New & noteworthy
Updates on activities in the profession

AOA Bureau of Research luncheon features Louisa Burns laureate's lecture, research and scholarly awards

At the Louisa Burns Luncheon and Lecture, Felix Rogers, DO, spoke on “Building on Tradition.” Dr. Rogers attended the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at the Detroit Osteopathic Hospital/Bi-County Community Hospital. He completed his residency training in cardiology at the Detroit Osteopathic Hospital and at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and has been in private practice in cardiology in Trenton, Michigan, since 1978.

Dr. Rogers previously served as chair of the AOA Bureau of Research and now serves as associate editor of the Journal of the American Osteopathic Association. Dr. Rogers has worked to incorporate osteopathic tenets throughout his practice of cardiology. In 1982, he published a report that described the correlation of paraspinal musculoskeletal findings in patients with coronary heart disease. With his colleagues, he has developed a cardiology practice that is focused on primary and secondary prevention with diet and lifestyle modification, including exercise and yoga.

Bernard R. Rubin, DO, chair of the AOA Bureau of Research, presented awards to members of the osteopathic profession for outstanding contributions in research, education, and leadership.

Gutensohn/Denslow Award

The Gutensohn/Denslow Award was presented to Michael L. Kuchera, DO, vice president for international osteopathic education and associate dean for osteopathic research at the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (KCOM). A 1980 KCOM graduate, he completed his osteopathic internship at Richmond Heights General Hospital in 1981. Dr. Kuchera is a professor in KCOM’s Department of Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine, where he also served as chairperson from 1987 to 1998. He is board certified by the American Osteopathic Board of Special Proficiency in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine. Dr. Kuchera is a past president of the American Academy of Osteopathy (AAO) and is active in AAO projects related to research, postdoctoral standards, and international affairs. In addition, he sits on the boards of the American Academy of Osteopathy, American Association of Orthopaedic Medicine, and the Missouri Arthritis Advisory Board. He is also a member of two councils of the American Osteopathic Association and is one of two delegates representing North America in the General Assembly of the International Federation of Manual/Musculoskeletal Medicine.

Irvin M. Korr Award

The Irvin M. Korr Award was presented to Peter B. Raven, PhD, chair of the Department of Integrative Physiology at the University of North Texas and director of the Center for Research on Musculoskeletal Pain. Dr. Raven’s research program has been in continuity for more than 32 years and has published more than 200 scientific articles and book chapters. In addition, he has administered more than $5 million in extramural biomedical awards.

For the past 16 years, Dr. Raven’s research program has focused on the autonomic neural control of the circulation system, with special emphasis on blood pressure regulation during exercise and orthostasis. His research program has been continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health RO1 mechanism and by the NANA-NRA program.

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George W. Northup Writing Award

The George W. Northup Writing Award, which honors the late George W. Northup, DO, who was the AOA’s editor in chief for 26 years, was presented to the authors of the article, “Benefits of osteopathic manipulative treatment for hospitalized elderly patients with pneumonia” (JAOA 2000;100:776-782). Donald R. Noll, DO, associate professor in the Clinical Division of Medicine, KCOM, is the principal author of the article.

Osteopathic research community partners with AOA President

Several activities of the AOA Division of Research staff are particularly relevant to the initiative of AOA President James E. Zini, DO, to optimize osteopathic postdoctoral training institutions (OPTIs). Recognizing that many allopathic and osteopathic clinical studies are hampered by investigators’ inability to enroll sufficient patients, the osteopathic profession presents a unique opportunity to han-
dle this situation through OPTIs. Sixteen OPTIs are affiliated with colleges of osteopathic medicine. Each has a requirement to create research-related educational objectives, provide support for facilitating resident participation in research, identify and list research resources, and provide ready access to basic science and/or clinical research mentorships. Thus, one objective has been to create an infrastructure to further develop research activities.

To this end, an individual has been identified at each OPTI who agrees to serve as research director, and is so recognized by the associated college of osteopathic medicine. In addition, Philip B. Hultgren, PhD, of Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Erie, Pennsylvania, has agreed to serve as chair of the OPTI research directors, with a plan to select an osteopathic physician to serve as co-chair. This structure will be helpful to investigators who seek collaboration on research projects. The emerging Osteopathic Research Center, in particular, should use these connections to promote multi-institutional research programs.

A second benefit of introducing research efforts through the OPTI system is that residents can be made aware of research opportunities at their institution. Introduction of research opportunities at an early point in physicians' careers is widely regarded as the most successful way to produce new investigators. Program officers at the National Institutes of Health have commented on the unique opportunity the osteopathic profession has in this regard.

As of this writing, the inaugural meeting of OPTI research directors has been set during the 2001 Research Conference. The goals and plans they establish will be disclosed in a future "New & noteworthy" column.

Dr. Zini's ten-point plan to optimize OPTIs is available on the AOA's Web site at www.aoa-net.org. The plan does not specifically include development of research through the OPTI research directors; however, Dr. Zini is aware of the initiative described herein and agrees that he has considerable common ground with the research community. He was sent a formal invitation to join the meeting of OPTI research directors in San Diego.

Investigators in the osteopathic profession have not developed a close working relationship with industry to its fullest potential. For instance, there is considerable expertise among pharmaceutical medical directors equivalent to program officers at the National Institutes of Health. Some of the firms have instructional programs in clinical research that are available to medical schools. It might be valuable for faculty at the Osteopathic Research Center to view this material, not only for their own benefit, but also to inform other colleges about the value of this material to osteopathic researchers.

A group of pharmaceutical medical directors that is particularly sensitive to the needs of the osteopathic profession has been identified. The members are interested in serving as an informal advisory group to investigators at colleges of osteopathic medicine. Members to date include David Neff, DO (Merck); Nazzareno Liegghio, DO (Pfizer); Scott Jacober, DO (Lilly); Michael Cressman, DO (AstraZeneca); Carol Duffy, DO (American Regents); and Christopher Barton, PhD (Amgen). Drs. Neff, Liegghio, and Jacober were recruited to participate in the Osteopathic Collaborative Clinical Trials Initiative Conference III on October 25 and 26, 2001, in San Diego, California.

Richard Rose, PhD
Secretary, AOA Bureau of Research