

UCSD GLOBAL HEALTH



Mozambique PROGRAM WITH THE UNIVERSIDADE EDUARDO MONDLANE

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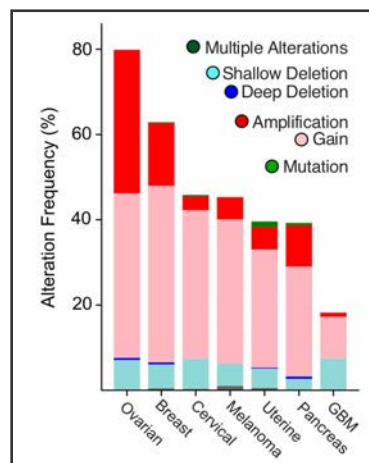
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◆ *The Schlaepfer Lab is evaluating Focal Adhesion Kinase, which is often gained or amplified in ovarian tumors, as a key mediator of resistance to therapy.*



The Back Page:

*Brubaker Wins
Oscar Contreras
Ortiz Award*

THANKING
NINE GIRLS ASK



Letter from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

As we come to the end of another calendar year, we can look back at 2019 as a year of growth within the department.

This year saw an overall increase in the number of women choosing UCSD for the birth of their child. Our deliveries increased by 8% in 2019, with three straight months of more than 300 deliveries. Louise Laurent and Mana Parast have received approval and funding from the Chancellor's office for a new UCSD Center for Perinatal Discovery. The excellence and expertise at UCSD bode well for growth in 2020.

Our outpatient surgeries increased 35%. We opened 3 new clinics and expanded our operations at the Hillcrest campus. We have had a banner year expanding the UCSD Health system across southern California.

To support these efforts, 2019 also saw us increase our clinical strength, with Sarah Tilford, Colleen McNally, Sarah Kluck, and Mai Hoang joining us. (See an interview with Mai in this issue of Fimbria.) We could not support our efforts without our new Nurse Practitioners Suzanne Riego, Amy Boutelle, Christina Buenrostro. Kim Vaughn has joined as our new evening nurse manager. The department is also proud to call UCSD Health system Nurse of the Year Marites Arendon one of our own!

Our training mission remains strong. Irene Su, Ramez Eskander and Sandy Ramos were welcomed as new Fellowship directors in 2019. Our own professor Mark Lawson is director of the UC President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program that supports talented postdoctoral fellows from underserved backgrounds. The success of his efforts are evident: UC President Napolitano has just doubled his budget from 2 to 4 million.



Our research mission continues to expand, as well. Our own Pam Mellon was elected to the very prestigious American Association for the Advancement of Science this year. We received 14 new awards, with a new total of 49 active awards. This is a 17% growth that has resulted from a 30% success rate. With a total of \$10.7 million in funding, more than \$7.6 million of this is NIH funding, which ranks our department 6th in the Nation.

Last February Linda Brubaker secured an R13 grant to organize the 1st annual UCSD urobiome conference that brought in 143 participants from 12 countries and 20 states. Her efforts have been so successful that we will host the second meeting this year.

Our success has come from talented and dedicated faculty and staff across all divisions. I congratulate you on a truly outstanding year.

Charles Nager, MD

CHARLES NAGER
Distinguished Professor and Samuel Yen Chair
Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology
& Reproductive Sciences

We hope you enjoy this issue of FQ and find it informative. Please forward it on to colleagues if you do. We'll see you next time.

DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS, GYNECOLOGY
& REPRODUCTIVE SCIENCES DIVISION CHIEFS

Family Planning SHEILA MODY	Gynecologic Oncology MICHAEL MCHALE
Maternal Fetal Medicine THOMAS KELLY	Obstetrics and Gynecology PAMELA DEAK
Hospitalist GINA FRUGONI	Urogynecology MIMI LUKACZ
Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility ANTONI DULEBA	
Midwife Director	KAREN PERDION

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News & New Arrivals

Congratulations to our new Grantees

Fall was again a productive time for our research mission.

