

for TUFTS MEDICINE

An elite fraternity of scientists

Andrew Camilli, associate professor of molecular biology and microbiology, has been named one of 43 new Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) investigators. Members of this elite scientific fraternity receive long-term, generous funding for their labs in recognition of the cutting-edge nature of their work.

Camilli joins **Ralph Isberg**, professor of microbiology, and **Dr. Matthew Waldor**, associate professor of molecular biology and microbiology, as HHMI colleagues at Tufts.

Camilli researches how cholera and pneumonia bacteria gain virulence in the body. He was a pioneer in developing methods to determine how bacteria act inside an infected host. Camilli and his research team discovered that the bacterium that causes cholera gains momentum and strength while passing through the digestive tract, potentially solving a long-standing medical mystery on the virulence of the disease. For more on the story, go to <http://tuftsjournal.tufts.edu/archive/2005/april/features/hhmi.shtml>.

A different take on breast cancer

One out of every eight American women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime, and some 40,000 U.S. women die of the disease each year. **Charlotte Kuperwasser** is working to lower those numbers.

An assistant professor of anatomy, Kuperwasser is investigating the role that pregnancy—especially in older women—plays in promoting breast cancer. Her work is funded by a \$117,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program, and she was awarded a new three-year, \$150,000 grant in March from the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Foundation.

Researchers have known since the 1970s that pregnancy cuts a woman's risk of developing breast cancer over her lifetime in half. However, women who have their first child after age 30 actually increase their risk for developing the disease within five years of childbirth.

Conventional wisdom held that the hormone surges and growth factors associated with pregnancy triggered these postpartum tumors. But that explanation never sat well with Kuperwasser because these postpartum tumors are quite different from the breast cancers common in older women. For one thing, postpartum tumors are more aggressive. But more importantly, the cells in these tumors don't have the hormone receptors found in the majority of breast cancers.

Kuperwasser realized that the body's process of reverting to a pre-pregnancy state after childbirth and lactation might be the more critical period. For more on the story, go to http://tuftsjournal.tufts.edu/archive/2005/april/features/breast_cancer.shtml.

HERE & THERE

Dr. Ronald Pies, clinical professor of psychiatry, has had the second edition of his book, *Handbook of Essential Psychopharmacology*, a guide to vital information in psychopharmacology, published by the American Psychiatric Press.

Dr. Joseph C. McCarthy, clinical professor of orthopedic surgery, was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Staff orthopedic surgeon at New England Baptist Hospital, McCarthy participates in residency training programs for orthopedic residents from Tufts, the University of Massachusetts and the Otto Aufranc Hip Fellows. He has authored or co-authored 13 book chapters, two textbooks and more than 44 peer-reviewed articles.

Scott Loomis, M08, completed the 2005 Boston Marathon in 2 hours, 33 minutes and 28 seconds—finishing 50th overall in a field of 20,405 registered runners. Prior to medical school, he was a member of the U.S. National Cross-Country Ski Team, ranking as one of the top three skiers in the country before “retiring” in spring 2004.

Physicians— and scholars

Two new physicians, **Shira H. Brown** and **Deborah R. Stein**, both M05, have been honored as 2005 Massachusetts Medical Society Scholars. The state's medical society presents the \$10,000 scholarships each year to two students from each of the four Massachusetts medical schools in recognition of their academic achievement, community involvement and financial need.

Brown received her B.S. in biology *summa cum laude* from Tufts in 2001. She has been a volunteer with the Massachusetts Special Olympics and the Neely House at Tufts-New England Medical Center for cancer patients and their families. Currently, she serves as a volunteer with the Boston Coalition for Adult Immunization and Kids in Chemotherapy and their Students, which pairs medical students with children undergoing chemotherapy.

Stein is also a *summa cum laude* graduate of Tufts, earning a B.S. in chemistry in 2000. She was a member of the varsity women's swim team and taught swimming to mentally and physically challenged children. Following a pediatrics residency, Stein plans to work with under-served populations in the Boston area and also stay involved in programs for children with disabilities.

Educational innovators

Four proposals have been chosen for the medical school's second annual Innovations in Education Intramural Grants program. "The selected proposals fill important curricular needs in our programs, foster integration and collaboration across disciplines and institutions and are in alignment with our strategic plan," Dean Michael Rosenblatt said.

This year's grant recipients and their projects are: **Drs. Maura Brennan, Thomas Campfield** and **John O'Reilly**, Baystate Medical Center, "A Bioethics Curriculum for TUSM Third-year Students;" **Drs. Michael Goldstein, John Ludden** and **David Fairchild**, Tufts-New England Medical Center, "Business and Management in Medicine Initiative;" **Drs. Michael Picchioni** and **Kevin Hinchey**, Baystate Medical Center, "Enhancing Resident Teaching Skills: Focus on Feedback;" and **Dr. Priscilla J. Slanetz**, Caritas St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, "Developing a Comprehensive Imaging Curriculum at Tufts University School of Medicine, with Particular Emphasis on Physical Diagnosis I and II."

Brief descriptions of the selected proposals and next year's grant deadlines are posted on the Innovations Grant website, <http://medicine.tufts.edu/IG/index.html>.

Pancreatic cancer research funded

Dr. Mircea Ivan, assistant professor of medicine, is one of four pancreatic cancer researchers in the country to be awarded a grant from the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN).

For the first time, PanCAN has listed the researchers and their projects on the PanCAN-NCI Pancreatic Cancer Research MAP (www.cancer-map.org/pancreatic), an innovative online tool with a searchable database of investigators and research projects relevant to pancreatic cancer. The online service tracks funded research that can assist in developing national strategies to combat the disease and in facilitating collaboration among researchers.

Ivan will investigate hypoxia resistance in pancreatic tumors. The three other grant recipients are Dr. William G. Hawkins of Washington University in St. Louis, Dr. Sunil R. Hingorani of the University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Aram Hezel of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

FEEDBACK

The *Dean's Letter for Tufts Medicine* is published nine times a year by the Office of the Dean of Tufts University School of Medicine. We welcome comments and story ideas. Contact Editor Jacqueline Mitchell at jacqueline.mitchell@tufts.edu or 617.636.3602.

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