It wasn’t the best of times. It should have been but it wasn’t. We have never had a year when we lost a faculty member, a house officer and an administrative staff person. I have known these individuals from between 3 to 25 years and each death was agonizing. Three different types of cancer each one worse than the other. The cancers took their lives quickly, from a few months to about 2 years max.

We hate failures in medicine and never get used to them. Yet most of what we do eventually ends up as a failure depending on your definition.

The oldest of our group was 61, the youngest in his 20’s. All three died with much left to give to society, let alone their families.

So do you see where I am going with this? Neither do I. Do I now write about all the babies that were born in the department this year and go into the Circle of Life thing? Do I write about how we will always remember the impact these three individuals had upon our lives?

Seems trite yet I don’t have much going on here. Why can’t we get this Cancer thing under control? Wasn’t the promise of unravelling the genetic code was that we could start curing diseases for which we had not yet any cures? How many cures have you seen so far?

In 1971, Nixon declared a War on Cancer (must have been on his enemies list), and since then, the United States has spent more than $100 billion dollars in that effort. It is true that some breakthroughs have been made such as in the treatment of lymphoma and leukemia and few others. In some instances, early detection can make a major difference in survival. However, after all the money, drugs, research and effort, most of the progress we’ve had against cancer over the past 44 years has come from prevention, most especially smoking cessation (and now we may watch the epidemic of obesity undo all the good that has been done). Back then we thought cancer was one disease and now we know it is hundreds of different diseases. But targeted drug therapy has shown promise at quite a cost.

Since 2012, the majority of cancer drugs approved by the FDA have cost over $100,000 for a year of treatment although most don’t come close to giving anyone a year of life. These drugs cost so much because of the cost of research, we have been told. The U.S. pharmaceutical industry spent 24.4 percent of each dollar of sales on promoting the drug, compared to 13.4 percent spent on R & D, according to a 2008 study in PLOS Medicine. So much for the cost of research being the driving force.

Yet there is probably more optimism for finding cures for the various cancers than ever before. The Hospital, the Medical School and the MFA have committed over $50 million dollars to a joint effort to help bring Cancer under control. We have hired a renowned director to lead this effort and will be hiring a cadre of new and established basic and clinical researchers to work on one problem. Maybe, just maybe, we can hope even if only in some small way. Imagine what a legacy to those three individuals it would be if someone else survived because we got serious about tackling this problem.

Finally, a new problem is emerging, e-cigarettes. “A safer alternative to smoking” is what is being touted. Sticking pins in your eardrum is probably a safer alternative to smoking but doesn’t mean anyone should do it. Here is what we know about e-cigarettes, there are no health benefits and some risks. You think they are popular now, just wait until Philip Morris releases its Marlboro branded e-cigarette. The tobacco companies are off and running.

Alan G. Wasserman, M.D.
May 7 “QI GRAND ROUNDS”  
Quality Improvement Groups  
Internal Medicine Residents  
GW Medical Faculty Associates  

May 14 AOA LECTURE: “Tropical Diseases: The New Plague of Poverty”  
Peter Hotez, MD, Ph.D  
Dean, National School of Tropical Medicine  
Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Molecular Virology & Microbiology  
Baylor College of Medicine  
Endowed Chair in Tropical Pediatrics  
Texas Children’s Hospital  
Houston, TX  

May 21 “Progress in Aortic Stenosis: New Insights, New Options, New Challenges”  
Robert Bonow, MD  
Max and Lily Goldberg Distinguished Professor of Cardiology  
Department of Medicine  
Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine  
Chicago, IL  

May 28 Hirsh Lecture: “Health and Inequality”  
Len Nichols, PhD  
Director, Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics  
Professor of Health Policy  
College of Health and Human Services  
George Mason University  

The George Washington University Medical Center (GWUMC) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to sponsor continuing medical education for physicians. GWUMC designates this continuing medical education activity on an hour-for-hour basis in Category I of the Physician’s Recognition Award of the American Medical Association (AMA).  

Medicine Team Contacts  
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BLUE TEAM (202) 715-6156  
SILVER TEAM (202) 715-6040  
PURPLE TEAM (202) 715-6042  
GOLD TEAM (202) 715-6044  
ADMITTING RESIDENT 741-0161 pager  

Cardiology Grand Rounds  
5:00 PM, Ross Hall, Room # 104  

May 6 Mortality & Morbidity Conference  

May 13 Victoria Shannugam, MD  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
Dreizler, Division of Rheumatology  
Department of Medicine  
GW Medical Faculty Associates  
CV Effects of Rheumatologic Diseases  

May 20 Robert Bonow, MD  
Max and Lily Goldberg Distinguished Professor of Cardiology  
Department of Medicine  
Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine  
Chicago, IL  
Evidence Based Management of Mitral Regurgitation  

May 27 Andrew Choi, MD  
Division of Cardiology  
GW Medical Faculty Associates (July 1, 2015)  
Prospective Evaluation of Radiation Dose Reduction and Prospective Evaluation of Cardiac CT for Redo Surgery  

Resident Lecture Series  
May 2015 Noon Conference  

May 1 Chairman’s Rounds  

May 4 “Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura” - Dr. Lauren Mauro  

May 5 Journal Club  

May 6 GME Core Lecture  

May 7 Grand Rounds  

May 8 Chairman’s Rounds  

May 11 TBD  

May 12 Mortality & Morbidity Conference—Drs. Charlie Lee and Ashley Noisette  

May 13 “Smoking Cessation”- Dr. Lawrence Deyton  

May 14 Grand Rounds  

May 15 “Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease”- Dr. Timothy Dougherty  

May 18 TBD  

May 19 “Integrative Medicine”- Dr. Mikhail Kogan  

May 20 “Central Line Associated Infections”- Dr. Farida Millwala  

May 21 Grand Rounds  

May 22 Chairman’s Rounds  

May 25 HOLIDAY  

May 26 Clinicopathology Conference- Drs. Struti Chintamaneni and Mitali Mehta  

May 27 “Geriatric Evaluation Part II”- Dr. Christina Prather  

May 28 Grand Rounds  

May 29 Chairman’s Rounds
Department Research Efforts

For the 5th year in a row a GW student has been awarded the 2015 Alpha Omega Alpha Carolyn L. Kuckein Student Research Fellowship Award. Congratulations to Jason Chien, 2nd year medical student!