Within UCSD Shunichi Shimasaki and Kellie Breen were awarded UCSD Senate awards for research. Breen also received an equipment supplement to her R01.

Dequina Alvarado and Priya Pantham just received K99 awards under the mentorship of Mark Lawson and Louise Laurent, respectively. Congratulations to Louise Laurent and Heidi Cooke-Andersen, who will receive a collaborative three year grant entitled "Defining the molecular basis of successful implantation and pregnancy of the human embryo to improve IVF." The funding adds to the recent UG3 (Development and application of a scalable workflow for immunomagnetic separation of exRNA carrier subclasses) and U54 (ODGC for Acute to Chronic Pain Signatures), and MPI R01 (Stress-mediated trophoblast proliferation: adaptation or pathology?) and R21 (Stem cell-based human placenta-on-a-chip using 3D bioprinting) that were also awarded to Laurent.

Sheila Mody has received a Cystic Fibrosis Foundation subaward as part of her collaborative work with UT Southwestern (Evaluation of Predictors of Maternal-Fetal Outcomes in Cystic Fibrosis). Dwayne Stupack received a gift from Nine Girls Ask to study the Immunology of Ovarian Cancer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

UROBIOME 2020

held jointly with

CMI International Microbiome Meeting

March 3-5, 2020

University of California, San Diego

*On behalf of Linda Brubaker, MD
Clinical Professor, UC San Diego
Department of Obstetrics,
Gynecology, and
Reproductive Sciences,*

We announce the
Urobiome 2020 Meeting.

Leading researchers will present on the advancing work on urobiome science and implications for human health including common conditions such as urinary tract infection, urinary incontinence, and bladder overactivity. Time will be dedicated to consensus development, a science blitz for new investigators and networking to promote collaborations.

website:

<http://cmi.ucsd.edu/event/2020-Urobiome>

Follow us on Twitter: @UCSD_ObGyn



New Service Offered for Researchers

The UCSD Perinatal Biorepository provides access to resources for clinical and translational studies on human pregnancy. High quality biospecimens and clinical data from rigorously adjudicated healthy and complicated pregnancies are available to investigators at UCSD and other institutions. For prospective studies, assistance with study design and preparation of regulatory documents, study subject recruitment and enrollment, and a variety of study procedures are available. The Biorepository currently contains: Placental tissue samples compatible with molecular and histologic studies (> 2,500 cases), Maternal serum, plasma, and urine (> 1,000 cases) and Cord blood (serum and plasma) (>300 cases). The Biorepository, which is co-directed by Drs. Louise Laurent and Mana Parast, also offers a number of molecular and analytical services.

Bench & Bedside

ROCKIF TRIAL: Targeting FAK in Ovarian Cancer

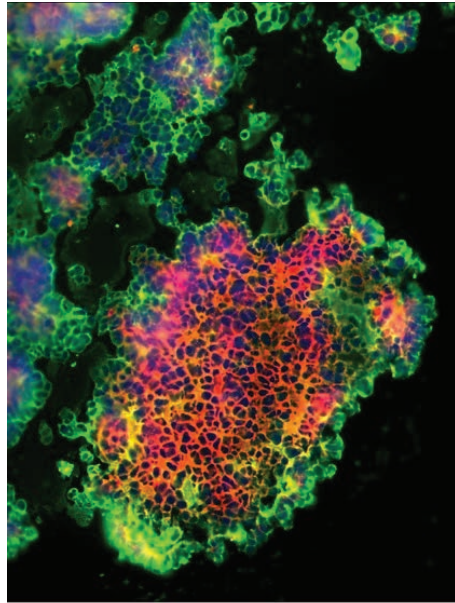
Ovarian Cancer is the most lethal of the gynecologic malignancies. It most frequently strikes women in the fifth decade and later. By the time a patient has developed symptoms significant enough to warrant a visit to their gynecologist, the disease has usually spread to sites beyond the fallopian tubes and ovaries, which are the sites of tumorigenesis for different subtypes of ovarian cancer. A major barrier to treatment is that ovarian cancer can become resistant to chemotherapy, as well as to the new wave of immunotherapies that have been developed. A new investigator-initiated clinical trial at the UCSD Moores Cancer Center is testing whether the addition of a new chemotherapy-sensitizing drug can act to limit ovarian cancer drug resistance.

