Christian P. Larsen, MD, DPhil, Chairman

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New Emory Surgery website goes live

Following intensive planning, migration of files, redesigning and reconfiguring, the Department of Surgery's new website published last week on the university's Cascade Server, Emory's Web Content Management system that is being used by dozens of departments across campus to manage and publish their websites. Cascade is browser-based, allowing the user to create and maintain web pages via an online interface containing Emory-standardized templates and styles, though a degree of customization is possible.

While a work in progress, the new site is already grounded in user-friendly architecture and efficient navigation. Communications Manager Sean Moore will continue to be the primary content manager, though Cascade's flexible features allow additional contributors to be granted access with relative ease. In the coming months, appropriate staff will be designated to receive training in Cascade so that they can maintain and update the content of their particular areas, ensuring timely and accurate information.
Targeting the protein LFA-1 blocks transplant rejection

Representative histologic liver sections from a long-term survivor in one of the treatment groups. Sections were stained using standard H&E (top) and immunohistochemical (bottom) methods. Pristine donor islets embedded in the liver can be seen, free of any lymphocytic infiltrates and having strong insulin (brown) and glucagon (blue) staining.

Drs. Idelberto Badell (a PGY-3 general surgery resident), Mandy Ford, Allan Kirk, Chris Larsen and colleagues of the Transplant Immunology Lab and Yerkes Primate Research Center have developed a new immuno-suppressive protocol that substantially prolongs the survival of transplanted pancreatic islets in nonhuman primates. As reported in “LFA-1–specific therapy prolongs allograft survival in rhesus macaques,” The Journal of Clinical Investigation, Volume 120, Issue 12, the research team made considerable progress in their long-term focus on exploiting T cell costimulation blockade as an alternative strategy to avoiding the side effects of conventional immuno-suppressive therapies. A rhesus macaque model of pancreatic islet cell transplantation was used to address the clear need for non-diabetes causing alternatives to currently available immuno-suppressive regimens for islet transplant.

Donor specific T cells are keys mediators of transplant rejection, and lymphocyte function-associated antigen (LFA-1) is an adhesion molecule that is expressed on T cells. Importantly, it is up-regulated on those T cells called memory T cells that are thought to pose an immunological barrier to costimulation blockade based therapies. The team was successful in applying the LFA-1–specific antibody TS-1/22 in combination with other drugs including the costimulation blockade drug belatacept to selectively inhibit LFA-1’s ability to promote the donor specific T cell response.

"While costimulatory blockade has long proven capable of allograft protection in primates, including humans, it's not as effective by itself in the long-term as we’d like it to be," says Dr. Larsen. "In this study, adding LFA-1–specific induction to the process promoted islet allograft survival to a greater degree likely by targeting costimulation independent memory T cells, and impairing T cell trafficking to the transplanted islets. The anti-LFA-1–based regimens also did not impair the primates' health."

While Dr. Larsen and his study partners concluded that their results support the use of LFA-1–specific induction therapy to neutralize costimulation blockade-resistant populations of T cells, they emphasized that further evaluation of therapies targeting LFA-1 as a treatment for transplantation is necessary.
Breast Center at EUHM receives three-year accreditation

The National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC) has awarded a Three-Year Full Accreditation to the Breast Center at Emory University Hospital Midtown (EUHM). The NAPBC, a program administered by the American College of Surgeons, is a consortium of national professional organizations dedicated to the improvement of the quality of care and the monitoring of outcomes for patients with diseases of the breast. The multidisciplinary group's board has defined 27 program standards that collectively provide the most efficient and contemporary care available for patients diagnosed with diseases of the breast.

The program at EUHM was not only compliant with all NAPBC standards, but "exceeded" them according to the site surveyor. The surveyor's written remarks also stated that the "(the center's) level of medical care is cutting edge with strong research" and that it was "the best program I have seen as an NAPBC surveyor."

As both the director of the Breast Center at EUHM as well as its ACS Commission on Cancer Liaison Physician, Dr. Monica Rizzo led the application process and was responsible for reviewing the 27 standards and making certain that the center was compliant. The standards included such rating categories as interdisciplinary patient management, patient navigator, sentinel node biopsy, breast conservation, stereotactic core needle biopsy, genetic evaluation and management, and reconstructive surgery.

"The goal of our multi-disciplinary team of breast health specialists is to tailor treatments to each patient's specific disease needs in order to provide the best possible outcomes," says Dr. Rizzo. "This accreditation validates our efforts and dedication to patient care excellence."

Dr. Padala receives International Career Development Award

The mission of the Paris-based Leducq Foundation is to improve human health through funding and facilitating international efforts to combat cardiovascular and neurovascular disease. As a recipient of the foundation's 2010-2011 Career Development Award (Faculty Level), Dr. Muralidhar Padala will represent Emory as a member of the "Mitral Valve Disease: From Genetic Mechanisms to Improved Repair" network, an international consortium of leading mitral valve biology scientists studying the mysterious underlying biology of the mitral valve. Their goal is to describe the factors which control the biological adaptation of the mitral valve and to encourage new thinking in the treatment of mitral valve disease.
The award is designed to support the development of young investigators in cardiovascular and/or neurovascular disease from Europe and the United States by allowing them to engage in international research in one of the Foundation's Transatlantic Networks of Excellence (collaborative teams of European and North American scientists). The structure of the Networks of Excellence provides researchers with the ability to take advantage of the strengths and resources on both sides of the Atlantic and to benefit from the advantages inherent to collaboration.

