GENERAL VASCULAR SURGERY

Division experiences major growth

New chief, four others join attending faculty

The vascular surgery division of The Ohio State University Department of Surgery underwent a substantial expansion in May, when a new chief and four other vascular surgeons joined the department’s full-time attending faculty.

Dr. Patrick S. Vaccaro, a former resident and attending faculty member at Ohio State, was appointed professor of clinical surgery and chief of the Division of General Vascular Surgery.

Accompanying Vaccaro were:
- Dr. B. Mohan Das, who was appointed assistant professor of clinical surgery.
- Dr. Bhagwan Satiani, who was appointed professor of clinical surgery.
- Dr. Jean E. Starr, who was appointed assistant professor of clinical surgery.
- Dr. Blair D. Vermilion, who was appointed associate professor of clinical surgery.

“These are very skilled surgeons who will strengthen Ohio State’s teaching and research reputation and enhance the clinical programs and services offered throughout the Medical Center, particularly the Ross Heart Hospital,” says Dr. E. Christopher Ellison, the Robert M. Zollinger professor and chairman of surgery and associate vice president for medical affairs in the College of Medicine and Public Health.

The Ross Heart Hospital, which is slated to open in September, will make available to vascular surgeons one of the most advanced angiography suites in the United States, according to Dr. Charles A. Bush, professor of cardiology and medical director of the heart hospital.

“There is considerable anticipation as we get closer to the opening and to moving a great medical team into the premier facility,” Bush says. “The addition of five excellent vascular surgeons to our medical staff only makes it more exciting.”

Ellison says the expansion of the Division of General Vascular Surgery will broaden training opportunities for residents and medical students, accelerate research, and improve clinical treatments and outcomes for patients with complex vascular problems.

“Vascular surgery as a specialty has evolved over the past several years, and has become a much more complex field of practice,” Ellison says. “Innovations in treatment and years of cumulative research data have opened new doors to better treatment options, and these advancements are going to continue. Ohio State has always had a very good program, and with the influx...”

(See Growth on page 3)
Dr. E. Antonio “Nino” Chiocca, a nationally recognized brain tumor specialist and previously an associate professor of neurosurgery at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, has been appointed professor and chairman of a new Department of Neurological Surgery at The Ohio State University Medical Center.

Also appointed holder of the Dardinger Family Endowed Chair in Oncological Neurosurgery, Chiocca is considered a leading investigator in the use of gene therapies for brain tumors and other central nervous system disorders.

“We are fortunate to bring a great physician-scientist and energetic young leader like Nino Chiocca to the OSU Medical Center,” says Dr. Fred Sanfilippo, senior vice president for health sciences and dean of the College of Medicine and Public Health. “He will strengthen our clinical, research, and educational missions in the growing subspecialty of neurological surgery, as well as our emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration.

“The benefits of establishing this new department will positively influence disciplines ranging from anesthesiology to rehabilitation, and the resulting multidisciplinary research will increase partnership opportunities with industry to convert research discoveries into new therapeutics and technologies.”

Chiocca has brought to Ohio State grants and research faculty, additions that are expected to attract further external research support to the medical center. Recruitment of additional specialists in other elements of the discipline, including trauma, movement disorders, spine surgery, and vascular disorders, is anticipated.

“Dr. Chiocca is one of the few people today capable of caring for patients, performing high-quality translational research, and holding an administrative position,” says Dr. E. Christopher Ellison, the Robert M. Zollinger professor and chairman of surgery and associate vice president for health sciences and vice dean of clinical affairs in the College of Medicine and Public Health. “He is going to add so much to the institution, in a multidisciplinary sense, that Ohio State’s expertise and reputation in this area of surgery promises to expand dramatically.”

Increased staffing of the department and high-caliber research will result in an enhanced educational environment for medical students, more clinical training opportunities for students and residents, and additional patients seeking treatment at University Medical Center for a wider range of disorders and injuries, Ellison says.

The medical center’s ability to dedicate resources to the new department and recruit Chiocca is attributed largely to funding made available through the Esther Dardinger Fund, a $14.1 million award to The Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute to further cancer research. The fund established the Dardinger Family Endowed Chair in Oncological Neurosurgery, held by Chiocca, and the Esther Dardinger Endowed Chair in Neuro-Oncology, held by Dr. Herbert B. Newton, associate professor of neurology.

The Dardinger Fund also made possible the establishment of the Esther Dardinger Neuro-Oncology Center, which is co-directed by Chiocca and Newton and was created to provide expanded research and treatments for patients with neuro-oncologic disease.

Patients will benefit immensely from the talent and skill Chiocca brings to Ohio State, says Dr. David Schuller, executive director of The James.

“Dr. Chiocca will provide needed support for a growing specialty, and will (See Chiocca on page 3)
**Growth**

*From page 1*

of new faculty with special interests and talents, we can make it one of the best nationally."

