire younger people to become involved with this fundraiser.

“For years, my grandsons have come to the auction or lunch with their friends. Lute Olson, of course, takes a personal interest in young people. It's good to encourage a younger group to become educated about arthritis and the need to support education and research,” says Mrs. Tobin.

Thank You Sponsors!

Organized by SAHBA volunteers, this year's events are sponsored by Desert Diamond Casino. Other major sponsors include Borderland Construction; Leslie Galloway; Balfour Walker Photography; Madden Publishing; SAHBA; and University Medical Center. Co-sponsors include Canyon Ranch; DeVries CPAs of Arizona, P.C.; eegee's; Finley Distributing; Koedyker & Kenyon Construction, Inc.; Port-A-Pit Catering; Pepsi One; Royal Buick; Robert Volz, MD.



Arizona Arthritis Center Welcomes New Physician

Sujata Sarkar, MD, is joining the Arizona Arthritis Center this summer.

Currently a faculty member at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Dr. Sarkar sees patients with all types of arthritis in a general rheumatology clinic. However, her clinical specialty is inflammatory arthritis, including rheumatoid, psoriatic and ankylosing spondylitis.

“My patients typically are referred by other rheumatologists because they either have an elusive diagnosis or are therapeutic challenges or both.



Sujata Sarkar, MD

I also see patients with vasculitis –which is inflammation of the body’s blood vessels,” says Dr. Sarkar.

Dr. Sarkar’s research interests involve understanding altered immune function that underlies autoimmune diseases, specifically in the context of

rheumatoid arthritis. “My research involves studying T cell dysfunction in inflammatory arthritis and its regulation by endogenous as well as exogenous biologic agents, with a goal to develop targeted therapeutic agents for patients with rheumatoid arthritis,” says Dr. Sarkar.

“We are thrilled to have a rheumatologist with Dr. Sarkar’s experience and research

interests join our faculty. She will be a valuable addition to the Arizona Arthritis Center team,” says Jeffrey Lisse, MD, interim director of the Arizona Arthritis Center.

Dr. Sarkar obtained a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MD equivalent) at Bankura Sammilani Medical College at the University of Calcutta, India. She then moved to Ohio State University to earn a Master of Science degree in microbiology. She worked as a post-doctoral associate at the University of Minnesota before joining the University of Michigan.

The University of Arizona will have double good fortune with Dr. Sarkar’s arrival. Her husband, Mrinal Ghosh, will be joining the Eller College of Management as associate professor. The busy couple are the proud parents of 3-year-old triplets.

A Great Way to Plan for Your Retirement

Would you like to support a worthy cause, such as the Arizona Arthritis Center, but you’re also concerned about planning for retirement? With a deferred gift, you can do both, plus get a tax advantage this year. A deferred gift is especially appealing to donors during their earning years who wish to enhance their retirement income in the future and immediately benefit from tax savings.

A deferred gift annuity, which is made through The University of Arizona Foundation, is a simple contractual agreement. In exchange for a transfer of assets, the UA Foundation promises to make payments to one or two people for life. You determine the date you want payments to start. When the deferred annuity is created, you are eligible for a charitable contribution deduction in that year.

You will be pleasantly surprised by how a deferred gift annuity will help

you accomplish retirement and charitable planning goals. Planning a gift to the Arizona Arthritis Center now, and deferring payments until retirement, allows for a significant increase in annuity payout rates. The immediate charitable income tax deduction allows you to take advantage of the tax savings during your higher income-earning years prior to retirement.

For example, Wilbur Wildcat, age 55, transfers \$10,000 to the UA Foundation for a deferred gift annuity with payments to start at age 65. Because Wilbur is deferring his payments for 10 years, he will contract with The University of Arizona Foundation to pay him an annuity rate of 9 percent. Wilbur’s charitable tax deduction to offset his income this year will be \$4,800. At age 65, Wilbur



Retirees can enjoy additional retirement income if they make a deferred gift during their earning years.

will begin receiving annual payments of \$990 for the remainder of his life. After the gift matures, it will benefit the Arizona Arthritis Center.

To learn more about charitable investment vehicles, such as deferred annuities, visit the UA Foundation online at www.uafoundation.org and click on Avenues of Giving/Planned Giving, or call the Arizona Arthritis Center at (520) 626-7902.



Message from the Chair

Arizona Arthritis Center Friends

Start Living Healthy With Arthritis

The Arizona Arthritis Center's annual "*Living Healthy with Arthritis*," will be held during National Arthritis Awareness Month in May. The Friends of the Arizona Arthritis Center are pleased to provide financial support for this event, coordinated by Michelle Cornett, RN, senior research nurse for the Center.