The work was founded in David Schlaepfer's lab, who demonstrated a central role for Focal Adhesion Kinase, or FAK, in tumor malignancy more than two decades ago. David's group is defining a pattern of genomic changes in the serous subtype of ovarian cancer which leads to elevated FAK protein levels and FAK activation inside tumor cells. This change in FAK supports the survival of cancer stem cells. These stem cells form clusters that can grow as tumorspheres (see image - FAK staining is in Green, and a stem cell marker in red - orange/yellow is the merged signal), and seem to play a key role in the response (or lack of response) of tumor cells to platinum-based chemotherapy. This is a new role for FAK as Schlaepfer's past studies showed that FAK functions to promote cell migration during development - even in normal cells. The work was a collaboration with Dr. Stupack's lab and was published this fall in *eLife*, an open access online journal, so that other scientists around the world could readily gain insights from the work¹. The understanding of how a protein may adopt new functions in cancer cells is important for translating research results into new drug therapies for cancer patients.

Schlaepfer explained it this way:

1. <https://elifesciences.org/articles/47327>

"Pharma is very good at making drugs that block enzymes. The main role of FAK in tumor cells seems to be enzymatic, and so it is an approachable target for drug development. Importantly, even when enzyme function is inhibited, FAK can still act as a structural protein, supporting the health of non-tumor cells. Several FAK inhibitors have been developed that have good drug properties, and now we can begin to determine the best ways to use them."



Microscopic image of an ovarian cancer tumorsphere isolated from mice that expresses green fluorescent fusion protein of FAK. Red staining is aldehyde dehydrogenase 1A1 (detoxifying enzyme) and cell nuclei are stained blue.

The sentence summed up more than a decade of focused research. After proving that FAK inhibition has efficacy against tumor cells in the culture dish and in preclinical mouse tumor models, there are administrative and financial hurdles to starting a clinical trial to test a new drug in patients. The hurdles are even higher when you don't have a major drug company paying for the trial costs. The transition

process of Bench to Bedside can present additional coordination challenges and requires teamwork.

This is where the Nine Girl's Ask (NGA) Foundation, led by Joan Wyllie, stepped in (See back page). Over the past ten years, NGA has provided philanthropic gifts, grants for pilot studies, and equipment to labs focused on gynecologic cancer research in San Diego. As NGA membership wished to have their philanthropy efforts provide a more direct benefit women with recurrent ovarian cancer, an investigative trial plan was formulated by Schlaepfer and Dr. Michael McHale, Director of the Gyn/Onc Division. The trial, termed ROCKIF (Resensitization of platinum-resistant Ovarian Cancer by Kinase Inhibition of FAK) relied upon the participation of Verastem Inc. to provide the investigational FAK inhibitor drug (Defactinib) at no cost, with the remainder of the funding coming from Nine Girls Ask. ROCKIF (<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03287271>) was born.

Targeting FAK in Cancer (cont):

The trial is currently open and enrolling patients at The Moores Cancer Center. In addition to determining whether a combination of daily Defactinib, monthly carboplatin, and weekly paclitaxel will provide clinical benefit for women with recurrent ovarian cancer, researchers associated with the Schlaepfer and Stupack labs will be analyzing collected tumor biopsy samples for specific genetic, cellular, and protein changes that are potential markers associated with FAK inhibition.

Schlaepfer noted, *"The ability to analyze patient tumor samples prior to and during the ROCKIF trial will provide us with a unique opportunity to perform Bench to Bedside and Back research in ovarian cancer. We have plans to incorporate next generation DNA-RNA sequencing as well as to explore new and completely unanticipated research questions involving the tumor immune microenvironment."*

NEW FACULTY

INTERVIEW: *Mai Hoang*

Welcome to Mai, our newest hospitalist. You can find out more about Mai in our brief chat here, or on Youtube!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USAdMleaXQo>



FQ: Welcome, Mai! Were you born outside the U.S.?

