

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Media Contacts: Reyes Abila
214-456-5318
reyes.abila@childrens.com

Staishy Bostick Siem
214-648-3404
staishy.siem@utsouthwestern.edu

RESEARCHERS RECEIVE NIH GRANT TO OPEN PEDIATRIC PHARMACOLOGY RESEARCH CENTER

DALLAS – Feb. 26, 2004 – Pediatric researchers at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas have received a \$2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to establish a pharmacology research center at Children's Medical Center Dallas to study how children react to drugs.

The NIH-funded pediatric pharmacology research center, one of 13 in the United States, will provide the infrastructure and support that researchers need to study drug therapies in infants and children. The investigators will evaluate the safety, tolerability, dosing schedules and effectiveness of new and existing drugs in pediatric patients.

Dr. George McCracken, professor of pediatrics at UT Southwestern, and Dr. Hasan Jafri, assistant professor of pediatrics, will co-direct the center that opened in January.

"Drug safety and effectiveness in children is a national priority right now. This will be a great resource for anyone conducting drug studies in pediatric patients," said Dr. Jafri.

Pediatric pharmacology research is especially important because drugs approved for use in adults don't always have the same effects in children, said Dr. Jafri, a staff physician at Children's.

"Children are simply not tiny adults. They process drugs in a different fashion, and the dosage regimens are very different compared with adults," he said.

The new center should help researchers more easily collaborate with their colleagues at the other 12 centers in the network, said Dr. McCracken.

"Advances in pharmacology have had a tremendous impact on improving quality of life for mankind," he said. "But historically, pharmacologic studies in infants and children have been more challenging to conduct than those in adults."

Dr. McCracken, chief of infectious diseases at Children's, said reasons for the challenges include parental concerns, wide differences in drug kinetics between infants and children of different ages, children's smaller blood volume compared to adults', and a shortage of pediatric

(MORE)

PEDIATRIC PHARMACOLOGY GRANT – 2

inpatient and outpatient facilities to perform these studies.

Plans are already under way to research an antifungal medication that has not usually been prescribed for children and to evaluate dosing regimens of an antibiotic to be certain that physicians are prescribing the appropriate amount of the drug.

Other key faculty and staff members at UT Southwestern and Children's involved in the center are: Dr. Octavio Ramilo, associate professor of pediatrics; Dr. Victor Aquino, assistant professor of pediatrics; Dr. Robert Bash, assistant professor of pediatrics; Dr. Roger Bawdon, professor of obstetrics and gynecology; Dr. Michael Bennett, professor of pathology; Dr. Graham Emslie, professor of psychiatry; Dr. Faryal Ghaffar-Khan, assistant professor of pediatrics; Dr. Alfred Gilman, chairman of pharmacology; Dr. Brett Giroir, associate dean for clinical affairs; Dr. Rebecca Gruchalla, chief of allergy; and Dr. Ellen Vitetta, director of Cancer Immunobiology Center.

###

This news release is available on our World Wide Web home page at
<http://www.utsouthwestern.edu/home/news/index.html>

To automatically receive news releases from UT Southwestern via e-mail,
subscribe at <http://www.utsouthwestern.edu/utsw/cda/dept37326/files/37813.html>