



CORE Quickly Becomes Leading Obesity Research Center



The CORE faculty includes (from left) Robert C. Whitaker, MD, MPH; Director Gary D. Foster, PhD; Melissa A. Napolitano, PhD; and Kelley Borradaile, PhD.

Since its founding two years ago, Temple University's Center for Obesity Research and Education (CORE) has quickly become one of the nation's leading

obesity research centers — particularly regarding the causes, treatment and prevention of obesity among children, adolescents and the underserved.

"Obesity is a prevalent, serious and stubborn problem that is over-represented among African-Americans, Latinos and those of lower socio-economic status," says Gary D. Foster, PhD, CORE's director and the current president of The Obesity Society.

More about Melissa A. Napolitano, PhD

Associate professor of kinesiology
PhD Duke University, clinical psychology

POSTGRADUATE TRAINING:

Brown University, Health psychology/
behavioral medicine

Former assistant professor of psychiatry and human behavior (research), Brown Medical School; staff psychologist, The Miriam Hospital

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These include seven studies worth \$3.4 million funded by the National Institutes of Health and its related institutes; two funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; one funded by the Philadelphia School District.

Since obesity is a multifaceted conundrum, CORE's multidisciplinary faculty includes Kelley Borradaile, PhD, a statistician and assistant professor of public health; Melissa A. Napolitano, PhD,

ROBERT WHITAKER, MD, MPH, FIRST QUANTIFIED THE HEIGHTENED RISK OF ADULT OBESITY FOR CHILDREN WITH OBESE PARENTS IN THE *NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE*.

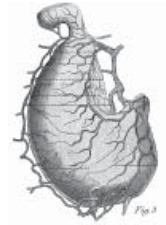
Adds Robert C. Whitaker, MD, MPH, CORE's medical director, "Obesity has biological and behavioral origins in childhood, and a lot of these origins involve social circumstances."

CORE currently is conducting 15 research studies whose annual direct and indirect costs total \$4.4 million.

associate professor of kinesiology; and Whitaker, professor of public health and pediatrics. The team also includes epidemiologists, psychologists, nutritionists and health communications specialists.

"What makes us unique nationwide," says Foster, "is that this really is a university-wide center with lots of support

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**OBESITY and
ENDOCRINOLOGY**

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This issue of PULSE focuses on the work of the Department of Medicine's Center for Obesity Research and Education and its Bone Marrow Transplant and Nephrology sections.

Celebrating Old and New

*A message from Joel Richter, MD, FACP, MACG
Richard L. Evans Chair, Department of Medicine*



This issue of *Pulse* is a celebration of both the new and old. It highlights our emerging programs and researchers working on the cutting edge of such critical issues as obesity and autoimmune diseases. It also calls attention to the Fox Chase-Temple Bone Marrow Transplant Program and its founder, Kenneth F. Mangan, MD, who for more than two decades has compassionately given high-quality care, hope and prolonged life to patients in need of bone marrow transplants.

I am equally pleased with Tracy McGaha, PhD, a young researcher in our nephrology section who is conducting innovative research with potentially significant clinical applications for the treatment of lupus and other autoimmune disorders.

Likewise, nothing better illustrates our revived commitment to clinically relevant, academic research than the rapid growth of our Center for Obesity Research and Education (CORE). Established in March two years ago, in the past 18 months its staff has quadrupled to 40 and by next fall will have also quadrupled its original two faculty members to eight.

As our cover story indicates, the work this multidisciplinary team is doing is exciting both in terms of its magnitude — \$4.4 million in annual grants — and in the breadth of the approaches and people involved in its investigations. From Head Start pre-schoolers, middle-school children and college students to underserved adults in both our North Philadelphia neighborhood and rural upstate Pennsylvania, CORE is assuming a leading role in national obesity research.

For all these reasons, I could not be more proud of the physicians and researchers we continue to attract to Temple.

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Dean John M. Daly, MD, congratulates Bertram Channick, MD, former endocrinology section chief, upon his retirement after nearly 53 years at Temple.

McGaha Probing Possible Cause of Lupus

Tracy L. McGaha, PhD, an investigator in the Department of Medicine's nephrology section, has been awarded a three-year, \$300,000 grant from the Lupus Research Institute to investigate a possible cause of this autoimmune disease.

The in vivo research, which began this past November, is focusing on marginal zone macrophages — cells active in the area where blood enters the spleen. "It's really the first area where cells of the immune system come in contact with cells and products being transported by the blood," McGaha explains. The macrophage cells, functioning like vultures, consume and remove dead cells.

But if the necrotic cells are not promptly removed, they can become inflammatory — one of the processes involved in autoimmune diseases. When McGaha chemically removes the macrophage cells, his animal subjects develop signifi-



Tracy L. McGaha, PhD

"Dr. McGaha brings an insight into the mechanisms that lead to autoimmune renal diseases and progressive renal failure, and hopefully his research will

OUR RESEARCH COULD POINT TO MORE TARGETED THERAPIES.

— Tracy McGaha, PhD

cant autoimmune conditions. "My gene manipulation leads to a severe lupus-like disease," he says. "Indeed, individuals who suffer from lupus seem to have defects in their macrophage function and their ability to clear cellular debris."

Michael P. Madaio, MD, nephrology section chief, first met McGaha during the latter's postdoctoral research fellowship between 2002 and 2005 in the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics and Immunology at The Rockefeller University in New York City. While there, McGaha won a national research service award from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Prior to coming to Temple in February, 2007, McGaha was a research assistant at the University of Geneva investigating vaccination efficacy in children and newborns for the World Health Organization.

lead to the development of either therapeutic strategies or reagents that will modify disease activity," say Madaio.

