

**UT Southwestern symposium to highlight space travel, radiation and health**

DALLAS – Sept. 24, 2009 – The Science Teacher Access to Resources at Southwestern (STARS) program and the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center will host a free symposium, “Space Travel, Radiation and Health,” on Saturday, Oct. 3, at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

“This is a critical time in our nation for space research,” said Dr. Jerry Shay, professor of cell biology at UT Southwestern and one of the speakers at the symposium. “This symposium will highlight how medical advances from space research may translate into treatments on Earth that will improve human health.”

At this daylong forum at UT Southwestern, scientists from the Johnson Space Center in Houston and the medical center will discuss space medicine and what NASA is doing to assess and reduce risk and radiation effects on the body.

Significant uncertainties exist about health consequences to astronauts who undertake long-term space missions. In addition to preventing radiation exposure and sickness, there is a critical need to limit brain and heart diseases as well as fatal cancers.

While countermeasures can be designed for spacecraft components, scientists can’t design astronauts to be resistant to space radiation. Researchers at the NASA Space Radiation Laboratory at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton, N. Y., are conducting experiments to measure the hazards of space radiation in one of the few facilities that can simulate the harsh space environment.

Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, president of UT Southwestern, will make opening remarks at the symposium and Dr. Joel Goodman, STARS director, will welcome attendees. Several videos illustrating NASA’s return to the moon also will be featured and presentations will be targeted to an educated lay audience.

Presentations include:

- “Introduction to Space Medicine” by Dr. Richard Scheuring, flight surgeon at Johnson Space Center;
- “What is NASA Doing to Assess and Reduce Risk” by Dr. Francis Cucinotta, chief scientist for NASA’s space radiation program, Johnson Space Center;
- “Introduction to Cancer and How I Became Interested in Space Science,” by Dr. Andres Roig,

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assistant instructor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern;

- “Radiation DNA Damage and Repair” by Dr. David Chen, professor of radiation oncology at UT Southwestern;
- “Radiation Effects on Lung Cancer and Leukemia: Genomic Approaches to Assessing Radiation Risks” by Dr. Michael Story, associate professor of radiation oncology at UT Southwestern;
- “Radiation Effects on the Brain” by Dr. Amelia Eisch, assistant professor of psychiatry at UT Southwestern;
- “Radiation Effects on the Cardiovascular System” by Dr. Benjamin Levine, professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern;
- “Using Mice to Assess Radiation Effects on Cancer Initiation and Progression” by Oliver Delgado, graduate student research assistant in cell biology at UT Southwestern; and
- “Countermeasures to Protect Against Radiation Damage” by Dr. Jerry Shay, professor of cell biology at UT Southwestern.

In addition, U.S. Rep. Ralph M. Hall, the ranking member of the House Science and Technology Committee, will make remarks. Rep. Hall is a member of the House Action Team, a bipartisan group of House members dedicated to promoting NASA and keeping the vision of space exploration alive.

The forum is open to the public but registration is required. The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Zale Foundation Lecture Hall (D1.600), located beneath the Eugene McDermott Plaza on the South Campus of UT Southwestern, 5323 Harry Hines Blvd.

Registration is available at [www.utsouthwestern.edu/STARS/register](http://www.utsouthwestern.edu/STARS/register) or by e-mailing [STARS@UTSouthwestern.edu](mailto:STARS@UTSouthwestern.edu). On-site late registrations will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Oct. 3.

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