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In the Research Business

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Director's Corner

- This is the first issue of the Department of Research's newsletter, **In the Research Business**. Within its pages you will find articles featuring LBH researchers and their studies, tips on getting a research project started, helpful hints in dealing with the Institutional Review Board (IRB), answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the IRB, highlights of local, national, and international research news, and information regarding current clinical trials.
- Farewell and good luck to : Yana Rachinskaya, Joe DiChiara, Cecily Spaulding, and Renata Vesnovsky.

If you have any suggestions for future editions, please contact our office at 410-601-9021 or email lwasserm@lifebridgehealth.org.

IRB Tips: I Didn't Know That!

- If you are presently active in research or will be active in the near future, submit an updated CV or resume and a copy of your physician or nursing license annually.
- On-line CITI Training at www.citiprogram.org must be completed prior to initiating any research project involving either animal or human subjects. This site also hosts the LBH Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) Animal Research Training Program. For more information contact Patty Lohinski in the Research Office at 410-601-9272.
- There is an IRB Suggestion Box outside of Schapiro Suite #203.

Nursing: Patient Care Services and Research.

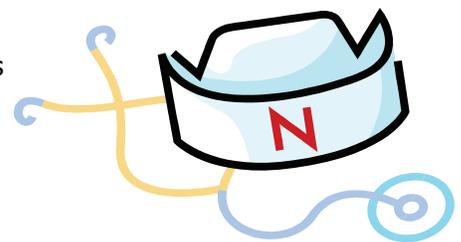
Comparison of Three Methods to Maintain Hemostasis Post Percutaneous Coronary Intervention.

Investigators: *Lizbeth Herrmann, RN; Linda Skuba, RN, BSN; Linda Johnson, RN, BSN; Alan Orpia, RN, BSN; Kenneth Rempher, PhD, RN.*

Everyone knows that LifeBridge Health (LBH) is committed to providing patients with the most up-to-date, evidence-based health care possible. In supporting this commitment, the Department of Patient Care Services at Sinai Hospital of Baltimore is continually looking for ways to improve patient care, and has identified nursing research as a means of doing so. Embracing the proactive spirit of LBH, the department recently initiated their Biannual Nursing Research Internship, an innovative program that recognizes the potential contributions of research activity to nursing practice, and provides scheduled time for intensive research training and research activity.

Lizbeth Herrmann, RN is the program's first nursing research intern, and in collaboration with the nursing staff of the Heart Center at Sinai Hospital, has initiated a study examining ways to improve the comfort and safety of patients undergoing cardiac catheterizations and angioplasty. This team of investigators is comparing three different methods for preventing the rebleeding that occasionally occurs after the completion of invasive cardiac procedures. These LBH investigators want to determine if the routine post-catheterization practice of placing a 10-pound sandbag on the groin is really necessary to stop rebleeding. Ms. Herrmann is the principal investigator of this study and emphasizes that this method is very uncomfortable. There is little evidence to suggest that it works any better than simply immobilizing the limb, or asking the patient not to move it. She and her co-investigators anticipate that the study will support this hypothesis and provide evidence for the use of one of the equally safe but more comfortable alternative methods. Thus far, preliminary data collected during the first few months of research suggest that sandbags may indeed be unnecessary.

The sandbag study is only one example of a number of research projects that are underway in the Department of Patient Care Services. In a world of rapidly changing scientific advances, the departments practice-based "grass roots" approach to nursing research will help ensure that the professional nursing care provided by LBH remains among the best available.



Surfing the Web

Birth of the CancerGuide Website

<http://cancerguide.org/index.html>

A very interesting website created by **Steve Dunn**, a 32 year old seemingly healthy man who was diagnosed with Stage IV (terminal) kidney cancer in 1989. He could have "traveled" the more conventional route of radiation therapy, but pursued an unconventional path, and when he died in 2005 it was from complications of bacterial meningitis and not cancer. His prolonged life was probably due to his choice to participate in an experimental clinical trial. Steve found a clinical trial through his own research, and later decided to share what he learned through his website. A team of volunteers now maintains and updates this website in the tradition in which Steve created the CancerGuide.

How Blueberries Help to Keep the Brain Young

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/06/27/nberry127.xml>

Blueberries may hold the key to fighting illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease, and may slow the affects of other degenerative conditions that come with old age. While it is unlikely to cure the disease, it may provide a way to prevent, slow down or reduce the impact of such illnesses which affect the mental abilities but not the physical health of sufferers.

Results of a study published in *Neurobiology of Aging* (Epub 2006 Jul 11 & 28:1187-94, 2007) found that rats fed blueberries had a slower rate of brain cell loss associated with an ageing illness when compared to rats on a normal diet. The research was conducted jointly by researchers in Boston, Baltimore, and Baton Rouge. The rodents were treated to bring on the affects of an ageing illness, mirroring the symptoms suffered by those with Alzheimer's disease. Tests on the rats' brain functions showed those on the blueberry diet suffered less brain cell loss and had better brain behavior than those on the normal diet. A spokesman for Elsevier, the publisher of the journal, said: "Blueberries have long been dubbed a wonder fruit. Scientists have discovered yet another reason why the blueberry lives up to its reputation." Like other berries, blueberries are rich in anti-oxidants, regarded as a key to health, preventing ailments such as heart disease. Researchers believe that the anti-oxidants in blueberries also help the brain to prevent deterioration of the cells.

Resident Reflects on his Three Years of Research at Sinai

Dr. Mulugeta Fissha, an Ethiopian native, was at Sinai Hospital for 3 years as a resident in Internal Medicine. During that time he did research, and this activity resulted in several abstracts and one published article.