The five new faculty members will work alongside Dr. William L. Smead, associate professor of surgery, who is nationally known for his work in vascular surgery and holds the Luther M. Keith professorship at Ohio State.

**New Faculty Members**

**Vaccaro** was a member of Ohio State’s attending faculty from 1981 to 1988. He received his medical degree at the University of Cincinnati, and in 1980 completed his general surgery residency at Ohio State. He has been director of surgical education at Grant Medical Center since 1990, and is a past president of the Columbus Vascular Society, the Columbus Surgical Society, and the Columbus Medical Forum.

**Das** completed a general surgery residency and a vascular fellowship at Albert Einstein Medical Center, in Philadelphia, and a vascular fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic. A former chairman of the department of surgery at Grant Medical Center, he has practiced in Central Ohio since 1984.

**Satiani** completed his residency and a trauma fellowship at Emory University School of Medicine, in Atlanta. He completed a vascular surgery fellowship at Ohio State in 1978. A past president of the Columbus Vascular Society and a former associate editor of Vascular Surgery, he has practiced in Central Ohio for 26 years.

**Starr** is a 1989 graduate of Ohio State’s College of Medicine. She completed her general surgery residency and a vascular surgery fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic. An endovascular surgery specialist, she has practiced in Central Ohio since 1995.

**Vermilion** is a 1972 graduate of Ohio State’s College of Medicine. After serving as a U.S. Army flight surgeon, he completed his surgical residency at Indiana University, in Indianapolis, and a vascular surgery fellowship at St. Anthony Hospital, in Columbus. He is a past president of the Columbus Vascular Society, and has practiced in Central Ohio since 1979.

**Chiocca**

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help The James take a leadership role in the research and treatment of a very serious form of cancer,” he says.

Chiocca’s research in biologic therapies and gene delivery methods to treat brain tumors and his highly specialized surgery skills will be a meaningful addition to the cancer research program, says Dr. Michael Caligiuri, director of The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center.

“The success of bringing a world-class brain tumor surgeon with an equally impressive research team will truly catapult Ohio State’s cancer program to new heights in innovative therapies,” he says.

The new Department of Neurological Surgery had been a division within the Department of Surgery since 1951. The division’s elevation to departmental status reflects the increasingly specialized nature of the field and a natural evolution, Ellison says. Half of the medical colleges in the United States maintain neurological surgery programs in separate academic departments.

Chiocca had been, since 1995, a member of the Harvard faculty and a practicing surgeon at Massachusetts General, where he served his residency in neurological surgery. He holds a medical degree from the University of Texas Medical School at Houston and a doctorate from the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Texas Health Science Center, also in Houston.

His research interests range from engineering more efficient “tumor-killing” genes to defining more selective viruses that could be used to deliver therapeutics directly to tumors. He is principal investigator on more than a dozen research projects examining a variety of brain tumor therapies, many of them funded by the National Institutes of Health. He has authored or co-authored more than 100 articles and book chapters, and holds three patents, with four others pending.
Surgeons participating in an FDA-approved, phase 1 clinical trial recently reported that a patient’s own skeletal muscle cells can be safely injected into a failing heart to stimulate growth of healthy cells.

The experimental procedure, called autologous myoblast transplantation, is a potential treatment for patients with irreversible heart damage.

Dr. Robert E. Michler, an Ohio State researcher participating in the clinical trial, says it would be difficult for him to overstate the importance of the study’s positive outcome.

“The major cause of death and decline in human health is due to heart muscle degeneration,” says Michler, the John G. and Jeanne B. McCoy professor of surgery and chief of cardiothoracic surgery and thoracic transplantation. “If we can replace badly scarred or dead heart tissue with new, healthy muscle, it means many, many people may live longer and have a much better quality of life. Patients who experience devastating heart dysfunctions will have options other than transplantation, drugs, and ongoing surgeries.”

The study’s presenting author, Dr. Nabil Dib, chief of cardiovascular research at the Arizona Heart Institute, in Phoenix, reported the clinical trial findings at the annual scientific session of the American College of Cardiology, which was held March 7–10, in New Orleans.

The clinical trial studied 29 patients with a mean age of 54 whose hearts were irreparably scarred from previous heart attacks. The majority of patients underwent elective coronary artery bypass surgery, and some received left ventricular assist device (LVAD) implantation. All underwent myoblast transplantation.

In the experimental procedure, a small piece of tissue is removed from the patient’s thigh muscle several weeks before surgery. The tissue is sent to a laboratory in Massachusetts, where myoblasts, immature cells that become muscle cells, are cultured in large quantities. During the surgical procedure, when the chest is open, the surgeon injects hundreds of millions of the patient’s myoblasts into the scarred heart tissue. “Injecting cells into the heart takes only two to three minutes and is a relatively low-risk procedure,” Michler says.

