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## IU helps develop transplant drug

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**Adults and children suffering from kidney failure now have a better chance for a successful transplant because of a drug tested by researchers at IUSM. The full research report appeared in the Jan. 15 edition of the New England Journal of Medicine.**

**The monoclonal antibody called Zenapax blocks immune cells from attacking the new kidney during the first eight weeks after transplant, which is the riskiest period for organ rejection to occur.** Zenapax is administered together with standard anti-rejection drugs. One of its best features is that it causes no additional side effects, even with increased dosage, a common problem with most anti-rejection drugs. Since anti-rejection drugs suppress the body's immune system so it won't attack the new organ, patients are vulnerable to severe infections and serious side effects.

IU Associate Professor of Surgery and of Microbiology and Immunology **Mark Pescovitz, MD**, and his team were the lead pediatric research group on the Zenapax trial.

"The great thing about Zenapax is that it is programmed to attack very specific cells during a critical time," said Dr. Pescovitz. Patients only take Zenapax during the first eight-weeks after transplant and the effect lasts for 12 weeks. They must continue to take other anti-rejection drugs for the rest of their lives.

During a six-month study of 260 adult patients, only 22 percent of patients with Zenapax added to the standard drug regimen experienced signs of rejection, compared to 35 percent on standard anti-rejection treatment. Further testing in children is currently underway, but so far the results are excellent. Children who were part of the trial at IU were transplanted at Riley Hospital for Children.

"We saw the same absence of side effects in the children that was noted in adults," Dr. Pescovitz said. "The children were also able to leave the hospital sooner."

About 38,000 Americans are on a waiting list for kidney transplants. IU physicians perform

approximately 100 kidney transplants per year. Researchers hope that Zenapax will prove to be effective for patients receiving other organs as well. The next clinical trials will test liver and heart transplant patients.

There has been an explosion of clinical research for anti-rejection and anti-viral drugs for transplant patients during the last few years. The IU Transplant Team is one of the major clinical research sites in the United States. It has been involved with the development of seven new drugs during the last five years. Research at IU includes work on an NIH study looking at replacements for the drug prednisone, a common anti-rejection drug that causes many side effects.

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## Acting Director Named

**William Baldwin, PhD**, has been named acting director of the IUSM's Northwest Center for Medical Education in Gary. He replaces **Panayotis Iatridis, MD, DSc, who retired Dec. 31**. Dr. Iatridis had served as director since 1975 and as assistant dean since 1979.

Dr. Baldwin is a professor of microbiology and immunology. He joined the faculty of the Northwest Center in 1973 and received his PhD from IUSM in 1974. He is the course director for the medical microbiology and immunology and biostatistics courses, and assisted in establishing a clinical virology laboratory at the Center.

Dr. Iatridis will remain at the Northwest Center as a professor of medicine and course director for Intro. to Medicine.

A search committee is currently reviewing candidates for the directorship of the Northwest Center.

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## Named Professorship

**Richard Rink, MD**, has been named the Robert A. Garrett Professor of Pediatric Urology Research at IUSM. Dr. Rink is director of the Division of Pediatric Urology and acting chairman of the Department of Urology at IUSM.

Dr. Robert A. Garrett, for whom the professorship is named, was the former chairman of the Department of Urology at IUSM and a pioneer in the field of pediatric urology.

# Mini Medical School begins tenth session in February

**Mini Medical School will begin the spring 1998 session on Feb. 17. The six-week lecture series Mini Medical School is offered free of charge to all IU medical students. Faculty and staff also are encouraged to attend.**

Classes are held on Tuesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. at the University Place Conference Center Auditorium. To register, call 317-274-3426.

The class dates and topics are as follows: February 17 Diagnosis and Management of Alzheimer Disease Hugh Hendrie, Mb, ChB February 24 Infertility: From Basic Evaluation to In Vitro Fertilization William Hurd, MD March 3 Obesity: Weighing Fact and Fiction Barry Gumbiner, MD March 10 Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: Fact and Fiction Deborah Givan, MD March 17 The Multiple Mysteries of Multiple Sclerosis David Mattson, MD, PhD March 24 The Amazingly Transparent Body Stanley Alexander, MD

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## HONORS

**Kathleen Brough Speicher, MD**, a diplomat of the American Board of Preventative Medicine, recently qualified as a certified Medical Review Officer. Dr. Speicher is a staff physician at IUPUI Occupational/Student Health Services.

Dr. Speicher was certified by the Medical Review Officer Certification Council. This independent council conducts an extensive application process and examination to identify licensed physicians with the highest professional standards of medical expertise and practical skills necessary to evaluate drug and alcohol test results in public and private sectors of the work place.

**The Echocardiography Laboratories** at IU presented two novel papers at the recent American Heart Association meeting in Orlando: "The feasibility of creating 3D images of the coronary arteries using transthoracic echocardiography" and "The dramatic improvement that harmonic imaging makes on endocardial visualization without contrast."

The American Heart Association included a biography of Harvey Feigenbaum, MD, distinguished professor of medicine and director of the Echocardiography Laboratories at IU, in a tribute to 20th century American pioneers in cardiovascular medicine.

**David Held, MS IV, and Erik Barrett, MS II**, were IUPUI United Way Tennis Classic Class A

doubles champions for 1997. A fund-raising event in the campus campaign, the tournament raised \$11,500.

**Jay L. Grosfeld, MD**, professor and chairman of the Department of Surgery, has been named president of the Western Surgical Association. The next meeting of the association will be Nov. 15-18, 1998, in Indianapolis. The Western Surgical Association is the oldest established surgical society in the U.S. This year it celebrates its 105th anniversary.

**Richard Rink, MD**, acting chairman of the Department of Urology and director of the Division of Pediatric Urology, has been elected to the Executive Committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Section of Urology and also to the Board of Directors of the North Central Section of the American Urologic Association.

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## **IMACS improves service for physicians**

**IMACS** is now using an independent Ameritech phone system and has a new local telephone number and physician paging response number. This change was made in order to solve transmission problems which have negatively impacted the quality of telecommunication service provided on campus.

**The toll-free number will remain the same: 1-800-622-4989. The new local number is 317-916-3500. The number to be used for paging is now 916-3501 followed by the 4-digit extension number of the operator who is trying to reach you. Old numbers will be forwarded directly to the new numbers.**

Yellow stickers with the new numbers have been placed on key telephones within the hospitals to serve as a reminder.

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**<http://www.medicine.indiana.edu>**