MH: I was born in Vietnam and immigrated to California with my family when I was ten years old. I lived with my family and grandparents in Westminster, Orange County until I moved to UCLA for college.

FQ: What attracted you to this position, at UCSD?

MH: It is my dream to work for an academic hospital that encourages professional growth and continual learning of cutting-edge technology and medical advances. This is only possible at a top academic institution like UCSD. However, it is also my goal to provide high quality care for underserved patient populations, and so I am very excited to find and join a group of ob hospitalists with similar aspirations.

FQ: Tell us about the training that brought you to our department.

MH: After obtaining my Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics, I attended medical school at the University of Vermont College of Medicine. I then completed my obstetrics and gynecology residency at Yale University. Having lived through eight years of New England winter, I decided to move back to California and took my first job as a generalist at Palo Alto Medical Foundation. I also worked in private practice in Laguna Hills for two years before relocating to San Diego.

FQ: What would you like to accomplish at UCSD?

MH: Besides providing excellent clinical care, I would like to take a more active role in medical student education. One of the things that attracted me to this position is the opportunity to teach students and residents while practicing evidence-based medicine in a collegial environment. I hope to participate in committees involving patient education and evidence-based practices. In the future, I hope to be in a leadership position working toward improving health care access, advocacy for our profession and increasing diversity in healthcare.

FQ: If you have family with you, how are they adjusting to San Diego?

MH: My husband grew up in San Diego, and so it was a familiar environment. He found a great job here and triggered our relocation.

FQ: What would you like the department to know about you?

MH: At the first glance, I am an introvert. But after you get to know me, you would see that I have a fun, sassy, and adventurous side. Underneath it all, I love to travel and explore new cuisines and cultures. My comfort foods include noodles and a nice glass of red wine.

Meet the New Residents

Continuing our Resident interview series, *Fimbria Quarterly* talked to Diana Ha, Tatyanna Henderson and Joseph Mimms Jr.



FQ: We frequently get residents that grew up in California. Is that anybody here?

Tatyanna: My father was in the Navy and picking a hometown is always difficult! I would call New England home. I was born in Connecticut, graduated high school in Rhode Island and both of my parents are from Massachusetts

Joe: - I'm from Aurora, OH, which is a small city about 30 miles south of Cleveland.

Diana – I am Californian. I grew up in San Francisco.

FQ: A common question that residents get is what attracted you to the program at UCSD. It's the elephant in the room. So, let's ask this now.

Joe: I was most attracted to the fellowship opportunities. Being someone who doesn't quite know exactly what I want to do after residency, it was important for me to be at a place where opportunities are abundant.

Diana: For me it was a combination of the people I met on my sub-I here, my partner who had matched here for anesthesia residency, and of course the weather and city itself.

Tatyanna: After an undergraduate education at Eckerd College in Florida I went to medical school at Duke University. My first exposure to the UCSD program was through the first year FPMRS fellow that joined Duke's program (from UCSD) in July. She was polished, warm and welcoming. It makes an impact.

Tatyanna: This theme rerepresents UCSD - it continued as I interacted with residents and attending during my interviews. I loved that, during the interviews, I learned about the program but also about the things that are important to them outside of the clinical setting.

FQ: Joe and Diana, where are you coming to UCSD from?

Joe: I went to Case Western Reserve University for both undergraduate education and medical school.

Diana: I went to UC Davis for undergrad and took a couple years prior to med school doing public health work. Then went right back to Davis for med school with a quick year at Harvard for my MPH.

FQ: What was the most memorable part of your interview here at UCSD?

Tatyanna: It was such a good interview, but the most memorable part of interviewing was getting to hang out with the residents after the day had wrapped up. The whole room was bright and lively and I could tell it was a group that enjoyed each other and loved what they did.