Join us for a half-day filled with inspiration, information and light brunch to help you and family members live fuller, healthier lives. The event will be **Saturday, May 5, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**, in DuVal Auditorium at University Medical Center, 1501 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson. The cost is \$10 (not tax deductible). Program highlights include:

- **Early Bird Stretch Session** at 8 a.m. (Please pre-register; space is limited for this session.)
- **"Arthritis Research: What's in Our Future,"** Jeffrey Lisse, MD, interim director, Arizona Arthritis Center, and professor of medicine and senior research scientist.
- **"The Power of Innocent Optimism,"** Bonnie Marson, author of "Sleeping with Schubert," and Tucson artist.
- Choice of breakout sessions:
 - **"Don't Worry, Bead Happy."** Make a beautiful beaded bracelet with artist Shirley Loose. Some hand dexterity required.
 - **"Drains and Gains."** Learn about whole-brain approaches to energy management with Liz Barta, RN, CHES.
 - **"Managing Your Pain with Medication."** Learn about the medical management of acute and chronic pain with Bridget Walsh, DO.
 - **"Relaxation & Breathing."** "Un-stress," unwind and find peace within, using gentle movement with Priscilla Potter, founder and director of the Yoga Connection.
 - **"Spa Time."** Relax as you create your own sugar scrub, bath salts and oatmeal facial scrub from all-natural products with Michelle Cornett, RN, and Emmy Fishman.
 - **"Stretch and Go."** If you miss the Early Bird Stretch, join Erin Nelson, ACSM, in exercises that promote flexibility and decrease muscle soreness. Suitable for all fitness levels.



Learn exercise and relaxation techniques at "Living Healthy With Arthritis" on May 5.



Ralph Silberschlag
Chair, Arizona Arthritis
Center Friends

Become an Informed Advocate

Join Arizona Arthritis Center Friends and you will be part of a dynamic organization dedicated to building community support for the Arizona Arthritis Center through education, public awareness and community involvement.

The Arizona Arthritis Center is a nonprofit, nationally-recognized Center of Excellence at The University of Arizona College of Medicine. Since the 1970s, the Center has been at the forefront of advances in arthritis research and care, with a mission to create a world free of arthritis and autoimmune disease. The Center provides basic and clinical research linked with excellence in clinical care and education

Annual membership is \$35 per individual; \$60 per family. (Note: membership is not a tax-deductible donation.) Friends programs include a Breakfast Chat at Canyon Ranch, Membership Tea and Conversations and Lunch—the Eva M. Holtby Endowed Lectureship. These events give Friends the opportunity to meet with Arizona Arthritis Center physicians and researchers, others concerned about arthritis education and advocacy, and guest lecturers who provide insightful perspectives on arthritis advances. Some events are free, others are offered exclusively to Friends, others are discounted for Friends. For more information, please call (520) 626-7901 or visit www.arthritis.arizona.edu.



Learn to thrive with arthritis while enjoying time to relax and eat well at Canyon Ranch.

Experience A World-Class Combination: Canyon Ranch and Arizona Arthritis Center

Thriving with Arthritis Week

Oct. 14-21, 2007

Learn how to live well with arthritis during a week that integrates the best that the Arizona Arthritis Center and Canyon Ranch have to offer. If you have any of the 100 forms that arthritis takes, this week was created for you.

Health professionals from the Arizona Arthritis Center and Canyon Ranch will team up to assess your condition, suggest appropriate treatments and provide an important network of support. *Thriving with Arthritis* balances medical components with fun and relaxation. Professionals will include occupational therapists, physicians, psychologists, nutritionists, exercise physiologists, physical therapists and movement therapists.

Here are some of the program highlights—all combined to relieve pain and increase mobility:

- **Exercises Geared to Your Abilities** —Whether it's walking in a comfortable, heated pool, stretching or low-impact aerobics, you'll discover the many benefits of movement. If you wish, an exercise physiologist will develop a personalized routine for you to follow at home.
- **Techniques to Manage Pain** —Discover how techniques such as meditation can help reduce both the physical and emotional pain of arthritis and improve the quality of your life.
- **An Active Life is Possible** —Proper nutrition and bodywork can improve your condition. Also, find out whether non-traditional medicine might be beneficial for you.
- **Support Makes a Difference** —Share support and exchange coping techniques with others who live with arthritis.

This week has sold out in the past. Rates start at \$6,065 for double occupancy and include allowances for health and healing as well as spa and sports services, plus three nutritious, gourmet meals daily.

A portion of the proceeds from this program supports arthritis research at the Arizona Arthritis Center at The University of Arizona.

For more information or to make a reservation, please call 1-800-742-9000, or visit www.canyonranch.com.