More about Tracy L. McGaha, PhD

Temple University School of Medicine
Assistant Professor,
Department of Medicine,
Nephrology section

Assistant Professor,
Department of Microbiology and
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Mangan Honored by Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Hospital Auxiliary

Kenneth F. Mangan, MD, the section chief the Fox Chase-Temple Bone Marrow Transplant Program since he founded it 21 years ago, will be the recipient of two major awards this year — from the Philadelphia regional chapter of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and from the Temple University Hospital auxiliary.

“I came to Temple in 1987 with the idea of setting up a first-class transplant program and to provide state-of-the-art transplant services to patients,” says Mangan, “and to be recognized by my peers and my community is sort of a validation of my career. I’m very shocked and pleased.”

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society has named him its 2008 Black Tie Gala honoree, he believes, for his tireless efforts in educating both the public and referring physicians about transplant capabilities while he established the transplant program, which now has completed more than 1,000 adult allogeneic and autologous bone marrow and blood stem cell transplants. “I think we surprised a lot of people, not only at Temple but in Philadelphia,” he says.

The hospital auxiliary’s Acres of Diamonds award, he believes, “recognizes that, against all odds, we’ve been able to make a very significant impact. To be honest, when I first arrived I think many people thought that there would never be a successful transplant program at Temple.

“I am particularly pleased that our transplant program has been able to provide high-tech care for the entire spectrum of our society, including minorities and patients with limited resources.”

With a background of solid training in stem cells and blood malignancies, Mangan came to Temple at a time, 21 years ago, when bone marrow transplants were much less common in Philadelphia. “It was a great opportunity, and although Temple initially was reluctant, in the end it came through and provided me with the resources to be successful at every level in terms of patient care and cure rates, as well as obtaining grants, publishing and marketing our services.

“With our incredibly committed personnel, we’ve developed a very healthy team approach.”

Why Mangan’s dogged persistence, vision and leadership? “Realizing that I could actually cure patients and not just keep them alive for a little bit longer, which is also a worthwhile goal, attracted me to the field,” says Mangan. “Diseases such as acute leukemia are terrible diseases that overwhelm patients and their families. What they go through demands a really very high standard of attention, care and support, and if you’re able to provide that, the payoff can be huge.”



Kenneth M. Mangan, MD, BMT Program section chief.

More about Kenneth F. Mangan, MD, FACP

Professor of Medicine
Section chief, Fox Chase–Temple Bone Marrow Transplantation Program
President, Pa. Hematology–Oncology Society, 1995–08
Author, American College of Physicians’ Physicians Informational Education Resource (PIER) Web site for severe aplastic anemia
National inspector, Foundation for Accreditation of Cellular Therapy

RESEARCH INTEREST:
Submyeloablative (“mini”) allogeneic transplant regimens for treatment of hematologic malignancies and selected solid tumors.

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from seven School of Medicine departments, including the Department of Medicine, and the College of Health Professions, as well as collaboration from other groups and centers at both the university’s Health Sciences and Main campuses.”

Current research studies include:

- NIH: Foster is the lead investigator for a three-year, seven-center interventional trial involving 6,400 predominantly minority, low-income children – half of whom are above the 85th percentile for BMI — at 42 U.S. middle schools. The purpose: to gauge the impact of increasing the quantity and quality of physical education and availability of healthy foods in the schools on BMI, glucose and insulin for sixth- to eighth-graders. He is also conducting a four-site, seven-year study on the effects of

weight loss on sleep apnea in patients with type 2 diabetes and concluding a three-center, five-year study comparing low-carbohydrate and low-fat diets.

- Napolitano also is conducting a National Cancer Institute study comparing exercise vs. body image workshops in preventing weight gain among college-aged females following smoking cessation.
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: Foster is evaluating the efficacy of a healthy corner store initiative to reduce childhood obesity and Whitaker is surveying eating environments and policies in the federal pre-school Head Start program. “Head Start serves almost a million low-income children and this survey will help determine what policies and programs Head Start could put in place to reduce children’s risk for developing obesity,” says Whitaker.

- Philadelphia School District: Foster and colleagues are evaluating the impact of nutrition education programs in K-12 schools.
- Pennsylvania Department of Health: In a study led by Temple endocrinologist Guenther Boden, MD, CORE is gauging the effectiveness of church-based weight-loss programs in both North Philadelphia and rural Pennsylvania. “We’re reaching out to people through their local churches so they feel more comfortable and it’s more convenient for them,” says Napolitano.

CORE also provides clinical weight loss services to patients of both Temple’s general internal medicine clinic and local physicians’ practices; it also provides pre-operative behavioral and nutrition evaluations for potential Temple bariatric surgery candidates.

For more information, contact Gary D. Foster, PhD at 215-707-8633 or gary.foster@temple.edu.

PULSE

Newsletter of the
Department of Medicine,
Temple University
School of Medicine

New Internist, Nephrologist and Oncologist Join Faculty

The Department of Medicine is pleased to announce the appointment of the following three distinguished physicians to the Temple University School of Medicine faculty.



THOMAS R. COMERCI,
MD

Thomas R. Comerci, MD
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MD, University of North Carolina
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POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION:

New York University,
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SPECIAL INTEREST: Substance abuse,
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IRIS JUNG-WON LEE, MD

Iris Jung-won Lee, MD
Nephrologist

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MD, Hahnemann University School of
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POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION:

University of Illinois,
University of Pennsylvania

SPECIAL INTEREST:

Renal transplantation,
glomerular disease



ARUNA PADMANABHAN,
MD, MBBS

Aruna Padmanabhan, MD, MBBS
Oncologist

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MD, Seton Hall University

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION:

Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo,
N.Y.

SPECIAL INTEREST:

Breast and GI cancers and supportive care