During his first year of residency Dr. Fissha worked with Dr Paul Gurbel on an ongoing study of the effect of clopidogrel on platelet reactivity in patients with stent thrombosis. They found that high post-treatment platelet reactivity and incomplete P2Y₁₂ receptor inhibition were risk factors for subacute stent thrombosis. This work was published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology in 2005 (46:1827-32).

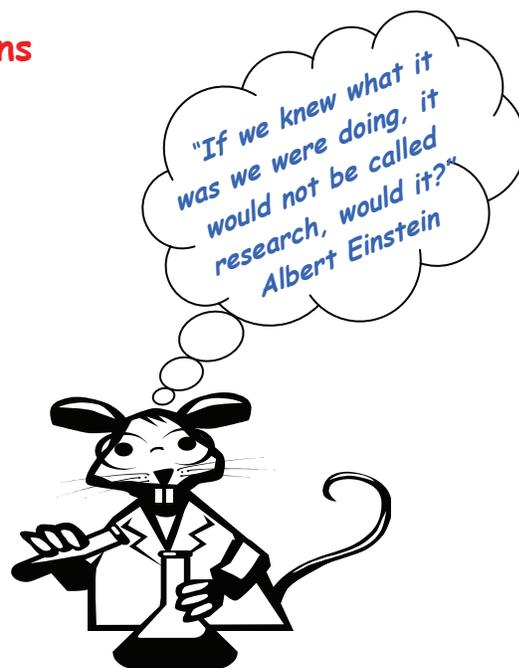
While completing his last two years at Sinai, Dr Fissha has been working with Drs. Steven Gambert, Morton Mower, and Nikhil Agarawal to compare biphasic and monophasic pacemakers in rats. Approximately three million people worldwide have hearts that beat too fast. Abnormally rapid heart beat can deteriorate into a life threatening condition called ventricular fibrillation, the major cause of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). Every year, approximately 350,000 Americans lose their lives to SCA. An Implantable Cardioverter-Defibrillator (ICD) is uniquely designed to promote natural heart activity. The current ICD works on a principle of transmitting electrical activity in one way, and is referred to as monophasic. Dr. Fissha's current research examines the use of a two phase or biphasic transmission pattern, which the investigators believe improves heart function. To date, only preliminary animal studies have been done in pigs. The current study compares the efficacy of monophasic and biphasic pacemakers in a small animal model (rat) using standard pressure-volume loop measurements as the clinical outcome for cardiac function.

Dr. Fissha notes that "being a resident, you have little time to devote to research. Yet, you can prevail if you have a definite plan of action and try not to be discouraged. There can be roadblocks, but there are many positive and supportive people at Sinai to help." Dr Fissha has big goals in life, but his next stop will be as a cardiology fellow at The Medical College of Georgia in Augusta where he plans to continue doing research.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the IRB?

A: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is an independent body consisting of a diverse group of health care professionals, scientists, and members from the local community. The IRB has the legal mandate to 1) advocate for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects who participate in research projects, 2) review and approve the scientific merit of research involving human subjects, 3) oversee the informed consent process, and 4) monitor ongoing biomedical and behavioral research studies. The United States Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the State of Maryland empower the IRB to insure that all federal, state, and local regulations are met. These regulations represent minimal acceptable standards, and the IRB has the authority to require higher standards whenever human subject autonomy or safety appear not to be maximized. The IRB performs this critical oversight function to insure that all participants in research are treated justly, and with respect and benevolence.



Q: What is the difference between IRB (A) and IRB (B)

A: Due to work load and time constraints, the IRB was divided into two committees:

IRB (A) meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month and oversees human research for these departments or divisions: Pediatrics, OB/GYN, Oncology, Orthopedic Surgery, Radiology, Radiation Oncology, Rehabilitation Medicine, and Women's and Children's Services.

IRB (B) meets the 4th Wednesday of the month and oversees human research for these departments or divisions: Anesthesiology, Infection Control, Medicine and Subspecialties, Ophthalmology, Pathology, Patient Care Services, Pharmacy, Psychiatry, Social Work, and Surgery & Subspecialties.

New To Our Department

Alan Orpia, RN joined the LifeBridge Health (LBH) Department of Research in December 2006 as its first Clinical Research Coordinator (CRC). The Department of Research created the CRC position to facilitate sponsored research in divisions throughout the LBH system lacking adequate research support staff.

Alan has an impressive medical background, earning nursing and doctor of medicine degrees in his native Philippines. He was a research investigator, research coordinator, clinical coordinator and an educator before deciding to migrate and look for new challenges and opportunities in the United States

Prior to joining LBH, Alan worked with two local healthcare companies, and according to Alan, LBH is by far the best employer that he has had to date. His goal here at LBH is to help research activity grow by leaps and bounds, and he is spending most of his time helping to make that a reality. "Work hard, be nice, make things happen, and make a difference" is his philosophy for success. Currently Alan is working on several clinical trials at Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital, and at Northwest Hospital Center and Sinai Hospital of Baltimore.



Alan can assist principal investigators with the preparation and submission of the initial Institutional Review Board and Administrative Review Board applications, as well as all amendment and continuing review paperwork needed during the course of a study. He can also assist in all aspects of a clinical trial, as defined by the principal investigators. To find out more about this new support program for sponsored research at LBH, please call or e-mail Alan directly at 410-601-0960 or aorpia@lifebridgehealth.org, respectively.