Leading in Heart Care: TJUH First in City to Launch Totally Robotic Surgery for Mitral Valve Repair

Robotics provides surgeons with three-dimensional visualization in and around the heart, a “miniaturized” field for operating, and three robotic hands. This allows for a more precise surgery, less scarring and blood loss and faster recovery for patients.

This fall, cardiothoracic surgeons at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals began performing wholly-robotic cardiac surgeries, starting with mitral valve repairs.

“This is the next step in the advancement of our robotics program,” said Howard Weitz, MD, Director of the Jefferson Heart Institute and Bernard L. Segal Professor of Clinical Cardiology. The Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery has been conducting partial robotic surgeries for several months, using the robotic arm for access and better visualization in and around the heart.

The mitral valve, made up of two small but important flaps that control the flow of blood between the atrium and ventricles of the heart, are essential in regulating blood flow to the lungs, aorta and the body. As the atrium fills with blood, the pressure pushes open the mitral valve allowing blood to flow into the left ventricle. It immediately closes behind to prevent a reversal of blood flow.

The valve can malfunction in the form of stenosis, a thickening, stiffening or fusing together of the valve flaps and regurgitation or backflow of blood into the atrium. If not treated, advanced heart valve disease can cause heart failure, stroke or blood clots.

Cardiothoracic surgeon Gurjyot Bajwa, MD, formerly on staff at the Cleveland Clinic, was recently hired to further advance Jefferson’s robotics program.

“The teams’ comprehensive robotics training will help us achieve quality outcomes for our patients,” said James Diehl, MD, Director of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Jefferson.

Robotics provides surgeons with three-dimensional visualization in and around the heart, a “miniaturized” field for operating, and three robotic hands. This allows for a more precise surgery, less scarring and blood loss and faster recovery for patients.

Note: U.S. News & World Report has ranked Jefferson as high-performing (in the top 25 percent of hospitals) in cardiology and cardiac surgery.

20 Years and Counting: Jefferson’s Kimmel Cancer Center Celebrates Milestone for Patient Care and Cancer Discovery

With the Jefferson Breast Care Center, the Bodine Center for Radiation Therapy, the Myrna Brind Center of Integrative Medicine, and Jefferson Pancreatic, Biliary and Related Cancer Center, to name a few, patients have access to the best facilities, providers and technologies for cancer screening and treatment. Read about the Center’s latest advances.

The Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson (KCC), a National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center, recently celebrated 20 years of service to the community and groundbreaking cancer research from the scientists and physicians who’ve provided an invaluable contribution to medical science and healthcare.

“This is truly a milestone for the Kimmel Cancer Center—it’s two decades of caring and collaborating to beat cancer,” says Richard Petrelli, MD, PhD, Director of the KCC and Chair of the Department of Cancer Biology at Thomas Jefferson University.

“With our multidisciplinary approach, KCC’s team of clinicians and researchers has continued to put their best feet forward to provide excellent, stand-out personalized care for cancer patients in the Philadelphia region and beyond and uncover new pathways to better prevent, diagnose and treat the disease,” he added.

Today, the KCC offers up an experienced team of medical and radiation oncologists, surgeons, pathologists, urologists, neurosurgeons, nurses and other specialists for patients as they fight against cancer.

The institute took its current name in 1996 when businessman and philanthropist Sidney Kimmel made a generous donation to the institute to expand its research activities.

The donation to Jefferson is not a “gift,” but “an investment for humanity,” Mr. Kimmel told the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1996. “I really believe we’re going to have a breakthrough in cancer research.”

Living up to his expectations, KCC cancer researchers have made significant contributions over the last two decades, including better care in prostate cancer; new targets and diagnostics for prostate and breast cancer; discoveries in colon cancer; pioneering discoveries in cancer metabolism and stem cells; better bone marrow transplants; more selective radiation treatment; and new areas of the human genome to treat.

New Leadership Ahead for TJU Next Fiscal Year

Last month, Robert L. Barchi, MD, PhD, President of Thomas Jefferson University, announced that he will leave his post in June 2012. After a year-long sabbatical, he will return to the TJU faculty in fall of 2013.

“It has been a true privilege to work with you and all the members of this remarkable campus community,” wrote Dr. Barchi. “In the 40 years of my academic career, I have not seen another institution blessed with a deeper sense of family and collegiality.”

“This single factor allows TJU to accomplish things beyond the expectation of many outside of our community,” he added.

The timing of Dr. Barchi’s announcement gives the Board the opportunity to identify a successor during the academic year, ensuring an orderly transition of leadership.

