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UPMC Children's GI Division Opens New Gastrostomy Tube Clinic

In January, the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at UPMC Children's formally opened its new gastrostomy tube (G-tube) clinic for children and adolescents who have multiple medical needs related to gastrostomy or gastrojejunostomy tubes. The aims of the clinic are to provide comprehensive G-tube care for a wide range of patients: NICU graduates, young children, and older adolescents who may have a long-term tube placement.



Maria Ines Clavell, MD, is the director of the new clinic. Dr. Clavell is an associate professor of pediatrics with board certifications in gastroenterology and clinical nutrition, and a

physician certification from the National Board of Nutrition Support Certification. Dr. Clavell



works in concert with pediatric dietitian **Stacey Zettle, MS, RD, LDN**, to treat patients in the clinic. The combination of GI and dietetics eliminates the need for multiple appointments.

Patients and families can have all their needs and questions addressed in a single visit. Currently, the G-tube clinic is offered twice per month with future goals to expand and add days as practice volume increases.

Comprehensive GI, G-Tube, and Nutrition Support

Be it short- or long-term G-tube placements, Dr. Clavell's clinic provides multimodal care for G-tube patients, not only accounting for their

nutrition needs but also troubleshooting various G-tube issues, such as fit or leakage, when changes or upgrades to tubes are called for, complications of G-tube placement such as tissue granulation or infections, and when it may be appropriate to discontinue tube use and resume or start normal oral feeding.

"A key element of the clinic is maintaining good nutritional support for patients that can allow them to have the best opportunity to progress with feeding skills, and to take part in occupational and speech therapies to facilitate that process," says Dr. Clavell.

As a gastroenterologist, Dr. Clavell also can attend to any other underlying GI needs or symptoms faced by this patient population. This includes such issues as gastroesophageal reflux, constipation, diarrhea, abdominal distention, bloating, and other common problems.

Referrals to the G-tube clinic arrive from numerous services and departments across UPMC Children's and from outside the area. NICU graduates are frequent referrals, as are some patients from the cardiothoracic surgery program and the extensive transplant

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Autoimmune Liver Disease Pilot Research Funding Awarded to James Squires, MD, MS

UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Liver Research Center announced **James E. Squires, MD, MS**, has received the 2019 Autoimmune Liver Disease Pilot Research Award from the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) Foundation, the largest private supporter of liver disease research in the United States.



The AASLD Foundation recently announced its investment of \$3.42 million in Research and Career Development Awards granted to 29 researchers and clinicians. These awards provide critical funding for liver

research, encourage young investigators new to the field, secure education and training for clinicians, and increase access to trained hepatology providers for patients with liver disease.

Dr. Squires is an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and program director of the Pediatric Transplant Hepatology Fellowship Program in the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at UPMC Children's.

As one of the Foundation's award recipients, Dr. Squires will utilize the tested model of a Learning Healthcare System (LHS) to decrease variability and improve care for children with autoimmune liver disease. Dr. Squires will work to develop a collaborative partnership with the most mature of these systems, the inflammatory bowel disease-focused ImproveCareNow (ICN).

Reflecting the success of the LHS model, a growing number of disease-specific LHS networks have been developed; however, each new network accrues a significant cost related to research infrastructure, data sharing mechanisms, and computational capabilities. Recognizing the complex but well-established relationship between pediatric inflammatory bowel disease and autoimmune liver disease, Dr. Squires' work, supported by the Pilot Research Award, looks to avoid a "re-inventing of the wheel" by imagining a novel system of integration, capitalizing on disease parallels and shared populations, and merging existing network resources with unmet needs to improve quality, affordability, and outcomes in pediatric autoimmune liver disease.

"Despite recent strides and successes in the treatment of many liver diseases, there is still much work to be done if we want to get closer to a world without liver disease. Integral to the success of this vision will be a consistent, stable source of funding for those committed to finding cures and saving lives through innovative research. AASLD Foundation award recipients, like Dr. Squires, are essential to increasing quality of care and discovering new treatments for liver diseases. Their work ultimately benefits patients, and the Foundation is proud to support its award recipients in their research and training," explains AASLD Foundation Chair Bruce R. Bacon, MD, FAASLD.

Dr. Squires was selected from a highly competitive applicant pool by a committee of academic and clinical specialists, physicians, and advanced practice providers in the fields of hepatology and transplant hepatology.

