almost ready to comment on any experts too embarrassing to write about but somehow I will muddle through. In 2002 I was asked to be on the Charlie Rose show to talk about President Bush’s fainting spell after eating a pretzel. Conspiracy theories of a more serious illness were prominent and the show was disappointed when I said I thought “he had a vagal episode after swallowing (choking) on a pretzel.” Since that wasn’t what they wanted to hear I had my 10 seconds of air time and was dismissed. I only agreed to comment since all the facts were known and already reported and all I could do was explain what a vagal episode was. But that is not what they wanted. They wanted to know what else this could be and what was being hidden.

Sensationalism makes news and there is no shortage of experts ready to comment on any medical issue as we discovered throughout the Cheney journey towards a healthy heart. President George W. Bush’s recent cardiac episode sets a new standard for degrading the medical profession. Note these two headlines regarding his care; the first from the Washington Post, “President Bush’s unnecessary surgery” and the second from the Society for Heart Attack Prevention and Eradication’s web site, “Task Force Applauds President Bush’s Medical Team…” These two examples are just a sample of the many renowned pundits that found a need to comment.

The first states that he was an asymptomatic vigorous individual who, because he received VIP treatment, was diagnosed with a coronary blockage that would never have hurt him. The authors (one is a chief oncology fellow at NIH), are concerned that this example will lead to more unnecessary testing paid for by Medicare. The second states that without the diagnostic procedures done he would have become another of the over 600,000 Americans who die each year from heart attacks. They lament that most insurance, including Medicare, do not pay for many of the procedures Bush received.

I realize you think that I am embarrassed by the amazing dichotomy of opinions regarding his care. No, I couldn’t care less that people disagree about treatment options. What I am appalled by is that individuals and groups are commenting with no idea of his entire episode after swallowing (choking) on a pretzel.” Since that wasn’t what they wanted to hear I had my 10 seconds of air time and was dismissed. I only agreed to comment since all the facts were known and already reported and all I could do was explain what a vagal episode was. But that is not what they wanted. They wanted to know what else this could be and what was being hidden.

The task force assumes that he was tested because he had other risk factors. It is not easy treating patients and even harder given the public scrutiny that goes along with treating a VIP. Why can’t we assume that the physicians treating him had only his interest in mind and used their ability to provide the best care they could? Broader questions regarding the best way to screen for coronary disease are important to discuss and debate but not by individuals or groups trying to promote themselves and their own self-centered opinions using a case, of which they are totally ignorant. In this case ignorance is not bliss, it’s just stupidity.

What I should have said on the Rose show was “these pretzels are making me thirsty.”

Alan G. Wasserman, M.D.
Department of Medicine
September 2013 Grand Rounds

Sept 5  Cancelled – Holiday

Sept 12  “Care of presidents after assassination attempts”
Joseph Giordano, MD
Emeritus Professor of Surgery
Former Chair of Surgery
GW University Medical School

Sept 19  “Hepatitis C Update”
Marc Siegel, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Infectious Diseases
Department of Medicine
The GW Medical Faculty Associates

The 12th Annual HY Zimmerman Memorial Lecture
Sept 26  “TBA”
Mitchell Shiffman, MD
Liver Institute of Virginia
Bon Secours Hampton Roads Health System
Hampton Roads and Richmond, Virginia

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.

Cardiology Grand Rounds
5:00 PM, GWU Hospital, Conference Room 6-116

Sept 4  No Conference : Rosh Hashannah

Sept 11  Mortality & Morbidity Conference

Sept 18  No Conference

Sept 25  Allen Solomon, MD
Professor of Medicine
Division of Cardiology
GW Medical Faculty Associates
Atrial Fibrillation and Dementia

Resident Lecture Series
September 2013 Noon Conference

Sept 3  Journal Club
Sept 4  Jeopardy
Sept 5  Medicine Grand Rounds
Sept 6  Chairman’s Rounds
Sept 9  "Rheumatologic Emergencies"- Dr. Rodolfo Curiel
Sept 10  Clinicopathologic Conference
Drs. Ashlee Metcalf and Salim Daouk
Sept 11  Clinical Documentation Session
Sept 12  Medicine Grand Rounds
Sept 13  Chairman’s Rounds
Sept 16  "Cancer Screening in Women"
Dr. P. Sheena Khurana
Sept 17  "Congestive Heart Failure"-Dr. Gurusher Panjrath
Sept 18  "Headaches"-Dr. Henry Kaminski
Sept 19  Medicine Grand Rounds
Sept 20  ID lecture
Sept 23  TBA
Sept 24  "Morbidity and Mortality"- Drs. Reda Shams and
Ashley Stycynski
Sept 25  Malnutrition lecture
Sept 26  Medicine Grand Rounds
Sept 27  Chairman’s Rounds
Sept 30  Administrative Noon Conference

Medicine Team Contacts

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BLUE TEAM  (202) 715-6156
SILVER TEAM  (202) 715-6040
PURPLE TEAM  (202) 715-6042
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ADMITTING RESIDENT 741-0161 pager
Please Join Us In Welcoming Our Newest Additions to the Medicine Faculty

Dr. Anita B. Kumar, joins the Division of Gastroenterology, or rather returns as a faculty member since she completed her gastroenterology fellowship here at GWU in June 2013. Dr. Kumar earned her medical degree from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine where she was ranked in the first quartile of her class.