Dr. Barchi joined TJU as president in October 2004.

The Philadelphia Eagles Support the Jefferson Breast Care Center

Jefferson recently celebrated the opening of the newly renovated 3rd floor and dedication of the donor wall at the Jefferson Breast Care Center. Pictured are Richard Petrelli, MD, PhD, Director, Jefferson’s Kimmel Cancer Center; breast cancer survivor, Caly Buc; Kurt Coleman, Philadelphia Eagles safety; Christina Lurie, co-owner of the Philadelphia Eagles; and Tom Lewis, TJUH President and CEO. Among the speakers, Kurt spoke about his father’s experience with breast cancer. Over the past five years, the Philadelphia Eagles have contributed more than $1 million to the Jefferson Breast Care Center through the Tackling Breast Cancer campaign.

Jefferson School of Nursing Welcomes New Dean

The Jefferson School of Nursing has a new dean – Beth Ann Swan, PhD, CRNP, FAAN, who has served as Acting Dean since July. Previously, Dr. Swan was Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the school.

In her role, Dr. Swan will serve as the chief academic and administrative officer of the school, with responsibility for the planning and execution of its education and research missions.

Dr. Swan has a distinguished record in research and training in the fields of evidence-based practice, ambulatory care nursing, and academic nursing practice. She also co-authored a book, Evidence-based Nursing Care Guidelines: Medical-Surgical Interventions that received a 2008 American Journal of Nursing (AJN) Book of the Year Award.

Dr. Swan has served on numerous committees within the School of Nursing and TJU. Currently Dr. Swan serves at Jefferson as co-chair of the Distance Learning Working Group. She also served on the Support Strategic Planning Committee, the University Web Presence Steering Committee, and the Educational Mission Strategic Planning Committee. Prior to joining Jefferson, Dr. Swan was Associate Director, Office of International Programs and PAHO/WHO Collaborating Center for Nursing and Midwifery Leadership at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Nursing.
The newly renovated chapel on the 9th floor of Gibbon reopened last month and was dedicated in honor of two longtime TJU Women’s Board members – Elaine Abruzzo and Marion Hayes – who passed away in 2010. In addition to the chapel dedication ceremony, the event included a presentation of the Tree of Life sculpture. Pictured are members of the Women’s Board: Theresa Yeo, President; Elinor Medoff, Martha Jefferson Department member; Vanessa Weissman, Chair of the Martha Jefferson Department; and Rosemary McKelty, Assistant Vice President of the board.

**NIH Awards $4.8 Million Grant to TJU for Study of New Rabies Vaccine that Clears Virus from Brain**

If the vaccine is found safe and effective, it will serve as a foundation to develop similar reagents for the treatment of epidemic virus infections of the brain, a major health concern, particularly with respect to bioterrorism.

For someone who unknowingly contracts rabies or is not treated, flu-like symptoms generally begin to manifest within a few weeks, meaning the virus has reached the nervous system and survival is unlikely. About 50,000 people die worldwide every year after being infected with the virus, most of whom live in developing nations where dog rabies is not controlled and vaccines for humans can be hard to get and are expensive. A new version of the rabies vaccine that is effective after someone develops the first signs of the disease could be the saving grace for some of these people.

Thomas Jefferson University received a National Institutes of Health (NIH) $4.8 million grant to test a new rabies vaccine with the potential to cure the virus infection, even after it has made its way into a person’s central nervous system (CNS). Today, if an unvaccinated person is infected with rabies, there is little chance for survival.

The grant to study the new vaccine, which was developed by Jefferson researchers, including the principal investigator for the project, D. Craig Hooper, PhD, Director of the Center for Neurovirology, will be shared among Jefferson, the University of Georgia, the Medical College of Wisconsin and the Institute for Hepatitis and Virus Research (Pennsylvania Commonwealth Institute).

**Treating rabies**

The rabies vaccine used today to protect people from the virus is the same one used to treat a person who has been bitten by a rabid dog, raccoon, bat or other animal. If the vaccine series and preformed rabies virus neutralizing antibodies are administered shortly after the bite, the virus is destroyed and the person almost always survives.

**Rabies Vaccine that Clears Virus from Brain**

Thomas Jefferson researchers have shown, for the first time, that blocking a receptor of a key hormone in the renin-angiotensin system (RAS) reduces cancer cell growth by activating the enzyme AMPK to inhibit fatty acid synthase, the ingredients to support cell division.

Previous studies have pointed to the hormone's type 1 receptor as the culprit involved in tumor angiogenesis.

