International Symposium on Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Diseases and Cirrhosis
May 18 & 19, 2006, Los Angeles, California
Preceding 2006 Digestive Diseases Week in Los Angeles
Venue - The Ritz-Carlton, Marina Del Rey

This symposium will assemble eighteen international and twelve U.S. speakers and guests along with leading investigators from the NIAAA funded Research Center for Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Diseases. It will provide an exciting forum to discuss and exchange cutting-edge science on the following major themes as they relate to the pathogenesis and pathophysiology of alcoholic liver and pancreatic diseases and cirrhosis: cell death and survival; oxidant stress and inflammation; metabolism and cancer; and stellate cell biology.

Pre-registration by March 1 is required and number of attendees limited to 120. Please register via our website at www.usc.edu/alpd.

30 travel awards are offered to graduate students, postdocs, or junior scientists whose abstracts for posters are considered to be excellent.

Further information:
Please visit our website www.usc.edu/alpd for further details, registration information, travel award details, venue details, poster abstract submission information, and to register online. Or contact Anne Taguchi 323-442-3120, ataguchi@usc.edu

Sponsored By:
The Research Center for Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Diseases
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
Co-Sponsored By:
Japanese Society of Gastroenterology
Institute for Nutritional Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences
American Liver Foundation, Greater Los Angeles Chapter

NIAAA is beginning to develop a Pacific Rim Alcohol Research Consortium that would include investigators from the U.S., China, Japan, and Australia and others who are interested. Alcohol-related problems are global and are increasing in developing and developing Asian countries. Therefore, this concept of international consortium is particularly timely and important in facilitating a global approach to our common interest in research, prevention, treatment of alcohol-related health problems. As part of implementation of this concept, NIAAA has signed a formal Letter of Intent (LOI) on research collaboration with the Institute for Nutritional Sciences (INS) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in Shanghai, China and renewed its LOI with the National Hospital Organization, Kurhama Alcoholism Center in Kurhama, Japan. As a first critical step to promote collaborations between US and China, NIAAAA and INS of CAS jointly sponsored a workshop entitled “Healthy People 2020 – Alcohol, Obesity and Diabetes” in Shanghai, October 12-14, 2005. The meeting was attended by the members of NIAAA, NIDDK, INS, and other US-Asian Pacific Rim Collaborations
By Hide Tsukamoto
University of Southern California

Center Networks with Local Community Leaders for Community Seminar in March 2006
By Anne Taguchi
University of Southern California

The Center is pleased to announce its third annual community seminar on “Alcohol and Your Health” scheduled for March 3, 2006. Panelists will include physicians and researchers from USC, UCLA, Loma Linda and Berkeley. Jerry Reilly, CEO of Organs for Life Foundation, and liver transplant recipient, will again be hosting the event. The format will be in a “talk show” style, with participation from the audience after a brief introduction on the liver and pancreas.

With the novel concept that alcohol related disease is a lifestyle disease much like diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease and stroke, and because of the prevalence of these diseases in the Los Angeles County area, we have started establishing relationships with and have pursued networking activities with local community leaders, healthcare providers and social workers to help bring awareness to the local lay public.

To this end, the Center is establishing networking opportunities with the help of various groups such as the National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA), Los Angeles County’s Alcohol and Drug Program Administration, the Korean Health, Education, Information and Re-
Kasper Wang

Kasper Wang is a pediatric surgeon at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) and an Assistant Professor of Surgery at the University of Southern California (USC) Keck School of Medicine, and an active Member of the Research Center for Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Diseases.

Kasper, who was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, completed high school at Lake Mary High School in Florida. For his outstanding achievement, he was awarded STAR National Student Scholarship from the General Electric Company. During his undergraduate studies at the Johns Hopkins University, he worked at the medical school where he developed a passion for research studying intracellular protein trafficking in hepatocytes with Dr. Ann L. Hubbard.

