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Contact: Silvi Taylor

******University of Texas Southwestern Medical School's Clinical Pharmacology Division can now be expanded because of a recent NIH grant of $354,102, enabling further teaching in the discipline of drug use.

DALLAS--The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School's Clinical Pharmacology Division can now be enlarged because of a recent $354,102 grant given by the National Institutes of Health.

Dr. William A. Pettinger, director of the division, said the funds will be used "to promote and develop excellence in training programs, employ new faculty and provide general support" for this discipline.

Dr. Pettinger stressed the importance of this designated administrative support for a division in clinical pharmacology. "Traditionally, drug mechanisms and actions are taught by a medical school's basic department of Pharmacology in an organized way to second-year medical students," he said. The purpose of establishing a clinical pharmacology division in association with these basic and clinical departments is "to extend the teaching of this important subject into the students' clinical years," he explained. He feels drug use in treating disease has not been sufficently emphasized in the past in clinical teaching and research programs of most medical schools.

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"There needs to be discipline in drug usage which coincides with the precise logical discipline of diagnosis and understanding of disease mechanisms," he said.

With major advances in new drugs and complexities of their usage, specialization emphasizing drugs and their mechanisms will be increasingly important, he believes. Dr. Pettinger's goal is to develop a well-rounded program in this area, including postdoctoral training, research and teaching of medical students and housestaff, and continuing education of physicians.

"Because of its high degree of excellence and great depth in medical subspecialties, Southwestern is unique in developing this course of study," he noted. "Our efforts are supported by faculty and administrators to make it a vital part of our curriculum."

The Division of Clinical Pharmacology was established several months ago when Dr. Pettinger was named the Burroughs-Wellcome Scholar in Clinical Pharmacology for 1974. The award of $150,000 was provided by the Burroughs-Wellcome Foundation, a leading pharmaceutical firm. It enabled the initiation of Southwestern's division with Dr. Pettinger as director. The NIH grant, along with other bases of support, provides for the addition of three or four faculty members.

One major objective, development of teaching and training programs, includes a 26 contact hour clinical pharmacology course for senior medical students and a senior elective. Consulting-teaching rounds for hospitalized patients, an outpatient clinic and training in research methods will also comprise the curriculum.

"Our division is ideally associated with a good basic pharmacology department and efficient liaisons with excellent clinical departments as well," Dr. Pettinger said.

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As a member of the Board of Directors of the American Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics Society, Dr. Pettinger is involved in national long-range planning concerning this field.

"In less than 10 years, at least a third of American medical schools have developed divisions in this area," Dr. Pettinger remarked. "However, the need is still very great." He pointed out that salary support is available for more than 100 additional clinical pharmacologists in this country. "At least 40 positions are offered now in medical schools alone, including the ones here," he said.

He noted that clinical pharmacologists are also needed in industry, government agencies and academic medicine, as evidenced by the numerous recruiting letters and telephone calls he receives.

Research projects currently conducted in Dr. Pettinger's division deal with the action of antihypertensive drugs in patients with high blood pressure, as well as studies with vasoactive substances and cardiovascular drugs. A recent discovery was the effect of a new drug, minoxidil, which provides an alternative to removal of both kidneys in patients with severe refractory hypertension.

"By preserving these functioning kidneys, many millions of health care dollars can be saved, as well as suffering and inconvenicnce to patients of hemodialysis or renal transplantation," he said. A beneficial interaction of this type of drug with others such as propranolol is also being studied in man and animal models.

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