**Blocking Receptor in Key Hormone Fires Up Enzyme to Kill Pancreatic Cancer Cells**

Pancreatic cancer researchers at Thomas Jefferson University have shown, for the first time, that blocking a receptor of a key hormone in the renin-angiotensin system (RAS) reduces cancer cell growth by activating the enzyme AMPK to inhibit fatty acid synthase, the ingredients to support cell division.

With that, a new chemopreventive agent that inhibits the angiotensin II type 2 receptor – never before thought to play a role in tumor growth – could be developed to help treat one of the fastest-moving cancers that has a five-year survival rate of only five percent.

Hwyda Arafat, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Surgery at Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University and the Co-director of the Jefferson Pancreatic, Biliary and Related Cancers Center, and her fellow researchers, including the Chair of the Department of Surgery at Jefferson, Charles Yeo, MD, FACS, presented their findings in the August issue of Surgery.

Angiotensin II (AngII) is the principal hormone in the RAS that regulates our blood pressure and water balance; it has two receptors: type 1 and type 2. AngII is also generated actively in the pancreas and has been shown to be involved in tumor angiogenesis.

Studies have pointed to the hormone's type 1 receptor as the culprit in cancer cell proliferation and tumor inflammation; however, the idea that type 2 had any effect was never entertained.

By looking at pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC) cells in vitro, Jefferson researchers discovered that the type 2 receptor, not just type 1, mediates the production of fatty acid synthase (FAS), which has been shown to supply the cell wall ingredients necessary for cancer cells to multiply.

The hormone receptor guanylyl cyclase C (GCC) has been established as a suppressor of colorectal cancer tumors, but new evidence from Thomas Jefferson University suggests it may also help fight one of the country’s biggest pandemics: obesity.

Reporting in an issue the online version of the Journal of Clinical Investigation, Scott Waldman, MD, PhD, Chair of the Department of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics at Jefferson, and colleagues found that silencing GCC affected appetite in mice, disrupting satiation and inducing obesity. Conversely, mice who expressed the hormone receptor knew when to call it quits at mealtime.

Revealing a never-before-shown endocrine axis between the intestine and hypothalamus, the research could provide novel therapeutic targets to control appetite, obesity and the metabolic syndrome, a promising notion, given that one-third of the U.S. population is considered obese.

Until now, the role of GCC outside the gut has remained elusive. Dr. Waldman and his team have previously shown its role as a tumor suppressor and biomarker that reveals occult metastases in lymph nodes. But its role in appetite is new and surprising territory.

“We were working with GCC-deficient mice to look at its role in tumorigenesis in the intestine,” said Dr. Waldman. “Then the mice grew up, and we noticed something: They got fatter.”

“Could we understand why it was happening, because GCC is expressed predominantly in the intestine, and there was no indication that it regulated any function that had to do with metabolism and nutrient uptake.”

To investigate this, Dr. Waldman, who also leads the Gastrointestinal Malignancies Program at the Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson, and his colleagues raised both GCC mice and GCC-deficient mice, tracking their weight, satiation responses, hepatic and serum triglyceride measurements, hormone receptor expression, and physical activity.

“Obesity could be biological, and not behavioral,” said Dr. Waldman. “But there is no evidence here that confirms that; however, knowing this new information opens that possibility.”

**Tumor Suppressor Might Also Fight Obesity, TJU Researchers Find**

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Jefferson Welcomes New Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology

William Schlaff, MD, has been appointed the new Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at JMC. Dr. Schlaff was previously Chief of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. Dr. Schlaff has received numerous honors, including election into the Society for Gynecologic Investigation and the American Gynecological and Obstetrical Society. He has routinely been recognized in The Best Doctors in America.

Learn more about Jefferson research and news developments at www.jeffersonhospital.org/news

PEOPLE

Gurjot Bajwa, MD, has joined the Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. She has also been named Instructor of Surgery at Jefferson Medical College (JMC) of Thomas Jefferson University (TJU). Dr. Bajwa most recently served as an instructor in cardiothoracic surgery and robotic cardiac surgery at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. Prior to this, she was a clinical instructor in the Department of Surgery at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Jennifer Bellot, PhD, RN, MHSA, an assistant professor in the Jefferson School of Nursing, has been named a nurse faculty scholar; she won a competitive grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to study the provision of nurse-managed healthcare for the frail elderly.

Congratulations to Meg Bourbouhniere, PhD, RN, Mary Lou Manning, PhD, CRNP, Mary Ann McKinley, PhD, RN, and Annette Mitchell, MSN, ACNP-CS, CCRN, who were honored as Nightingale Awards of Pennsylvania finalists at an awards gala in Harrisburg in November.