GWU Research Day was an amazing success with 29 posters being presented by our internal medicine residents. The award winner this year was Dr. Niharika Tipirneni on her poster titled, “A Rare Disease with a Rare Complication”.

3 other poster presentations were selected to present at the May 7th Medicine Grand Rounds on Quality Improvement which include:

“Improving Advance Care Planning in Primary Care” by Emily Lo, Erica McBride, Suneeta Ganji, and Aung Myint

“Streamlining Scheduling: Improvement in Patient Continuity in a Resident-Run Primary Care Clinic” by Jessica Davis, Maram Alkhatib, Nikila Kumar, and Rami Al-Sharif


Vanessa Hawkins, the DOM financial analyst from 1999 to 2014, passed away peacefully on April 5th. She was an invaluable part of the management team and will always be remembered for her wide smile, great patience and willingness to help everyone. She is survived by her mother, 3 children and 6 grandchildren. Vanessa went out of her way to ensure that her children and other young people were provided with the opportunity to pursue their educational and vocational aspirations. Her legacy includes a whole cadre of young people who are contributing to their communities, churches and families. She will be greatly missed.

Welcome to the MFA family...

We are pleased to announce an exciting new growth initiative at The MFA. Please join us in welcoming Metro Immediate & Primary Care (MetroIPC) to The MFA family.

Metro Immediate & Primary Care (MetroIPC) is now a proud practice of The GW Medical Faculty Associates, offering quality same-day immediate and primary care seven days a week, including evenings and weekends. At MetroIPC offers same-day immediate care services with convenient daytime, evening, weekend, and holiday hours to help patients get back to feeling better sooner. Or, patients can choose to book a future appointment for a date and time that works best for them at three Metro accessible locations - with more on the way.

"MetroIPC is a welcome addition to the MFA family, bringing increased access and convenience to all of our patients, both new and current," says MFA President Alan Wasserman, MD. "From a referral perspective, it’s also a win-win – whether from our specialists to MetroIPC, or vice versa."

Cleveland Park
2902 Porter Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008
Phone: 202-525-5287

Capital Hill/NoMa
220 L Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: 202-544-7580

Silver Spring
8484 Georgia Ave., Suite 100
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301-755-6655

And our newest location:

McPherson SQ
1101 15th St NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-798-0100

Chairman’s Rounds
GWU Hospital Auditorium, 12:00 Noon
All Faculty Invited to Attend

MAY 1   Dr. Courtney Paul
Dr. Austin Smith

MAY 8   Dr. Suliman Alamro
Dr. Nikila Kumar

MAY 22  Dr. Mohamed Houry
Dr. Alex Ross

MAY 29  Dr. Erin Davidson
Dr. Mohammed Gibreal
Kudos

Kudos... to Drs. Katalin Roth and Fatima Khan, PGY4, Geriatrics, on receiving a letter of praise from a patient, “I am in the right place with the right doctors... I feel comfortable and confident. Thank you for your prompt care and guidance.”

Kudos... to Dr. Michael Stempel, Podiatry, from a very thankful patient who wrote, “thank you for the extraordinary care you gave my wife.... She had many challenges but you stuck with her and comforted her throughout it all.”

Kudos... to Dr. Tahira Lodhi, Geriatrics, on the wonderful praise she received from her PCL group of students, “Thank you for leading our group with great passion and warmth, we have all learned so much from you.”

Kudos... to Jane Wu, PA, General Internal Medicine, a patient writes, “She was fantastic. I was having breathing problems and she took the time and used her knowledge to resolve the issue in acute care.”

Kudos... to Dr. Seema Kakar, General Internal Medicine, “She made sure I got to see a first rate dermatologist via Urgent Care, I hope you realize how wonderful it was to be treated by Dr. Kakar at Urgent Care.”

See you next month! The Editor

Rheumatology Academic Conference Schedule
May 2015

ACC Building 6B-411B (8:00 am - 9:00 am)
Ross Hall: Room 201C (1:00 pm– 3:00 pm)
Questions? Call (202) 741-2488

MAY 7: "Pediatric Radiology"
Dr. Patience White, MD

MAY 7: Rheumatology Divisional meeting

MAY 14: Journal Club
Dr. Almanabri

MAY 14: Didactic Sessions
1:00 - 3:30 p.m., GW Hospital, 6th floor

MAY 21: Intra-City Rheumatology Grand Rounds
NOTE LOCATION: GWU, Ross Hall
NOTE TIME: 7:30 AM

MAY 21: Didactic Sessions
1:00 - 3:30 p.m., GW Hospital, 6th floor

MAY 28: Radiology Conference
Dr. Kathleen Brindle, Associate Professor of Radiology
Chief, Musculoskeletal Radiology
Location: GW Hospital, Radiology Conference Room

MAY 28: Didactic Sessions
1:00 - 3:30 p.m., GW Hospital, 6th floor

The George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates
Department of Medicine, Suite 8-416
2150 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW