News and Updates:

Congratulations to Dr. Mitzi Nagarkatti on her reappointment as Chair of the PMI Department. Dr. Nagarkatti has led our department to a top 15th ranking amongst pathology departments in the United States based on NIH funding. She is the recipient of multiple grants from the NIH as well as the VA. We look forward to continued success under Dr. Nagarkatti’s leadership in the years to come.

Dr. Tonya Colpitts joined the department this summer as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Colpitts’ research focuses on dengue virus pathogenesis in the mosquito and interactions in both mosquito and mammalian cells. Welcome Dr. Colpitts!

Dr. Farhan Zameer, Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Biotechnology, Microbiology and Biochemistry, University of Mysore, India has joined the Nagarkatti lab for a year supported by a Raman Fellowship for Postdoctoral Research in America for Indian Scholars administered by the University Grand Commission. The fellowship is named after the Nobel Laureate C. V. Raman.

Dr. Prakash Nagarkatti was an invited member of the NIH Center for Scientific Review (CSR) Intra-Integrated Review Groups (IRGs)/Cross-Scientific Review Group (SRG or Study Section) Study to evaluate the relative quality of grant applications across Study Sections within IRGs at CSR.

Dr. Jennifer Nyland participated in a grant review study section for the Ocean Research Consortium, Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI) in Washington, DC at the beginning of July. The grants reviewed focused on the public health impacts of the Deep Water Horizon oil spill.

Dr. Angela Murphy was invited to serve as a reviewer of Nutrition and Obesity Research Center P30 grants for the NIDDK.

Dr. Udai Singh served on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) “Cellular and Molecular Immunology A” Study Section on June 4-5, 2015.

Dr. Lucia Pirisi-Creek completed her training to become a certified Gyrokinesis Level 1 instructor in Miami, May 29-31, 2015. This certification will allow Dr. Pirisi-Creek to begin her studies of the impact of this meditative form of exercise on overall health and on specific physical conditions such as chronic back pain, fibromyalgia, and other musculoskeletal diseases.

Dr. Angela Murphy gave an invited symposium presentation on ‘Behavioral Interventions in Cancer’ at the American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting in San Diego (May 2015).

Dr. Swapan Ray served as an expert international reviewer in August 2015 for the grants submitted to the National Medical Research Council (NMRC). The NMRC is a national funding agency under the Ministry of Health, Singapore.

Dr. Prakash Nagarkatti was invited to participate in the “Innovate to Accelerate” Program aimed at identifying the most compelling areas of science for support via the NIH Common Fund.
Dr. Udai Singh is serving as Editor-in-chief of the journal “Clinical Microbiology: Open access”.

Dr. Dev Karan was invited to give a talk at the “Federation of Clinical Cancer Societies, Immunology by the Bay” on June 24-27 in San Diego, CA. The title of his talk was, “Dual Antigen Targeted Immunotherapy for Prostate Cancer: Preclinical Evaluation.”

Dr. Udai Singh served on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) ZRG1 Special Emphasis Panel (DKUSN) for SBIR grants on Digestive Disease Study Section on July 8th 2015.

Dr. Angela Murphy served as a reviewer on a Special Emphasis Panel for the NIDDK reviewing grants related to obesity and diabetes.

Dr. Lucia Pirisi-Creek completed the Riley Diversity Leadership Institute (DLI) and graduated in June, 2015 as a Riley DLI Fellow. The DLI, organized by the Riley Institute at Furman University, brings together community leaders, educators and business people for six leadership training sessions with a strong focus on promoting diversity in the workplace and in the community.

Dr. Udai Singh served on the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP), Department of Defense study section on July 15th 2015, reviewing pre-applications on Interstitial Cystitis.

Dr. Venkatesh Hegde is currently serving on the Editorial Advisory Board for the journal “Nutrition” (Elsevier Publishers).

Dr. Swapan Ray participated as a Member of the NCI Program Project Meeting III (P01) Review Committee, June 9 to 10, 2015, in Washington, DC.

Dr. Udai Singh served on the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP), Department of Defense Study Section on July 15th 2015, reviewing pre-applications on Inflammatory Bowel Diseases.

Dr. Venkatesh Hegde has two new members working with him in the Nagarkatti lab, Dr. Jingwen Chen, a Research Assistant and Amy Harrington, an undergraduate student who is Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Major.

Dr. Dev Karan served as a Scientific Reviewer for SC INBRE Developmental Research Program.

Dr. Angela Murphy was invited to serve as a reviewer for NCCIH on grants related to Methods Development in Natural Product Chemistry SBIR/STTR.

**Honors & Awards:**

Dr. Lucia Pirisi-Creek received the notice of award for the competitive renewal of SC INBRE (P20GM103499) funded from July 10, 2015 to June 30, 2020 for a total of $18.2M. SC INBRE III includes 13 institutions across South Carolina and provides funding for faculty development, student training, core facility support and other means of developing biomedical research infrastructure at the participating institutions.

Dr. Farhan Zameer, a Visiting Scientist in Dr. Nagarkatti’s lab received a “Presidential Junior Faculty/Post-Doc” award to attend 48th Meeting on Immunity in Health and Disease by Society for Leukocyte Biology. The title of Dr. Zameer’s abstract was "Integrative studies on 3,3'-diindolylmethane triggered regulation of Th17 and Treg cells in ameliorating multiple sclerosis through microbiome-host interplay".

Dr. Lucia Pirisi-Creek received a CCCR COBRE Pilot Project to study the possible HPV etiology of rectal cancer in young (<50) individuals (August 1, 2015-July 31, 2016).
Dr. Alexa Orr Gandy, Ph.D., a Postdoctoral Fellow in Dr. Nagarkatti’s lab attended the American Association of Immunologists (AAI) Annual Meeting held in New Orleans. She received the AAI Trainee Poster Award. The title of her abstract was “Resveratrol regulates the miR-124/Sphingosine Kinase 1 axis in encephalitogenic T cells and protects from experimental multiple sclerosis”.

Dr. Lucia Pirisi-Creek received a 3rd percentile score (impact score 18) on her NCI R21 application (1R21CA201853-1) entitled “Molecular Origin and Evolution of HPV-inactive Head and Neck Cancers. Funding for this project is expected to start December 1, 2015 at the latest.

Catherine Dong (Biochemistry Major) carried out undergraduate research with Dr. Venkatesh Hegde in Dr. Nagarkatti’s group since 2012. Catherine’s research was on the topic of “Anti-inflammatory effects of resveratrol in autoimmune hepatitis”. She has won a number of awards including Magellan grants, SURF fellowship, SURF Travel fellowship and the Betty R. Fudenberg Biochemistry Award. Catherine presented her research as an oral presentation at USC Discovery Day, at Columbia Women’s Health Forum and at a Sigma XI Student Research Conference held at Research Triangle Park, NC. Catherine graduated with honors, and will be starting her medical education soon at MUSC (class of 2019).

Publications:


Penta, Kayla L, Diego Altomare, Devon L Shirley, and Jennifer F Nyland. 2015. Female Immune System is Protected from Effects of Prenatal Exposure to Mercury. AIMS Environmental Science. 2(3): 448-463.


**Presentations:**


Dubey S and Karan D. Human glandular kallikrein (hK2): a negative regulator in prostate cancer immunotherapy. Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies: 06/24 - 06/27/2015; San Diego, CA.

Barnstein B., Kolawole E., Oskeritzian CA, Ryan JJ. “Statin treatment suppresses IgE-mediated mast cell activation in vitro and in vivo” presented at The American Association of Immunologists (AAI) Annual Meeting, May 8-12, 2015, New Orleans, LA.


