



Internal Medicine Ink

Volume 1, Issue 1

The Official Newsletter of the Department of Medicine

Welcome to Internal Medicine Ink

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Internal Medicine Ink, the official newsletter of the Department of Medicine (DOM). In this issue, we will explore the efforts of the Senior Associate Chair for Scientific Affairs, John Nicoloff who, along with his Associate Chairs Laurie DeLeve and Howard Hodis, is working to create new opportunities for research growth in the Department. We will also take a look at the careers of long time Department faculty, Drs. Elkayam, Sharma, and Rahimtoola. As we highlight the endeavors of the Department, we would like to introduce our resident class which recently gained success at the 2005 Regional American College of Physicians Conference poster competition. It is this next generation of doctors who are the future of our Department and of the field of internal medicine as a whole.

We are proud of our many accomplishments, despite the many challenges facing academic health centers in the United States. We lead all departments of medicine in research dollars per investigator, have a wealth of interdisciplinary activities available, and a diverse patient and faculty population. Clinical research opportunities in atherosclerosis and AIDS, among others, allow our researchers to blaze a trail for scientists across the country.



As the largest department in the Keck School of Medicine at the Health Sciences Campus, it is difficult to communicate the vast amount of work that our faculty accomplish. We hope to use this periodical to enhance communication among our Department, the greater Health Sciences Campus community and our alumni. Feel free to give us your feedback as we aim to provide relevant information to you, the reader, by spotlighting programs and faculty who are exemplary of the work we accomplish as teachers, clinicians and researchers.

- Edward D. Crandall, Ph.D., M.D.

Cardiologist Leads Heart Failure Research at USC into Future

Uri Elkayam, Director of the Heart Failure Program and Professor in the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, is an example of a clinician investigator who has persevered through many difficulties to head a clinical program that has been involved in the development of most therapeutic modalities available for the treatment of patients with heart failure. Elkayam attributes his success to the excitement he finds in answering clinical questions and honing his clinical skills through research.

At first intent on becoming an obstetrician, Elkayam developed his interest in cardiology after his internship experience at Ichilov Hospital's critical care unit in Tel Aviv, Israel. It was in this area that Elkayam felt he could make the greatest impact in healthcare by providing immediate results for patients in need of care.

Clinical faculty in the Department of Medicine face an extremely large clinical load in the LAC+USC Healthcare Network seeing or supervising over 100,000 ambulatory patients

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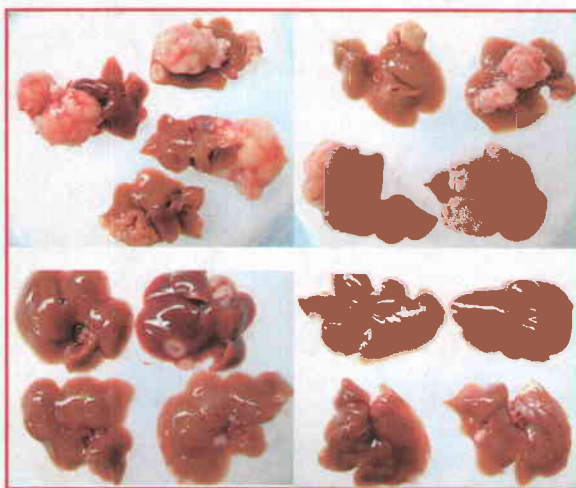
Parkash Gill, M.D.

EphB4: A Novel Target for Therapeutics - Cancer and Vascular Proliferative Disorders

This month, we highlight the work of DOM hematologist Parkash Gill, whose work has provided new opportunities in the fight against cancer. Gill recently presented his findings at a DOM general faculty meeting where he described the role EphB4 protein plays in cancer. EphB4 normally acts to stimulate angiogenesis and tumor cell migration which are essential in the transition of benign tumors into a malignant state.

Due to the role that EphB4 plays in the survival and malignancy of cancerous tumors, Gill has devoted much of his research to the development of EphB4-specific antibodies that, in conjunction with chemotherapy, has been shown to significantly reduce the size of tumors in bladder, breast, and colorectal cancer in an experimental animal model (see adjoining figure).

It is anticipated that future studies will demonstrate equal anti-tumor effects of EphB4 in human malignancies as well. These studies may prove to be a major step forward in the management of human malignancies.



EphB4 antibodies inhibit metastases to the liver. Clockwise from upper left: vehicle, liver as affected by three different Eph-B4 antibodies

In conjunction with chemotherapy, antibodies can reduce the size of a tumor to 4.5% the size of control group.

Sarcoidosis

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bored or burnt out in their work, suggesting that they try to read about anything but medicine before ending the day to expand their breadth of knowledge. It is with this breadth of knowledge that Sharma believes a physician can treat the "whole patient" and increase the chances of a successful treatment program by becoming capable of relating to patients with different cultural backgrounds and thus relieving the particularly stressful occasion of visiting the doctor.

Sharma is currently practicing his own mind expansion by writing a biography of liver specialist Sheila Sherlock, reading the literature of famed Japanese writer and victim of tuberculosis, Shushaku Endo, and playing the Japanese bamboo flute, shaku hachi.

DOM Residents Triumphant at ACP Conference

DOM residents participating in the 2005 Regional American College of Physicians (ACP) Conference in Palm Springs received a pleasant surprise when the president of ACP announced that, out of 75 poster presentations, first and third place in Region One would be awarded to USC residents. Winners were Christine Yeramian and Andrew Hendifar (who worked together on the winning presentation) and Ali Farvid, respectively. Congratulations!



DOM residents celebrate their accomplishment. From left: Katrin Youdim, Christine Yeramian, Mazen Nourredin, John Fun, Angie Sadeghi, Manisha Israni, Vikas Pabby, Carlos Zem.