He entered medical school in 1989 at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and after his first year of medical school, he received a summer research fellowship award to study dopamine receptor restriction fragment length polymorphisms in substance abusers at the National Institute of Drug Abuse. Later, he joined the laboratory of Dr. Mark Clemens to study gap junctional communication in the liver during sepsis. After completing medical school, Kasper moved to Stanford University, where he completed internship and residency in general surgery. For three years in the middle of his surgery residency, he studied aquaporin water channels in the gastrointestinal tract under the guidance of Professor Alan Verkman. They developed aquaporin knockout mice and showed that transgenic mice lacking aquaporin-1 water channels had defective fat processing in part from pancreatic exocrine insufficiently.

In 2002, Kasper moved to CHLA for specialized training in pediatric surgery and took on a faculty position here at USC in 2004. As faculty, Kasper initiated a research program studying liver organogenesis and regeneration. Dr. Wang and his team are studying the role of fibroblast growth factor 10 in the pathogenesis of liver and biliary tract development. Additionally, Kasper is elucidating the FGF-10 induced signaling in liver to understand the process of liver morphogenesis.

2005 Lee Summer Student Fellowship Awards

By Anne Taguchi
University of Southern California

Now in its fifth year, the Center once again had a wonderful group of students participate in the Lee Summer Student Fellowship Program. This program promotes the involvement of undergraduate and Master’s students in research on our Center’s theme. The program is named after Dr. S.P. Lee who made a donation toward this noble cause. In collaboration with the Edmondson Summer Fellowship Program sponsored by the Department of Pathology at USC, the Lee Summer Students participated in their laboratory safety classes and some of their lectures. The Lee program entails a minimum of 8 weeks of research during the summer in the Center investigator’s laboratory and a required presentation on his/her research at the Center’s Progress Report Meeting which was held on August 16, 2005.

Five students presented their summer work at this meeting. Mark Awad, an undergraduate student at USC, was recruited from the Edmondson Summer Fellowship Program as an independent base. He worked with Dr. Steve Pandol on a project entitled, “Characterization of pancreatic gene expression in the ‘combined cyclosporine and cerulean’ model of chronic alcoholic pancreatitis.” Travis Chong, undergraduate student in Biomedical Engineering at USC worked with William Kaplowitz, Neil, R01 DK057215-01, Role of Glutathione Redox Status in Hepatotoxicity.

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US-Asian Collaborations, Continued from page 1

scientists from both countries. David Guidot from Emory University and I were also invited to participate as NIAAA Alcohol Research Center directors. We witnessed conceptual and financial commitments by CAS and INS toward cutting-edge research and prevention for alcohol, obesity, and diabetes, that singly and more importantly in combination, contribute to an emerging threat of costly life style diseases in China. The INS has established the first Alcohol Research Center and we were given a tour of the center and INS. Division heads for different disciplines at INS were mostly, if not all, trained in the US for many years and many have held and some continue to hold highly productive academic positions at major institutions in the U.S. This rapid and inspiring move of CAS epitomizes what China as a whole is currently experiencing and also serves as an impetus for other countries to develop similar global and integrative approaches for life-style diseases to which alcohol makes a pivotal contribution. As a NIAAA-funded research center on the campus of USC that is historically known for its active involvement in international relations particularly in a Pacific Rim region, we wish to take a major role in the proposed consortium. To this end, the international symposium that we are sponsoring next May, should serve as an ideal opportunity to stimulate specific discussions for international collaborations. Among the 18 international speakers and guests who are invited to the symposium, several represent Shanghai’s INS and its alcohol research center. Japanese Society of Gastroenterology is also sending their delegates to the event including its Director General and past Director General. There will also be scheduled presentations by NIAAA staff at the symposium on mechanisms of federal support on international collaborations. Specific areas of collaborations with Chinese or Japanese investigators that may prove to be fruitful include epidemiology and gene-environment interactions for alcoholic liver and pancreatic diseases, clinical studies including trials, genetic, proteomic, and metabolomic profiling. If you are interested in more information on US-Asian collaborations, please feel free to contact my office at (323) 442-5107 or www.usc.edu/alpd.