"Interdisciplinary collaborations define much of what we know about many diseases today. These efforts inform medical communities, patients, families, industry, and governmental agencies about specific insights into disease processes that are critical for the day-to-day practice of health care professionals. And yet gaps in connectedness exist, often in the most vulnerable populations, where improved organization has the potential to transform research and improve health outcomes at scale. Thus, the award will enable the partnering of multiple centers of excellence with patients, families, and investigators to enable future works aimed at identifying and overcoming common challenges of research in autoimmune liver disease. This award will also allow me to establish myself as a leader in the field of pediatric autoimmune liver disease, cultivating the LHS to support the conduct of observational research, clinical trials, patient advocacy, and quality improvement across the spectrum of autoimmune liver diseases," says Dr. Squires.

To learn more about AASLD Foundation and its 2019 award recipients, visit aasldfoundation.org.

Dealing With Dismotility: New Program Emphasizes Collaborative Care

In January, UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh’s Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition welcomed **Vibha Sood, MD**, as its newest faculty member and director of the new Motility and Neurogastroenterology Program for pediatric patients with motility or functional gastrointestinal disorders.



Dr. Sood is fellowship-trained in pediatric gastroenterology from Golisano Children’s Hospital at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York. Upon completion of

her pediatric gastroenterology fellowship, Dr. Sood joined the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Hepatology at Medstar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C.

While at Georgetown, Dr. Sood developed an interest in motility and functional gastrointestinal disorders in children which eventually led her to pursue additional training in motility disorders. She completed a year of advanced pediatric motility and neurogastroenterology training at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Ohio. As part of her research, Dr. Sood had the opportunity to study the spectrum of gastrointestinal and motility disorders in patients with a hypermobile type of Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome.

“Pediatric motility and neurogastroenterology is a rapidly progressing field, with exciting emerging technologies for diagnosis and management of patients with dysmotility. My fellowship training exposed me to a wide variety of complex gastrointestinal motility disorders, including colorectal disorders, in children,” says Dr. Sood.

Dr. Sood brings with her to UPMC Children’s proficiency in performing colonic, antroduodenal esophageal and anorectal manometry procedures, along with interpretation and application of these studies in the clinical realm.

Neuromodulation is an exciting and emerging field within neurogastroenterology, explains

Dr. Sood, who has gained experience in taking care of patients who have received various neuromodulation devices including sacral nerve stimulation (SNS) for intractable constipation, electro auricular device for functional gastrointestinal disorders, and gastric electrical stimulation (gastric pacemaker) for gastroparesis.

Disorders Treated in the Motility and Neurogastroenterology Program

- Achalasia
- Aerodigestive disorders
- Anorectal malformations
- Colonic dysmotility
- Dysphagia and feeding disorders
- Functional gastrointestinal disorders
- Gastroparesis
- Hirschsprung’s disease
- Intestinal pseudo-obstruction
- Intractable constipation and encopresis
- Pre- and posttransplant motility evaluation
- Rumination

Designing a Motility Program

Dr. Sood’s program allows patients with functional gastrointestinal disorders in need of specialized diagnostics and procedures to remain at UPMC Children’s for their entire spectrum of care. It eliminates the need for long trips and time away from home, improves continuity of care, and provides for seamless communications and patient discussions — all within the confines of UPMC Children’s.

“Our goals are to build the program into a center of excellence that provides comprehensive evaluation and treatment of pediatric patients with complex motility and

functional gastrointestinal disorders, and to build a multidisciplinary care service with colorectal surgery, intestinal rehabilitation, the intestine transplant program, and the aerodigestive center for the co-management of patients with esophageal, intestinal, and colonic dysmotility,” says Dr. Sood.

In the long term, Dr. Sood’s goal for the program is to make UPMC Children’s a regional and national referral center for patients with complex motility and functional gastrointestinal disorders and to provide training in these disorders to new generations of gastroenterology specialists.

Opportunities for Collaboration

The breadth of services and care that is provided at UPMC Children’s will allow for many collaborative efforts in the future between Dr. Sood, her gastroenterology colleagues, and others in areas such as colorectal surgery, small bowel transplant, and intestinal rehabilitation programs.

“A motility program like we are building will allow additional care and expertise to be provided to some of our more complex patients, including our intestinal transplant patients. I am looking forward to developing collaborations with my colleagues in that program, and to helping care for these patients who need long-term, complex follow-up,” says Dr. Sood.

She also plans to help develop a multidisciplinary approach to care for patients with longstanding, severe constipation issues or complicated anorectal malformation disorders.

To refer a patient to the Motility and Neurogastroenterology Program, please contact the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition at 412-692-5180.

Annual NASPGHAN Meeting

The Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh was well-represented at the 2019 North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) annual meeting in Chicago, Illinois, October 17–19, 2019.