Joe: Above anything else, I just felt comfortable during the entire interview process. I came away immediately thinking UCSD was a place I could see myself. I felt that all of the interviewers knew my application very well. I was also pleasantly surprised that so many faculty were present for the pre-interview dinner and that each of them were so approachable.

Diana - Dr. Ballas- He had this incredibly funny story of a urogyn patient encounter that had me dying of laughter.

New Residents con't

FQ: What do you do outside of medicine?

Tatyanna: I love to watch TV. My guilty pleasure is reality TV but I also enjoy watching sports especially football (Go Patriots!). I also enjoy playing mini golf or getting into the batting cages.

Joe: I am a huge Cleveland sports fan. Getting out to Browns, Cavaliers, or Indians games are some of my favorite things to do. I also really enjoy listening to music and watching movies.

Diana - I love the outdoors and nature. Plants make me happy. I also use backpacking and scuba diving as a way to reset, meditate, and stay connected. Aside from nature I love live music and have a deep appreciation for dance and art. In my free time during 4th yr of medical school I learned how to sketch portraits via youtube. I highly recommend the tutorial.

/FQ



At the Frontier Recent Publications:

Outstanding productivity across the Divisions in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, resulting in 40+ publications to highlight this quarter:

1. The Homeodomain Transcription Factors Vax1 and Six6 Are Required for SCN Development and Function. Pandolfi EC, Breuer JA, Nguyen Huu VA, Talluri T, Nguyen D, Lee JS, Hu R, Bharti K, Skowronska-Krawczyk D, Gorman MR, Mellon PL, Hoffmann HM. *Mol Neurobiol.* 2019 Nov 09. PMID: 31705443.
2. Deletion of the Homeodomain Protein Six6 From GnRH Neurons Decreases GnRH Gene Expression, Resulting in Infertility. *Endocrinology.* Pandolfi EC, Tonsfeldt KJ, Hoffmann HM, Mellon PL. 2019 Sep 01; 160(9):2151-2164. PMID: 31211355.
3. Mechanisms of nuclear content loading to exosomes. Yokoi A, Villar-Prados A, Oliphint PA, Zhang J, Song X, De Hoff P, Morey R, Liu J, Roszik J, Clise-Dwyer K, Burks JK, O'Halloran TJ, Laurent LC, Sood AK. *Sci Adv.* 2019 Nov; 5(11):eaax8849. PMID: 31799396.
4. Age-associated changes in the mechanical properties of human cadaveric pelvic floor muscles. Burnett LA, Cook M, Shah S, Michelle Wong M, Kado DM, Alperin M. *J Biomech.* 2019 Oct 31; 109436. PMID: 31708240.

