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STD researchers gain noteworthy funding

Three grants, totaling \$16.83 million, have been received by the Division of Infectious Diseases for continued research into sexually transmitted diseases.

The Midwest Sexually Transmitted Diseases Cooperative Research Center has received the second renewal of its National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases grant. Initially funded in 1991, the center is a consortium between IUSM and Northwestern University Medical School.

The four-year grant renewal brings nearly \$4.52 million in research funds to the center, which is the only NIH sexually transmitted disease research consortium in the Midwest. IUSM has two federally funded STD centers: one that focuses on adult populations and one that researches sexual behavior in adolescents.

Center director Stanley Spinola, MD, says the primary objective of the Midwest Center is to enhance the efforts of physicians and researchers with different scientific backgrounds and interests on sexually transmitted diseases. The ultimate goal is to develop new approaches to prevention of STDs.

Center researchers include individuals with expertise in the basic biomedical sciences, patient-related research, and behavioral and epidemiological studies.

Recognized nationally for their comprehensive programs, STD researchers at IUSM currently have a total of \$7.63 million in active grants.

Other STD researchers at the IU School of Medicine funded by the NIAID grant are Dennis Fortenberry, MD, Gregory Zimet, MD, Ann Roman, PhD, Byron Batteiger, MD, Diane Stothard, PhD, Barry Katz, PhD, and Robert Jones, MD, PhD.

Herpes Research

A \$2.25 million, three-year grant from the Centers for Disease Control will enable IUSM researchers to take aim at reducing the escalating rate of genital herpes throughout the country. The grant will be used

to develop strategies to prevent genital herpes simplex infections and to build a national prevention program, the first of its kind in the United States. The University of Cincinnati will collaborate with the IUSM on the project.

Both have demonstrated research excellence in the areas of sexually transmitted diseases, virology, psychology, adolescent medicine and biostatistics, said Kenneth Fife, MD, PhD, principal investigator of the grant.

IUSM researchers will focus on issues related to testing for exposure to HSV-2 in adults. Their counterparts at the University of Cincinnati will conduct similar studies in adolescents and college students. IU investigators also will study patients who have recently acquired genital herpes to determine how they were infected.

Dr. Fife says the collaborative research will significantly expand the knowledge base about genital herpes and ultimately lead to the development of a national prevention and control program. There is no cure for herpes, but antiviral medications can shorten and prevent outbreaks for whatever period of time the person takes the medication.

AIDS Clinical Trials Unit

The Indiana AIDS Clinical Trials Unit has received \$10.06 million in renewed funding from the NIAID. This is the fourth renewal of the unit's grant since its inception in October 1987.

The Indiana AIDS Clinical Trials Unit at IUSM is part of the Adult AIDS Clinical Trials Group, the largest clinical trials network in the world. The renewal of the group's funding allows clinical trials units nationwide to continue their work on the prevention and the treatment of the deadly HIV virus. Individual units conduct clinical studies of antiviral drugs, develop methods to reconstitute HIV-damaged immune systems, and seek innovative treatments or preventions for opportunistic diseases and other HIV-related complications.

L. Joseph Wheat, MD, director of the Indiana AIDS Clinical Trials Unit, heads a team of six physician researchers, six nurse practitioners, two registered nurses and a social worker who utilize the latest diagnostic and therapeutic techniques to treat patients at IU Hospital, Wishard Memorial Hospital, Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center and Methodist Hospital.

Patient care and disease management are a primary focus of the unit. Patients are enrolled as part of nationwide clinical trials and have access to the latest in investigational therapies. Data from the patients are examined as part of the national AIDS Clinical Trials Group, resulting in better care and treatment of patients afflicted with HIV.

The Indiana unit ranked among the top third of all units in the competitive renewal process and was awarded nearly a 50 percent increase in funding based upon its excellent performance during the past

three years.

Briefs

New appointments

IUMG-SC officer

William Martin II, MD, has been appointed president and CEO of IU Medical Group - Specialty Care. He will assume his new duties Feb. 1.

Dr. Martin is director of the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Critical Care Medicine and Occupational Medicine.

Casting call

IUSM students, with assistance from Medical Student Academic Affairs, are sponsoring the "Evening of the Arts," Friday, March 24, at the University Place Conference Center.

"Students, residents, faculty and staff are invited to showcase their talents for this special show, whose proceeds are donated to area clinics that serve the homeless," says student Lisa Tiongson, co-chair of this year's program. "It is a great opportunity to share your talent with others while also serving to help promote a worthy cause."

Performing artists must commit by Feb. 1 and should contact Lisa Tiongson at 297-3670, or e-mail her at etiongso@iupui.edu. Visual artists must sign up by Feb. 14 and can do so by contacting Matt Priddy at 925-7121, or at mjpriddy@iupui.edu.

Dr. Elders challenges system

The United States has the world's best physicians, medical professionals, hospitals and research. The only problem is that such benefits are not always available to minorities, the poor and uninsured.

That was among the many messages former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, MD, delivered to listeners attending her special address at IU School of Medicine's Emerson Hall, Jan. 14. This appearance and others at Clarian Health sites were part of her two-day visit to Indianapolis to participate in The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday observances.

"We've got the means to prevent disease and we can care for people when they arrive in the ER or OR, but the key is to keep people from getting there in the first place, and we do that through education," said Elders.

"We've got the best to offer in health care yet, we have a health care illiterate society," particularly among minorities.

The antidote, Dr. Elders added, is for physicians, educators and parents to work harder to educate children of all ages about the dangers of tobacco use, unprotected sexual intercourse, and the benefits of healthy diets and exercise.

"Those of us in the medical community must become advocates for 100 hundred percent access to health care for all Americans and zero percent disparity-the very things Dr. King dedicated his life to," said Elders, who served as surgeon general from 1993 to late 1994.

"We cannot afford to fail-the lives of our children and patients are at stake."

Y2K worries put to rest

*Roses are red.
Violets are blue.
The millennium bug
Didn't bite IU.*

January 1, 2000, has come and gone without so much as a single power outage at IUSM. The much dreaded millennium bug was squashed by the efforts of many diligent individuals.

While most of the world celebrated, a few dedicated campus employees spent New Year's Eve at IUPUI to make sure their months of work were a success. Fortunately, there were no calamities.

The power remained intact; the heat stayed on. Major computer systems continued to function. The

venture to Y2K-proof the campus was deemed a success by all concerned.

Planning and preparedness were the keys, Y2K committee members said. On a more positive note, the millennium venture served as trial run for the thorough emergency preparedness plan now in place for IUSM and the IUPUI campus.

Submissions to Scope

Scope wants your news items.

There are three easy ways to submit story ideas or information to SCOPE:

- -- fax the information to 278-3502;
- -- e-mail the information to mhardin@iupui.edu;
- -- or mail the information to Mary Hardin, LO 401, IUPUI.

The deadline for copy is 8:30 a.m. Mondays, the week prior to publication.

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