Division faculty presented new research in poster sessions, oral presentations, and panel discussions on numerous topics during the conference. Below are details on featured Division activities at the meeting.

Posters and Abstracts

The Drug Complication of Pancreatic Injury With Asparaginase Is Related to Pancreatic Levels of the Endogenous Counteracting Enzyme Asparagine Synthetase and Intra-Pancreatic Nutrient Stress. Authors: **Amitava Mukherjee**, Nayyar Ahmed, **Abraheem Ahmad**, **Tanveer Javed**, Li Wen, Sohail Husain.

Durability of Infliximab Therapy in Very Early Onset Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

Leah Siebold, MD, is a co-author of this multicenter investigation.

Comprehensive Care for Children With Inflammatory Bowel Diseases: Whose Job Is it Anyway? Authors: **Hilary Michel**, **Sandra Kim**, Nalyn Siripong, Robert Noll.

Patterns of Primary, Urgent, and Emergent Care in Pediatric Patients With Inflammatory Bowel Diseases. Authors: **Hilary Michel**, Robert Noll, Nalyn Siripong, **Sandra Kim**.

Peripheral Blood Eosinophilia and Long-Term Severity in Patients With Pediatric- and Adult-Onset Inflammatory Bowel Diseases. Authors: **Krishnapriya Marangattu Prathapan**, Claudia Ramos Rivers, **Sandra Kim**, Ioannis Koutroubakis, Xiaoqing Tan, Gong Tang, Dmitriy Babichenko, Marc Schwartz, Siobhan Proksell, Elyse Johnston, Jana Al Hashash, Michael Dunn, Annette Wilson, Alyce Anderson, Arthur Barrie, Janet Harrison, Douglas Hartman, David Binion.

Pediatric Patient and Parent Experience With the Crohn's Disease Exclusion Diet: Barriers and Facilitators for Nutrition Therapy Implementation. Authors: **Angela Sandell**, Debra Bogen, **David Keljo**, **Stacey Zettle**, Judy Chang, Sandra Kim.

Cost-Effectiveness of Parenteral or Enteral Iron Supplementation in Children With Intestinal Failure: A Microsimulation Study. Authors: **Vikram Raghu**, **Jeffrey Rudolph**, Hawre Jalal, Kenneth Smith.

Cost-Effectiveness of Teduglutide in Pediatric Patients With Intestinal Failure Using Markov Modeling. Authors: **Vikram Raghu**, **Jeffrey Rudolph**, Kenneth Smith.

2019 Terri Li Teaching Award

Arvind Srinath, MD, MS, will be awarded the 2019 Terri Li Teaching Award from NASPGHAN. Dr. Srinath is an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and he also is the director of the pediatric gastroenterology fellowship

program and associate vice chair for education for fellowship training in the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

Oral Presentations

"Fail First" and Other Payor Driven Policies: How Can Physicians Become Effective Advocates? Speaker: **Sandra Kim, MD**

Recognition and Stabilization of the Pediatric Patient With Acute Liver Failure. Presented by **Robert Squires, MD**

Session Moderators

Liver Transplant: Pre- and Post-Transplant Considerations — **James Squires, MD, MS**

APGNN Program

Panel Discussion: Transition to Adult Care: It's More Than Knowledge and Independence — **Whitney Gray, FNP**

Gastrostomy Tube Clinic *Continued from Page 1*

programs that have long been a hallmark of UPMC Children's. Most patients who make their way to the clinic have had their tubes placed at varying times in the past. Dr. Clavell and her team also are working to collaborate more closely with surgical programs at UPMC Children's in advance of patients having tubes placed to help optimize the long-term outcomes and support these patients ultimately need.

"It can assuredly help some patients greatly if we are more involved earlier in their care process, to plan for their

specific needs well in advance of their tube placement. I think we will be able to offer more of this service as our program grows," says Dr. Clavell.

Referrals and Additional Information

For patient referrals or more information, please call the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at 412-692-5180.

Continued Funding for IBD Research Awarded to Timothy Hand, PhD

Timothy Hand, PhD, a scientist specializing in gastrointestinal immunology, received renewed funding from the Kenneth Rainin Foundation for his ongoing research project investigating the role of dietary simple sugars in predisposing inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Dr. Hand's Kenneth Rainin Foundation Innovator Award initially was funded in 2017 and has since received two years of additional support to continue the work.



Dr. Hand joined UPMC Children's in 2015 after working as a postdoctoral fellow beginning in 2009 in the Laboratory of Parasitic Diseases at the National Institute of Allergy and

Infectious Diseases, in Bethesda, Maryland.