Robert Brent, MD, PhD, Dsc, was a guest lecturer at the Hebrew University Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem, Israel, this fall. He is Chair Emeritus of the Department of Pediatrics at Jefferson, and Professor in the Department of Pathology, Anatomy and Cell Biology.

Daniel Brown, MD, FSIR, and Carin Gonzales, MD, FSIR, interventional radiologists at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals (TJUH), were recently inducted as fellows into the Society of Interventional Radiology. The Jefferson interventional radiologists were two of 26 fellows inducted nationwide during 36th Annual Scientific Meeting held in Chicago earlier this year.

Radiation oncologist Robert Den, MD, recently joined TJUH as an attending physician, and was also named an assistant professor at Jefferson Medical College (JMC) of Thomas Jefferson University in the Department of Radiation Oncology.

The Society for Vascular Surgery* (SVS) elected Paul DiMuzio, MD, as a Distinguished Fellow during their Vascular Annual Meeting. Dr. DiMuzio serves as the William M. Measey Professor of Surgery. He is currently the Director of the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, Program Director of their Fellowship in Vascular Surgery, and Co-Director of the Jefferson Vascular Center.

Aaron Dumont, MD, recently joined the TJUH Department of Neurological Surgery and was named associate professor of Neurological Surgery at JMC. Dr. Dumont serves as Director of the Division of Neurological and Endovascular Surgery. Prior to his appointment at Jefferson, Dr. Dumont served as assistant professor of Neurological Surgery and Radiology and associate director of the Neurosurgery Residency Program at the University of Virginia Health System in Charlottesville, VA.

Elisabeth Edelstein, MD, Director of Wilderness Medicine and Associate Director of Undergraduate Medical Education in the Department of Emergency Medicine at JMC, has been awarded the Wilderness Medicine Society Education Award. This award is given in recognition of outstanding contributions in education to students, members, or the public in the field of wilderness medicine.

Emergency Department staff members presented research abstracts at the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) Research Forum San Francisco, CA, in October: “Demographics and Risk Factors of Patients Who Decline Opt-In HIV Screening in an Urban Emergency Department” - authors: Naisohn Arlaf, MD (former ER attending) Kathleen Squires, MD (Infectious Diseases), Yvonne Ezeala, MD (ER resident) Laura Carolfi (ER Prevention Counselor) Julia Moon (ER Research Assistant) Bernard Lopez, MD (ER attending) and Jon Brigham. Presenting: Yvonne Ezeala and Laura Carolfi.


Fernando Gonzalez, MD, a neurosurgeon at TJUH and Assistant Professor of Neurological Surgery at JMC, was recently awarded a $15,000 grant from the Brain Research Foundation. Dr. Gonzalez is one of eight grant award recipients at the Fifth Annual Brain Aneurysm Foundation Research Grant Symposium.

Patrick Greaney, Jr., MD, recently joined the Department of Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and was named Assistant Professor of Surgery at JMC. Dr. Greaney specializes in plastic surgery and comes to Jefferson from New York University - Langone Medical Center where he completed a fellowship in microsurgery.

Irwin Levitan, PhD, founding chair of the Department of Neuroscience at Jefferson Medical College, and Director of the Farber Institute for Neurosciences of Thomas Jefferson University, has been selected as the recipient of The Paul C. Brucker, MD, Professorship in Neuroscience Research.

Rajnish Mago, MD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at JMC and Director, Mood Disorders Program at TJU, has been selected for this year’s Daniel Blain Award by the Philadelphia Psychiatric Society. The award is presented each year for “dedication and service to the profession of psychiatry” and named in honor of the physician who in 1948 became the first medical director of the American Psychiatric Association and who subsequently served as its president.

Yaron Moshel, MD, PhD, recently joined the TJUH Department of Neurological Surgery and was named assistant professor of Neurological Surgery at Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University. He specializes in brain tumor and stereotactic neurosurgery, performing open and minimally invasive endoscopic surgery for benign and malignant tumors.

David B. Nash, MD, MBA, Dean of the Jefferson School of Population Health, was honored at the US-Israeli Healthcare IT Conference kickoff in November. The Gala Reception in the Hamilton Building featured recognition of Dr. Nash for his contributions to healthcare and global health policy between the Greater Philadelphia region and Israel.

The American Headache Society recently awarded the 2011 Harold G. Wolf Lecture award to Michael Oshinsky, PhD, for creating a new animal model of migraine headache. He is Assistant Professor of Neurology at JMC and a member of the Jefferson Headache Center team.