5. Uncovering changes in proteomic signature of rat pelvic floor muscles in pregnancy. Burnett LA, Boscolo FS, Laurent LC, Wong M, Alperin M. *Am J Obstet Gynecol.* 2019 Aug; 221(2):130.e1-130.e9. PMID: 31047881
6. Benchmarking urine storage and collection conditions for evaluating the female urinary microbiome. Jung CE, Chopyk J, Shin JH, Lukacz ES, Brubaker L, Schwanemann LK, Knight R, Wolfe AJ, Pride DT. *Sci Rep.* 2019 Sep 16; 9(1):13409. PMID: 31527753.
7. Bladder Health Experiences, Perceptions and Knowledge of Sexual and Gender Minorities. Hardacker CT, Baccellieri A, Mueller ER, Brubaker L, Hutchins G, Zhang JLY, Hebert-Beirne J. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2019 08 30; 16(17). PMID: 31480302.
8. Postoperative urinary tract infection after urogynecologic surgery: timing and uropathogens. Jung CE, Brubaker L. *Int Urogynecol J.* 2019 Jul 29. PMID: 31359115.
9. Recruitment and retention: A randomized controlled trial of video-enhanced versus standard consent processes within the E-OPTIMAL study. Brubaker L, Jelovsek JE, Lukacz ES, Balgobin S, Ballard A, Weidner AC, Gantz MG, Whitworth R, Mazloomdoost D. *Clin Trials.* 2019 Oct; 16(5):481-489. PMID: 31347384.
10. Barber MD, Brubaker L, Nygaard I, Wai CY, Dyer KY, Ellington D, Sridhar A, Gantz MG. Pain and activity after vaginal reconstructive surgery for pelvic organ prolapse and stress urinary incontinence. *Am J Obstet Gynecol.* 2019 Sep; 221(3):233.e1-233.e16. PMID: 31201809
11. Harvie HS, Amundsen CL, Neuwahl SJ, Honeycutt AA, Lukacz ES, Sung VW, Rogers RG, Ellington D, Ferrando CA, Chermansky CJ, Mazloomdoost D, Thomas S. Cost Effectiveness of Sacral Neuromodulation Versus OnabotulinumtoxinA for Refractory Urgency Urinary Incontinence: Results of the ROSETTA Randomized Trial. *J Urol.* 2019 Nov 18; 101097JU0000000000000656. PMID: 31738113.
12. Effect of Behavioral and Pelvic Floor Muscle Therapy Combined With Surgery vs Surgery Alone on Incontinence Symptoms Among Women With Mixed Urinary Incontinence: The ESTEEM Randomized Clinical Trial. Sung VW, Borello-France D, Newman DK, Richter HE, Lukacz ES, Moalli P, Weidner AC, Smith AL, Dunivan G, Ridgeway B, Nguyen JN, Mazloomdoost D, Carper B, Gantz MG. *JAMA.* 2019 09 17; 322(11):1066-1076. PMID: 31529007.
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14. Exploring emergency contraception prescribing by pharmacists in California. Mody SK, Rafie S, Hildebrand M, Oakley LP. *Contraception.* 2019 Sep 04. PMID: 31493380
15. Effects of the levonorgestrel-containing intrauterine device, copper intrauterine device, and levonorgestrel-containing oral contraceptive on susceptibility of immune cells from cervix, endometrium and blood to HIV-1 fusion measured ex vivo. Cavois M, Hilton JF, Roan NR, Takeda M, Seidman D, Averbach S, Chang E, Raman N, Greenblatt R, Shacklett BL, Smith-McCune K. *PLoS One.* 2019; 14(8):e0221181. PMID: 31437197.
16. A gender synchronized family planning intervention for married couples in rural India: study protocol for the CHARM2 cluster randomized controlled trial evaluation. Dixit A, Averbach S, Yore J, Kully G, Ghule M, Battala M, Begum S, Johns NE, Vaida F, Bharadwaj P, Wyss N, Saggurti N, Silverman J, Raj A. *Reprod Health.* 2019 Jun 25; 16(1):88. PMID: 31238954
17. Moving beyond cytotoxic drug dosing in ovarian cancer. Eskander RN, Monk BJ. *Lancet.* 2019 Dec 07; 394(10214):2043-2045. PMID: 31791687.

At the Frontier continued

18. FAK activity sustains intrinsic and acquired ovarian cancer resistance to platinum chemotherapy. Diaz Osterman CJ, Ozmadenci D, Kleinschmidt EG, Taylor KN, Barrie AM, Jiang S, Bean LM, Sulzmaier FJ, Jean C, Tancioni I, Anderson K, Uryu S, Cordasco EA, Li J, Chen XL, Fu G, Ojalill M, Rappu P, Heino J, Mark AM, Xu G, Fisch KM, Kolev VN, Weaver DT, Pachter JA, Gyorffy B, McHale MT, Connolly DC, Molinolo A, Stupack DG, Schlaepfer DD. *Elife*. 2019 09 03; 8. PMID: 31478830.