Dr. Hand currently holds the position of Richard King Mellon Foundation Institute for Pediatric Research Scholar at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, and he also is an assistant professor in both the Department of

Pediatrics and Department of Immunology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, along with being the director of the University of Pittsburgh Gnotobiotic Animal Core.

Broadly speaking, Dr. Hand's research focuses on the development and regulation of T-cell responses against microbiota, and how gastrointestinal infection may "unleash" the immune response against commensal bacteria and how such responses are controlled to prevent overt pathology. His research has many applications and may provide insight into a variety of diseases affecting children, including Crohn's disease, environmental enteropathy, and food allergies. His lab studies

gastrointestinal immunity in the healthy gastrointestinal tract and host-invading pathogens that may disrupt tissue stability.

Dr. Hand's Kenneth Rainin Foundation Innovator Award is funding work to elucidate how Western diets that are high in fats and sugars and low in fiber contribute to the incidence and development of IBD. Specifically, the Hand Lab hopes to define novel sugar-modified mechanisms of the intestinal immune response with the hope that these will aid in efforts to design diets for IBD patients that will reduce inflammation and disease flares.

Save the Date: June 26 - 28, 2020 11th International Pediatric Intestinal Failure and Rehabilitation Symposium

Join us in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel for this premier three-day symposium.

This global meeting is designed to bring together pediatric gastroenterologists, surgeons, hepatologists, scientists, and allied health professionals who have dedicated themselves to the care of children with intestinal failure.

So much has transpired in the past two decades, and this meeting will celebrate the tremendous advances in medical and surgical care for the intestinal failure patient while addressing the challenges that face the field. The premeeting symposia as well as the main meeting will address the latest developments in etiology, pathophysiology, surgical and nonsurgical therapies, quality-of-life, and outcomes-based work in the field.



PIFRS 2020 integrates medical and surgical dialogue to help build off the dramatic interdisciplinary work that has characterized intestinal failure management. Global leaders in the field will set the stage for important next steps and networking.

For additional information, registration, abstract submissions, and updates, visit www.pedsintestine.com.

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Division News

Arvind Srinath, MD, MS, was awarded the 2019 Terri Li Teaching Award from the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN). Dr. Srinath is an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and he also is the director of the pediatric gastroenterology fellowship program and associate vice chair for education for fellowship training in the Division of Pediatric

Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

Dean Yimlamai, MD, PhD, was awarded a new grant from the Pittsburgh Liver Research Center (PLRC) to study the basic mechanisms of liver regeneration.

The Division was awarded a new fellowship training grant from the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. **Montserrat Corbera-Hincapie, MD**, is

the first Division fellow to receive the award. She is mentored in the program by Division Chief Andrew Feranchak, MD.

Eight Division faculty members were recognized in 2019 as one of the "Best Doctors" by *Pittsburgh Magazine*. Recognized faculty include: **Maria Clavell, MD; Andrew Feranchak, MD; David Keljo, MD, PhD; Sandra Kim, MD; Jeffrey Rudolph, MD; Robert Squires, MD;** and **Arvind Srinath, MD, MS**.

Recent Peer-Reviewed Publications

Squires JE, Rudnick DA, Hardison RM, Horslen S, NG VL, Alonso EM, Belle SH, **Squires RH**. Liver Transplant Listing in Pediatric Acute Liver Failure: Practices and Participant Characteristics. *Hepatology*. 2018; 68(6): 2338-2347.

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Raghu VK, Beaumont JL, Everly MJ, Venick RS, Lacaille F, Mazariegos GV. Pediatric Intestinal Transplantation: Analysis of the Intestinal Transplant Registry. *Pediatr Transplant*. 2019 Sep 18; e13580. doi: 10.1111/petr.13580. Epub ahead of print.

Raghu VK, Nowalk AJ, **Srinath AI**. Should Children With Constipation Undergo Blood Lead Level Screening? *Clin Pediatr (Phila)*. 2019 Jun; 58(6): 627-632. doi: 10.1177/0009922819832029. Epub 2019 Feb 21.

Michel HK, Noll RB, Siripong N, Kim SC, Lipstein EA. Shared Decision Making About Starting Anti-TNFs: A Pediatric Perspective. *J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr*. 2019 Mar; 68(3): 339-342.

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Pediatric Liver Transplantation: Inaugural Meeting Report From the Starzl Network for Excellence in Pediatric Transplantation. *Pediatr Transplant*. 2019 Sep; 23(6): e13528. Epub ahead of print.