The Leducq Foundation awarded the Mitral Valve Disease network $6 million in 2007. After being encouraged by the foundation to identify capable new investigators entering the field and nominate them for the Career Development Award in 2009, the network's North American Coordinator Dr. Robert Levine (MGH), European Coordinator Dr. Albert Hagege (Hôpital Européen Georges Pompidou, Paris), and Core Member Dr. Adrian Chester (Magdi Yacoub Heart Institute, Imperial College, London) nominated Dr. Padala. Dr. Padala's role in the network will be to investigate the biological adaptation of the mitral valve to abnormal mechanical forces in ischemic heart disease at the organ, tissue and cellular levels.

In brief

Dr. William Wood, President of the Southern Surgical Association from 2009-2010, delivered the presidential address at the SSA's Annual Meeting in Palm Beach. For the meeting's presentation of papers, Dr. Charles Staley presented "Low preoperative platelet count is independently associated with increased postoperative morbidity, liver insufficiency, and 60-day mortality in patients selected for resection of hepatocellular carcinoma: A multi-institutional study," and Dr. Shishir Maithel, the study's principal investigator, answered questions during the discussion portion. Dr. Wood and Dr. David Kooby were among the study's co-authors. Additionally, Dr. David Feliciano presented his study "Thyroidectomy is optimal treatment for Graves' disease."

Dr. John Calvert was named a Fellow of the American Heart Association at the the AHA's Scientific Sessions Meeting.

In recognition of his role establishing and sustaining preeminent learning, research, scholarship and service programs at Emory, Dr. Stuart Knechtle was appointed the Carlos and Marguerite Mason Chair of Liver Transplant Surgery.

Dr. Edward Lin led a team of Emory surgeons to teach the SAGES Advanced Laparoscopic Solid Organ and Intestinal Surgery Course for 4th and 5th Year Residents in Cincinnati, November 18-19. The team included Dr. Jahnavi Srinivasan, Dr. Joe Sharma, Dr. David McClusky, and Emory Endosurgery Fellows Dr. Kalyana Nandipati and Dr. Farah Husain. "It is a privilege to know that Emory can impart something of value to emerging surgeons," said Dr. Lin.

Dr. LaMar McGinnis published a reflective piece on his tenure as President of the American College of Surgeons from 2009-2010 in the October 2010 edition of the ACS Bulletin. Entitled "Thoughts as I leave office," he discusses the commonalities in interests and problems he found in the field of surgery during his worldwide travels as president, the sweeping changes ahead in the wake of the Affordable Health Care Act, and the ACS' new Capitol Hill location and his hopes for its engagement. Click here to read his account.
Department huddles influence team approach

In January 2010, the Department of Surgery initiated three office huddles across its divisions: the Grady Surgery Administration Huddle (unable to be pictured below due to time constraints), the Surgery Research Huddle, and the EUH H-Wing Huddle, the latter including Department administrative and research staff as well as representatives from General Surgery, Vascular Surgery, Pediatric Surgery and the WOCNEC. Held on a weekly basis, these gatherings are geared towards enhancing our efficiency, communication, teamwork, and familiarity with each other’s duties and responsibilities as well as to provide a social outlet. The huddles also assist in preparing for future changes, events and policy shifts, and often feature outside speakers, from representatives of the Benefits Office discussing open enrollment to clinicians of the Faculty Staff Assistance Program describing the diverse services their program offers.
# Events calendar

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<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>DATE/TIME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SURGICAL GRAND ROUNDS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fenestrated and Branched Endografts to Treat Thoracoabdominal Aortic Aneurysms</td>
<td>7:00-8:00 am, Jan 6, 2011</td>
<td>Auditorium, Emory University Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presented by Joseph J. Ricotta, MD – Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Vascular Surgery and Endovascular Therapy, Department of Surgery, Emory University School of Medicine – Associate Program Director, Fellowship In Vascular Surgery, Department of Surgery, Emory University School of Medicine</td>
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<td><strong>SURGICAL GRAND ROUNDS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grady Memorial Hospital: The Birthplace of Emory Plastic Surgery</td>
<td>7:00-8:00 am, Jan 13, 2011</td>
<td>Auditorium, Emory University Hospital</td>
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<td>Presented by Kim Singh, MD – Plastic Surgery Fellow, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Department of Surgery, Emory University School of Medicine</td>
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<td><strong>SURGICAL GRAND ROUNDS</strong></td>
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<td>Joseph M. Craver Visiting Teacher Lectureship</td>
<td>7:00-8:00 am, Jan 20, 2011</td>
<td>Auditorium, Emory University Hospital</td>
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<td>Transcatheter Valve Implantation</td>
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<td>Presented by Craig R. Smith, MD – Surgeon-in-Chief, Seymour Milstein Family Heart Center, NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia – Chairman, Department of Surgery, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surgery Faculty Meeting</td>
<td>5:30-7:00 pm, Jan 25, 2011</td>
<td>EUH B6300</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUH Surgical Services Performance Day</td>
<td>7:00-8:00 am, Jan 27, 2011</td>
<td>Auditorium, Emory University Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>A quarterly review and analysis of surgical services performance among anesthesia, surgery, and OR Staff of Emory University Hospital. ATTENDANCE BY INVITATION ONLY.</td>
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