19. NCCN Guidelines Insights: Ovarian Cancer, Version 1. Armstrong DK, Alvarez RD, Bakkum-Gamez JN, Barroilhet L, Behbakht K, Berchuck A, Berek JS, Chen LM, Cristea M, DeRosa M, ElNaggar AC, Gershenson DM, Gray HJ, Hakam A, Jain A, Johnston C, Leath CA, Liu J, Mahdi H, Matei D, McHale M, McLean K, O'Malley DM, Penson RT, Percac-Lima S, Ratner E, Remmenga SW, Sabbatini P, Werner TL, Zsiros E, Burns JL, Engh AM. *J Natl Compr Canc Netw*. 2019 08 01; 17(8):896-909. PMID: 31390583

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27. What Is New in Contraception? Best Articles From the Past Year. Resnik JL. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2019 May; 133(5):1052-1054. PMID: 30969222.

28. Is diagnosis of Leiomyosarcoma after Radiofrequency Ablation of Uterine Myomas. Varon S, Parvataneni R, Waetjen E, Dunn K, Jacoby VL. *J Minim Invasive Gynecol*. 2019 Mar - Apr; 26(3):564-566. PMID: 30121386.

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34. Rethinking endometriosis care: applying the chronic care model via a multidisciplinary program for the care of women with endometriosis. Agarwal SK, Foster WG, Groessl EJ. *Int J Womens Health*. 2019; 11:405-410. PMID: 31413643.

35. Response to: X-linked miR-506 family miRNAs promote FMRP expression in mouse spermatogonia. Ramaiah M, Tan K, Plank TM, Song HW, Dumdie JN, Jones S, Shum EY, Sheridan SD, Peterson KJ, Gromoll J, Haggarty SJ, Cook-Andersen H, Wilkinson MF. *EMBO Rep*. 2019 Dec 06; e49354. PMID: 31808609.

36. Neural and endocrine mechanisms underlying stress-induced suppression of pulsatile LH secretion. McCosh RB, Breen KM, Kauffman AS. *Mol Cell Endocrinol*. 2019 Dec 01; 498:110579. PMID: 31521706.

37. Cre/lox generation of a novel whole-body Kiss1r KO mouse line recapitulates a hypogonadal, obese, and metabolically-impaired phenotype. Tolson KP, Marooki N, Wolfe A, Smith JT, Kauffman AS. *Mol Cell Endocrinol*. 2019 Dec 01; 498:110559. PMID: 31442544.

38. The Role of the Brain in the Pathogenesis and Physiology of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). Coutinho EA, Kauffman AS. *Med Sci (Basel)*. 2019 Aug 02; 7(8). PMID: 3138254

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UCSD GLOBAL HEALTH: *Mozambique Excursion*

Mozambique is one of the poorest nations on the planet and has recently suffered major damage in the wake of two devastating Cyclones.

Mozambique is ranked 180 out of 189 countries and territories on the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Human resources for health are scarce in Mozambique with only 0.26 trained physicians per 1000 persons and even fewer specialists. Maternal mortality is one of the highest on the planet at 489 per 100 000 live births (compared to 27 per 100 000 live births in USA). Access to surgical care for emergency or disability is scarce with surgical services concentrated in tertiary and quaternary health centers. The largest quaternary care hospital is located in the capital city of Maputo, Maputo Central Hospital, and is responsible for training the majority of doctors and nurses in the nation.

UCSD is well positioned to make lasting and sustainable change in Mozambique at a time of the country's greatest need. There is already substantial human capital at UCSD engaged in meaningful academic collaborative work. 12 years ago Dr. Robert Schooley MD, Director of International Programs for UCSD, and Professor of Infectious Diseases in the UC San Diego Department of Medicine began a collaboration with Universidade Eduardo Modlane (the nations' largest and oldest medical school) and Maputo Central Hospital (the main teaching hospital) to help address the rampant spread of HIV and AIDS in Mozambique. The partnership has grown to include the entire Department of Medicine at UC San Diego and has included hundreds of teaching, research, and exchange visits.



The UCSD department of Internal Medicine has catalyzed improvements in Mozambican medical education,

substantially improved the quality of care for patients admitted to Maputo Central Hospital Medicine wards and helped to create a generation of physician leaders in Mozambique who are engaged in teaching, research, and health policy activities to benefit Mozambique, East and Southern Africa.