New Grants by Center Members

- Kaplowitz, Neil, R01 DK057215-01, Role of Glutathione Redox Status in Hepatotoxicity
- Lu, Shelly, R01 DK05719-06 pending (priority score 121) Regulation of Methionine Adenosyltransferase in Liver
- Tsukamoto, Hidekazu, R24 AA012885-06 pending (priority score 137), Nonparenchymal Liver Cell Core
- Pandol, Stephen, R21 AA016010-01 pending (priority score 140), Alcohol and the Exocrine Pancreas ER Stress Responses
- Lugera, Aurelia, R21 AA015781-01A1 pending (priority score 141) Plasminogen System and Alcoholic Pancreatitis

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Kasper Wang, Continued from page 2

and development of end stage alcoholic liver disease. To support his investigations, Dr. Wang recently obtained funding for a pilot grant from the Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Disease Center at USC Keck School of Medicine as well as a Research Career Development Award from the Saban Research Institute at CHLA.

Kasper is married to his wife, Lourdes, of 13 years. They have two children, Bryan, 9, and Emily, 3. What little time he has outside of the hospital Kasper spends with his family or on hobbies including swimming, running, and coaching his son’s travel baseball team.

Lee Summer Students, Continued from page 2

Dr. Shigang Xiong and Pilot Project PI, Dr. Kasper Wang on a project entitled “The role of Fgf10 in liver regeneration.” Jason Cheng, graduate student in the Department of Pathology at USC worked with Dr. Hide Tsukamoto on a project entitled “The role of beta-Catenin in activation of Hepatic Stellate Cells.” Justin Barad, an undergraduate student at UC Berkeley, worked with Dr. Henry Lin on a project entitled “A mouse model of small intestinal bacterial overgrowth.” Mathew Zebrowski, mentored by Dr. Anna Gukovskaya, and an undergraduate student at Long Beach State University, worked on a project entitled, “Effects of ethanol on the regulation of death mediators in experimental acute pancreatitis.”

Each student that presented received a certificate and an $800 check upon completion of their fellowship. All in attendance at the presentations were very impressed with the student’s work and with the quality of their presentations. We hope that the students’ summer work was an enjoyable one, and we look forward to seeing some of these students as future scientists. Congratulations to all!

Training Grant Renewed for Another Five Years

By Anne Taguchi
University of Southern California

We are pleased to announce that the NIAAA-funded Training Program in Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Diseases (ALPD) was renewed for another 5 year cycle! The main objective of our training program is to support the development of independent research career of young scientists in the pathogenesis of ALPD and cirrhosis. We are particularly interested in training and promoting specialization in cutting-edge and cell-type specific research aimed at molecular elucidation of alcohol-induced sensitization and priming mechanisms for the genesis of ALPD.

Our program will support funding for 4 postdoctoral and 1 predoctoral fellows a year. Each trainee will commit to two years of training. In addition to laboratory training, trainees will have the opportunity to participate in didactic courses, our annual symposium and progress report meetings, single-topic workshops, and two weeks in the laboratories of Center members or Training Faculty other than their primary mentor. These sessions allow the trainee to become familiar with experimental approaches and techniques different but complementary to those of the mentor’s laboratory.

We are currently inviting applications for trainee positions under our training grant under the mentorship of well established investigators. Candidates should have a Ph.D. in biological sciences, good communication skills and ability to conduct independent research, and have no more than seven years of post-doctoral research experience. The training environment is highly conducive to promote independent research and grant writing. The NIH post-doctoral training grant requirements are that the individual should have US permanent residency or citizenship and salary commensurate with experience. Please e-mail CV, a statement of interests and names of three references to Vijay Kalra, Ph.D. (vkalra@usc.edu).
Most Recent Publications by Center Members

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Research Center for Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Diseases
Keck School of Medicine of the
University of Southern California
1333 San Pablo Street, MMR 4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90033

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