PEOPLE

Satish Rattan, DVM, MS, an internationally renowned researcher and educator, and Professor of Medicine in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at TJU, was recently awarded a grant for more than $1 million by National Institutes of Health (NIH) to continue his research on rectoanal motility disorders.

Russell Schilder, MD, recently joined the Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson as Director of the Gynecologic Medical Oncology Program. Prior to his arrival at TJUH, Dr. Schilder served as a professor in the Department of Medical Oncology and Chief of Gynecologic Medical Oncology at Fox Chase Cancer Center.

Jacqueline S. Urtecho, MD, recently joined the departments of Neurology and Neurosurgery at TJUH and was named Assistant Professor of Neurology at JMC. Dr. Urtecho specializes in stroke and neurorcritical care. Prior to her appointment, Dr. Urtecho completed a fellowship in neurocritical care at TJUH.

Jordan Winter, MD, recently joined the TJUH Department of Surgery and was named assistant professor of Surgery at JMC. Dr. Winter specializes in surgical oncology.

AChIEVEMENTS

Jefferson is the first hospital in the region to adopt an automated lab that includes a storage-and-retrieval system. This new equipment will help eliminate manual tasks, increase capacity, ensure patient safety and enable the laboratory to handle the increased demand for diagnostic tests while expediting the analytic process.

Researchers at Jefferson’s Kimmel Cancer Center have developed a half-match bone marrow transplant procedure that will triple the pool of suitable donors for patients suffering from blood diseases.

Partnering with the NIH, Thomas Jefferson University has successfully tested a vaccine that could lead to a more effective public health tool in Africa. Matthias Schnell, PhD, Director of the Jefferson Vaccine Center, tested a single vaccine in mice for both rabies and Ebola.

Jefferson is proud to have its Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) fully accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, Inc. (AAHRPP) for an additional five years. Since accreditation is a voluntary, objective measure of quality, participants are more likely to choose organizations that have earned the AAHRPP seal.

The Jefferson School of Nursing (JSN) at Thomas Jefferson University received a $1 million grant from Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for the project “Promoting Health Access: Online Graduate Programs for Rural Underserved Communities.” The grant funds a continuation of a successful project of the same name and furthers JSN’s goal to increase the critical mass of nursing experts throughout Pennsylvania in order to eliminate health access barriers.

The staff of Jefferson’s 4 West Intensive Care Unit (the ICU) was recognized with the Pennsylvania Comprehensive Unit-Based Safety Program Participation Award for reducing central line associated infections to zero for 16 months. The award is testimony for our staff’s dedication to TJUH Balanced Scorecard initiatives linked to reducing infection rates – and creating an even safer environment for patients.

Researchers at Jefferson’s Kimmel Cancer Center have found that tamoxifen combined with dasatinib, a protein-tyrosine kinase inhibitor, reverses the chemoresistance caused by cancer-associated fibroblasts in the surrounding tissue by normalizing glucose intake and reducing mitochondrial oxidative stress, the process that fuels the cancer cells.
Make a Difference in Healthcare—Become a Health Mentor at Jefferson

Please call 215-955-3757 or visit http://jeffline.tju.edu/jcipe/hmp.


Support Education
See more support group information in the boxed area on this page.

Thursday, December 1
Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson, Bone Marrow Transplant Survivors, a group designed for individuals who have completed a bone marrow transplant. Facilitated by an oncology social worker this monthly meeting (1st Thursday of every month including July & August) offers a wonderful opportunity to exchange information, validation and support with other people who have been through the same procedure, noon to 1:30 p.m., 602 BLSB. Lunch will be provided. (Subsidized parking is available at Interpark Garage, 10th and Chestnut St.—Enter on 10th or Sansom.) For more information or to RSVP contact Bonnie Croxham-Leh, LSW at 215-503-7711. Also, Jan. 5, 2012.

Wednesday, December 2
Come join our Wednesday Prayer and Bible Study Class, noon, 207 College. All are welcome. Please contact Annette Chesson at 215-955-8991 for more information or e-mail annettechessonpraynow@gmail.com. Also, Wed., Nov. 30, 12, 14, 21, and 25, (Tour: 2nd and 4th Wed. of every month). For more information, call 1-800-JEFF-NOW.

Friday, December 4

Sunday, December 4
Nursing, Parent Education, “One Day Childbirth Class,” 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. RSVP to 1-800-JEFF-NOW.

Tuesday, December 6
Nursing, Parent Education, “Grandparents Night” (Grand parenting and what’s new in the world of babies.) Time: 7 to 9 p.m., 1408 Gibson. Free program. RSVP to 1-800-JEFF-NOW.

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