Dr. Sierra Washington, a Hospitalist, and a member of the newly formed Section of Global Women's Health in UCSD's Department of OBGYN recently spearheaded an exploratory trip of representatives from the UCSD's Departments of Medicine, OBGYN, and Surgery. Delegates included Dr Robert Schooley MD (as above); Dr Charles Nager MD, Professor and Chair of OBGYN; Dr Bryan Clary MD, Professor and Chair of Surgery. As well as Dr. Maureen Ries, section of Global Women's Health; Dr. Sarah Averbach, section of Global Women's Health; and Dr. Allison Berndtson, Division of Trauma, Critical Care and Acute Care Surgery.

The goal of the visit was to determine if UC San Diego can grow to expand our collaboration to include the departments of OBGYN, Anesthesia, and Surgery to improve Womens' Reproductive Health, Surgical, and Perioperative care in Mozambique across a tri-partite mission of advancing health science research, education, and clinical capacity building in Mozambique. Through collective action, pooled resources, and interdepartmental commitment our hope is that UCSD can increase its impact on health care, health education, and health-science research in Mozambique and can increase its contribution to Global Health exponentially.

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Mozambique Excursion (cont)

The UCSD interdisciplinary delegation spent the week exploring with UEM faculty and staff at the Maputo Central Hospital ways we can work together to improve health outcomes in Maputo and Mozambique as a whole. The opportunities abound! There is work for everyone in every cadre that could result in Mozambican lives saved and improved health outcomes

and we look forward to forging a path together.



CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. LINDA BRUBAKER

Incontinence medication response relates to the female urinary microbiota, an article she co-authored and was published in the May 2016 issue of the International Urogynecology Journal (IJU), was the original research article which contributed most to the IJU's 2018 impact factor. As such, she and her co-authors are the 2019 co-recipients of the Oscar Contreras Ortiz Award.

The Oscar Contreras Ortiz Award was first awarded in 2018 to honor the memory and legacy of Oscar Contreras Ortiz, co-founder of the International Urogynecology Journal and IUGA President from 1996-1998. This award is given annually to the author(s) of the article which most contributed to the IJU's impact factor for the previous year.

Thanking Nine Girls: A legacy in UCSD Gyn/Onc

The **Nine Girls Ask? For a Cure for Ovarian Cancer** has been a foundational supporter of the Division of Gynecologic Oncology more than a decade. CEO Joan Wyllie, a survivor of serous ovarian cancer, founded the program after being treated in the Division of Gynecologic Oncology at the UCSD Moores Cancer Center. The initial purpose of NGA was to put new and needed tools into the hands of UCSD researchers. Following the purchase of major instrumentation, including microscopes, digital cameras, cryostats, digital cell counters and a qPCR machine, NGA funded a postdoctoral Fellow (Joe Delaney, who went on to a K99 and an assistant professorship at the Medical University of South Carolina) as well as the Phase I portion of the ROCKIF trial to evaluate FAK inhibitors in ovarian cancer. Most recently, NGA funded an anesthesia machine that permits surgical procedures to be done on mice, and provided pilot funding for studies to understand why ovarian cancer is so adept at evading the immune system, as undertaken by Dwayne Stupack and David Schlaepfer.

Dr. Stupack expressed his gratitude to NGA this way: *"The funds provided by NGA are amazing. They have continuously supported our research programs over the last decade with total support of well over half a million dollars. In almost every case we've been able to leverage the funds and equipment provided into additional support from national agencies. And we've made breakthroughs. These don't always immediately end up in the clinic, but we understand better what may or may not benefit patients, and we find promising new avenues. Many times, a charitable gift is one and done. NGA has made a lasting investment in UCSD, and provides a constant stream of funding that has been strategically placed where the funds can do the most good."*

Funding for NGA comes directly from the Southern California Community. NGA supports women across all types and stages of gynecologic malignancy, and provides comfort kits to help patients undergoing chemotherapy.

Nine Girls Ask



<https://www.ninegirlsask.com>