The *Thriving with Arthritis* package includes:

- Lectures and group sessions with Canyon Ranch and Arizona Arthritis Center health-care experts
- 30-minute consultation with a rheumatologist
- 30-minute consultation with a rehabilitation therapist (physical or occupational)
- Complete blood profile and 30-minute follow-up with physician to review results
- Allowance for Canyon Ranch services





Arizona Arthritis Center Clinic

Make an appointment today to see one of our outstanding rheumatologists.

Patient care includes:

- Complementary and alternative therapies
- State-of-the-art infusion clinic
- Special expertise in lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis and osteoarthritis

No referrals are necessary, except when required by insurance. Most insurance plans are accepted. To make an appointment, please call (520) 694-0611.

DARC, continued from p. 1

helps them apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and investigates whether the person is entitled to a long-term disability policy through their employer.

“Many people don’t realize or understand all the benefits available to them, and not all employers are forthcoming with this information,” says Dr. Smith.

Musculoskeletal conditions, mostly back problems, are the leading cause of disabilities, and represent a huge economic burden. In Arizona, of the 5,300 state employees who are on



A client is assessed for physical work abilities in the Disability Assessment Research Clinic.

disability, 65 percent are due to musculoskeletal ailments, including arthritis. “If caught within the first couple of years and treated with proper early medical intervention, some of the deformity could be prevented and people could remain in their jobs,” says Dr. Smith.

No One Turned Away

DARC sees about 500 patients per year through a contract with the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES). It sees another 150 people pro bono, who are referred by other physicians, primarily rheumatologists.

“We don’t turn anyone away, but we sure could use some funding to provide assessments for people who can’t pay and to expand the program to provide early intervention to more people,” says Dr. Smith.

“We are getting more and more calls from physicians in the community. Any medical doctor can refer a patient, and we’d like to continue to see everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. Unless it happens to you, you don’t see how devastating disability can be,” says Dr. Smith, who hopes to develop an endowment at the Arizona Arthritis Center to cover the cost of these assessments for people who can’t pay.

For more information about DARC, please call (520) 626-2982.

Mind-Body Study, continued from p. 2

Although the human sample for this pilot is small, participants’ blood samples will yield literally millions of cells from each group that can be studied and stimulated with various doses of oxytocin for comparison with other known stimulants in Dr. Adelman’s lab. The researchers also will collect data on other inflammation measures, such as erythrocyte sedimentation rate and C-reactive protein.

On the Horizon

The researchers hope this pilot study will lead to larger investigations that may establish an anti-inflammatory

effect of oxytocin in RA, as well as in other chronic diseases. This information could be used in clinical applications in years to come. For example, clear descriptions of relational behaviors that stimulate natural oxytocin production could lead to the development of social support interventions in which patients and families are trained to engage in these behaviors, much the way people are taught relaxation or stress-management techniques. Another clinical application might be the development of drugs or supplements based on oxytocin that could be used medically, similar to the way

medications based on cortisol are used to treat inflammation.

In the meantime, it can’t hurt for family and friends to engage mutually with RA patients – to reciprocally share thoughts and feelings with one another during important conversations. We just may learn that it makes them – and us – feel measurably better.

For more information, please visit the Arizona Arthritis Center Website: www.arthritis.arizona.edu.

A Message from the Interim Director

It has been two years since I became interim director of the Arizona Arthritis Center, and we have seen some changes that inevitably occur with new leadership. But the one thing that has remained constant throughout my tenure has been the dedication of all of the staff who work every day to make the Arizona Arthritis Center a center of excellence, a center of hope.

We now are in a position to accelerate the AAC's move forward. The search for a permanent director is progressing, and we will interview promising candidates throughout April. This will be an exciting time for all of us. Our goal is to add strength in the basic sciences for our existing programs, as well as complement our clinical and translational research.

We have two new faculty members joining us this summer, who will increase our clinical capacity, as well as our teaching capabilities. The two new junior faculty members will begin seeing patients shortly after joining us, so that people will find it easier to schedule timely appointments. These physicians will begin a new rheumatology practice at the UPH Clinics at Kino Campus. In addition, our invaluable nurse practitioner is beginning to see patients again after dealing with a family emergency. I would like to thank all of you who have patiently waited through this period.

Upcoming events include the 20th anniversary Lute Olson/SABHA events April 19-21, the "Living Healthy" program on May 5 and the "Thriving with Arthritis" program at Canyon Ranch in October. More information on these can be found in this newsletter. These are only some of the community events at the AAC. Please make sure you visit the Website (www.arthritis.arizona.edu) for more information about our educational programs, clinics and research, as well as links to valuable arthritis information. Feel free to suggest ways to improve our Website and our service to the community.



Jeffrey R. Lisse, MD
*Interim Director,
Arizona Arthritis Center*

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