

news THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT DALLAS

southwestern medical school ■ graduate school of biomedical sciences ■ school of allied health sciences

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*****UTHSCD pharmacology student receives
award to study effects of anti-psychotic
drugs.

DALLAS-- Pharmacology graduate student Don Harper, who received his M.D. degree from Southwestern Medical School June 4, has been named recipient of a \$5,000 research award from the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association Foundation, Inc.

Dr. Harper has been simultaneously enrolled in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Southwestern, both components of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas.

He will begin work July 1 with Dr. Parkhurst Shore, professor of pharmacology, on a study of the physiological effects of anti-psychotic drugs. These drugs cause tardive dyskinesia (a late-developing involuntary muscle movement) when patients take the drugs over a period of months or years and then stop taking them or take a decreased dosage.

Dr. Harper will study the synthesis and metabolism of brain dopamine, a neurotransmitter, in rats to find out what biochemical changes occur in the brain after long-term use of the drugs.

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first add anti-psychotic drugs

With tardive dyskinesia, a patient develops "extra movements, sort of a nervous twitch," said Dr. Harper. He said the extra movements include chewing the tongue and rolling the hands. He believes the dyskinesia may be a natural consequence of long-term administration of the drugs, not an unrelated side-effect. He thinks it occurs because the nervous system adapts itself to the drugs and the body requires larger and larger doses.

Dr. Shore said this problem is increasingly recognized and is interesting "because the drugs that cause the syndrome are the only ones that have been found to treat it." He said two of the most common anti-psychotic drugs are chlorpromazine and haloperidol.

After Dr. Harper completes work for his Ph.D. in pharmacology, he will serve residencies in internal medicine and in neurology.

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