SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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Three UT Southwestern faculty receive honors

DALLAS – Nov. 12, 2004 – Three faculty members from UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas recently were recognized for outstanding achievement in their fields.

Dr. Steven Kliewer, professor of molecular biology at UT Southwestern, recently won awards from the Endocrine Society and Aventis for his contributions to the understanding of how proteins called nuclear receptors affect the way drugs interact in the body.

The Ernst Oppenheimer Award is presented annually by the Endocrine Society and given to a young scientist with distinguished research in the field of basic or clinical endocrinology. The Aventis Innovative Investigator Award is given annually by Aventis and recognizes scientific leaders who make significant contributions to the drug discovery process.

Dr. Kliewer and his colleagues have shown that certain drugs can activate nuclear receptors, leading to their rapid metabolism, and effectively lowering their potency.

Dr. Shawna Nesbitt, assistant professor of internal medicine in the division of hypertension at UT Southwestern and medical director of the Parkland Memorial Hospital hypertension clinic, recently was elected secretary/treasurer of the International Society on Hypertension in Blacks. She will hold the office through 2006.

ISHIB is a professional medical organization that provides education, advocacy and research on high blood pressure and related risk factors in ethnic populations. Dr. Nesbitt also is the national coordinator for the Trial of Prevention of Hypertension, a four-year trial that includes more than 71 sites and 800 patients.

Dr. Eric Nestler, chairman of psychiatry at UT Southwestern, recently received the 2004 Linda and Jack Gill Center for Biomolecular Science Award from Indiana University. The award recognizes "scientists who have emerged as national leaders in cellular, membrane or molecular neuroscience."

Dr. Nestler was honored for his molecular research into addiction and the changes in specific neurons of the central nervous system that result after long-term exposure to drugs of abuse. His research focuses on identifying the molecular and cellular adaptations involved, and in relating them to specific behavioral features of addiction.

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