Celik N, Kelly B, Soltys K, **Squires JE**, Vockley J, Shellmer DA, Strauss K, **McKiernan P**, Ganoza A, Sindhi R, Bond G, Mazariegos G, Khanna A. Technique and Outcome of Domino Liver Transplantation From Patients With Maple Syrup Urine Disease: Expanding the Donor Pool for Live Donor Liver Transplantation. *Clin Transplant*. 2019 Sep 25; e13721. doi: 10.1111/ctr.13721. Epub ahead of print.

Strauss KA, Ahlfors CE, Soltys K, Mazariegos GV, Young M, Bowser LE, Fox MD, **Squires JE**, **McKiernan P**, Brigatti KW, Puffenberger EG, Carson VJ, Vreman HJ. Crigler-Najjar Syndrome Type 1: Pathophysiology, Natural History, and Therapeutic Frontier. *Hepatology*. 2019 Sep 25; doi: 10.1002/hep.30959. Epub ahead of print.

“That’s Pediatrics” Research Podcast Series

UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh medical podcast series for physicians, scientists, and other health care professionals features compelling interviews with the hospital’s leading researchers and clinicians discussing innovative basic, translational, and clinical research. New episodes are released every two weeks.



“Going back to the polio vaccine, Pittsburgh has always been a hub of very innovative research, and in recent years has really become a nexus for some groundbreaking research in pediatric medicine,” says

John Williams, MD, chief of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at UPMC Children’s and one of the podcast hosts. “There is a spirit of collaboration here in Pittsburgh that makes it somewhat unique nationally, and we really want to explore the research that is happening here and how we have a real opportunity to change the way pediatric medicine is practiced around the world.”

In addition to Dr. Williams, “That’s Pediatrics” hosts are:

Carolyn Coyne, PhD, director of the Center for Microbial Pathogenesis, UPMC Children’s Hospital

Stephanie Dewar, MD, director of Pediatric Residency Training Program, UPMC Children’s Hospital

Brian Martin, DMD, vice president, Medical Affairs, UPMC Children’s Hospital

Current episodes of “That’s Pediatrics” from **gastroenterology faculty** and related topics include:

- *A Deep Dive Into Pediatric Cystic Fibrosis* with **Daniel Weiner, MD, and Andrew Feranchak, MD**
- *The Overlooked Liver* with **Dean Yimlamai, MD, PhD**
- *A History of Pediatric Liver Transplantation* with **George Mazariegos, MD**
- *The First Handshake* with **Tim Hand, PhD**

Subscribe to “That’s Pediatrics” in iTunes or Google Play Music to have new episodes automatically download to your phone for free when they become available. To see the current list of archived podcasts, visit CHP.edu/health-care-professionals/podcast.



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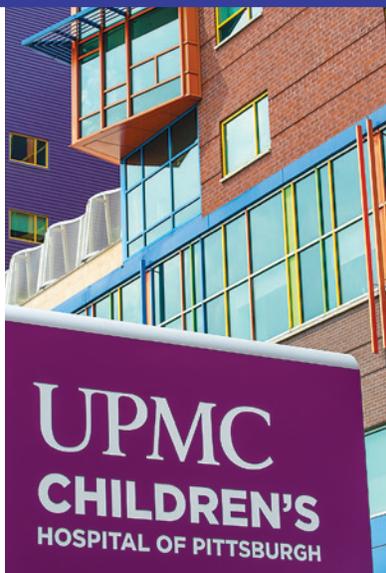
For the latest news, events, videos, and free CME courses presented by UPMC clinicians and researchers, visit UPMCPhysicianResources.com.

Video Rounds

Video Rounds is a series of short, informative, and educational videos created for physicians and covering a variety of medical and surgical disciplines. Current topics in gastroenterology include:

- **Pediatric Metabolic Liver Disease** with Patrick McKiernan, MD, Director, Pediatric Hepatology Program
- **Nutritional Therapy for Pediatric IBD Patients** with Sandra C. Kim, MD, Co-director, Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center
- **Treatment of Acute Liver Failure** with Robert Squires, MD, Medical Director, Pediatric Liver Transplantation
- **Treating Pediatric Inflammatory Bowel Disease** with David Keljo, MD, PhD, Co-director, Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center

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About UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

Regionally, nationally, and globally, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh is a leader in the treatment of childhood conditions and diseases, a pioneer in the development of new and improved therapies, and a top educator of the next generation of pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists. With generous community support, UPMC Children's Hospital has fulfilled this mission since its founding in 1890. UPMC Children's is recognized consistently for its clinical, research, educational, and advocacy-related accomplishments, including ranking 15th among children's hospitals and schools of medicine in funding for pediatric research provided by the National Institutes of Health (FY2018) and ranking on *U.S. News & World Report's* Honor Roll of America's Best Children's Hospitals (2019–20).