Dr. Kumar completed her internal medicine residency and her gastroenterology fellowship training at GWU. She is board certified in internal medicine. Her clinical and research interests include hepatitis C, inflammatory bowel disease, and celiac disease. Dr. Kumar speaks Hindi and Punjabi.

Dr. Sabyasachi Sen, joins the Division of Endocrinology. Dr. Sen is joining us from Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, MA, where he has been on faculty since 2008. He has also served as Principal Investigator at the Pioneer Valley Life Sciences Institute (PVLSI) since that time.

Dr. Sen received his medical degree from R.G. Kar Medical College, Calcutta University in Calcutta, India. He completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine, St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center. He then went on to complete his endocrinology fellowship at National Institute of Health.

Dr. Sen is board certified in Internal Medicine and Endocrinology. His clinical and research interests include lipid metabolism, vascular complications of diabetes, obesity, insulinoma, endocrine hypertension, and osteoporosis.

Dr. Christian Nagy joins the Division of Cardiology this month. Dr. Nagy received his dual general cardiology and pediatric cardiology fellowship at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and did his 1st and 2nd year of interventional cardiology fellowship at the University of Toronto and 3rd year finished at Tufts Medical Center in Massachusetts.

Dr. Nagy completed his medical degree at the University Erlangen-Nuremberg, Medical Faculty of the Friedrich-Alexander in Erlangen, Germany. He completed his combined Internal Medicine and Pediatrics residency, which included an additional Chief year, at Bridgeport Hospital and Yale New Haven Hospital in Connecticut.

He is board certified in Internal Medicine, Cardiology, General Pediatrics, and Pediatric Cardiology. His clinical interests include interventional cardiology, coronary artery disease, structural heart disease, transcatheter aortic valve replacement, and adult congenital heart disease. Dr. Nagy speaks German and Romanian.

Please join us in welcoming Drs. Kumar, Sen, and Nagy to the Department of Medicine and to the MFA. Appointments can be made for all of these physicians by calling 202-741-3333.

Dr. Jillian Catalanotti New Residency Director (continued from page 1)

Dr. Catalanotti is a Faculty Inductee for the Gold Humanism Honor Society given in May 2013 which honors medical students, residents, role-model physician teachers and other exemplars recognized for “demonstrated excellence in clinical care, leadership, compassion and dedication to service.”

She is also the recipient of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences Leonard Tow Humanism Award that was given in May. This award is presented to a student and faculty member who best demonstrate the Foundation’s ideals of outstanding compassion in the delivery of care, respect for patients, their families, and healthcare colleagues, as well as demonstrated clinical excellence.

“I consider this to be one of, if not, the most important position in the Department. I made a great choice 14 years ago and I am sure that Jill will also be an outstanding director,” said Dr. Wasserman.

Dr. Joan St. Onge, Assumes GME Position at University of Miami

Dr. Joan St. Onge, former Medicine faculty member and one-time Interim Internal Medicine Program Director, has recently been appointed as Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education at The University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. Dr. St. Onge had been an Assistant Regional Dean for Clinical Curriculum, but this new position will allow her to return to her life’s passion of guiding new physicians as the begin their careers. In addition to the Deanship, Dr. St. Onge was appointed as Director of the Office of Graduate Medical Education.

Dr. St. Onge is an Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Miami, where she moved to from GWU four years ago to join her husband in his retirement.

Congratulations and best wishes to Joan in her new endeavors.

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

Sept 6 Dr. Shiv Pandya
Dr. Samir Vermani

Sept 13 Dr. Michael Spagnola
Dr. Bianca Ummat

Sept 27 Dr. Nehmat Ramadan
Kudos & Congratulations

Kudos...to Drs. Seema Kakar, Jillian Catalanotti, Andrea Flory, Matthew Mintz, and Benjamin Blatt, all of General Internal Medicine, who got their article “Evaluating Oral Case Presentations Using a Checklist: How do Senior Student-Evaluators Compare with Faculty?” published in Academic Medicine.

More Kudos...Dr. Jehan (Gigi) El-Bayoumi, General Internal Medicine, who received a letter from a patient thanking her for her professionalism and care that she had given his mother. He stated that he and his mother were "impressed with the doctors taking their time to figure out his mom's health problems...I have a new respect for hospital care after seeing my mom’s experience at GW.”

More more Kudos...to Dr. James Howard, PGY1, who was chosen as Physician of the Month for August 2013. He was selected by one of the nurses for helping her when she had trouble unlocking a bed in the hallway during rounds one morning.

Kudos also...to Dr. Nishant Magar, PGY1, who received praise from a patient's daughter on giving her mother excellent, kind, and thoughtful care at INOVA Fairfax hospital. Way to go!

Congratulations ... to Dr. Dominic Raj who has been invited to review research grants and write the consensus statement for the French National Research Agency and Estonian Research Council.

Congratulations ... to Dr. Talal Alzahrani, PGY1, who's research on "Prevalence and Predictors of Blood Pressure variability in Hemodialysis Patients" was selected by the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) for an oral abstract presentation.

More Congratulations... To Dr. Alexander Cho, former chief resident, and his wife on the birth of their daughter Ellie Nash Cho born on 7/31/2013.

Congratulations also... to Dr. Leelie Selassie’s, former chief resident, husband, Dr. Reuben Brigety II who was appointed the next U.S. ambassador to the African Union.

See you next month! The Editor