Researchers hope that by transplanting healthy cells directly into the heart muscle, otherwise permanent damage can at least be partially reversed. If successful, the approach could eventually benefit the more than 300,000 Americans who suffer from heart failure each year.

One of the patients in the study is Gale Dixon, 61, of Mechanicsburg, Ohio. During a triple bypass at The Ohio State University Medical Center last September, he underwent myoblast transplantation.

“It’s improved the quality of my life, I believe,” he says. Dixon, who suffered his first heart attack in 1990, says that before the procedure, he grew short of breath even during a brief conversation. “Now I can walk in the countryside again.”

Ohio State continues to enroll patients in the trial.

Researchers from the University of Michigan and the Arizona Heart Institute also are participating in the study.

GenVec, the company that develops the transplantable cells, is providing financial support for the trial.
RECOGNITIONS

Graduates, teachers honored

Outstanding teachers and the graduates of the Department of Surgery’s training programs for 2004 were honored June 18 at the department’s annual awards banquet.

Recipients of teaching awards were:
- Dr. Hosam F. El Sayed, a chief resident in the Division of General Surgery, who was honored by the department for outstanding teaching of medical students. El Sayed was also named Resident of the Year by department faculty.
- Dr. Henry J. Kaufman, a fellow in the Division of Surgical Oncology, who was recognized by department residents for outstanding teaching by a fellow.
- Dr. W. Scott Melvin, associate professor of surgery, chief of the Division of General Surgery, and director of the Center for Minimally Invasive Surgery, and Dr. Richard E. Schlanger, clinical assistant professor of surgery in the Division of General Surgery and director of wound healing at University Hospitals East, who were both honored by department residents for outstanding teaching by a faculty member.
- Dr. Thomas E. Williams Jr., clinical assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, who was recognized by the medical students for outstanding teaching by a faculty member.
- Dr. David P. Bahner, assistant professor of emergency medicine, who received the John L. Robinson Award, for outstanding teaching by a faculty member outside the Department of Surgery. The award is bestowed by the chief residents in general surgery.

Residents receiving awards for research they presented at the department’s Ninth Annual Resident Research Conference, held May 28, were:
- Dr. Ergun Kocak, who won the first-place award.
- Dr. Michael R. Go, who received the second-place award.
- Dr. Sarah E. McMillan, who won the third-place award.

Named Intern of the Year by department faculty was Dr. Patricia H. Sandholm.

Senior medical students recognized by department faculty for exceptional performance and dedication were:
- Natalie A. Beckman, who received the Zollinger Award in Surgery.
- Brian J. Blake, who received the Carey Award in Surgery.
- Alfred Fleming, who received the Ferguson Award in Surgery.
- Laura M. White, who received the Jonasson Award in Surgery.

Department residents honored at other ceremonies were:
- Dr. Diego R. Camacho, a chief resident in the Division of General Surgery, who received an award from the College of Medicine and Public Health for outstanding teaching of medical students.
- Dr. Sarah M. Cowgill, a resident in the Division of General Surgery, who was named Resident of the Year by the Division of Pediatric Surgery at Columbus Children’s Hospital.

Graduates

Of the 17 residents and fellows who completed their training programs in June, eight went on to further training, five to community practice, and two to academic posts, both at Ohio State.

Two graduates had not yet decided on new positions when this newsletter went to press.

The graduates, listed with their new positions, were:
- Dr. Doreen M. Agnese, assistant professor of surgery, The Ohio State University Department of Surgery.
- Dr. Diego R. Camacho, minimally invasive surgery fellowship, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston.
- Dr. Cynthia A. Corpron, undecided.
- Dr. Hosam F. El Sayed, vascular surgery fellowship, Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, Va.
- Dr. David J. Finlay, endovascular surgery fellowship, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.
- Dr. Michael R. Gigax, private urology practice, Dover, Ohio.
- Dr. Rafael D. Gottenger, private plastic surgery practice.
- Dr. Weidun Alan Guo, continuation of general surgery residency, Huron Hospital, Cleveland.
- Dr. David A. Jones, private general surgery practice, Denver.
- Dr. Daniel L. Kapp, cosmetic surgery fellowship, Boston University Medical Center.
- Dr. Ali R. Khan, undecided.
- Dr. Dean J. Mikami, assistant professor of surgery, The Ohio State University Department of Surgery.
- Dr. Matthew E. Newlin, general and laparoscopic surgery practice, Altoona, Pa.
- Dr. Gregory D. Pearson, craniofacial surgery fellowship, Riley Hospital for Children, Indianapolis.
- Dr. David J. Robertson, private general surgery practice, Lancaster, Ohio.
- Dr. M. Chad Wallis, pediatric urology fellowship, Toronto, Canada.
- Dr. Jennifer L. Young, breast surgery fellowship, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

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PRESENTATIONS


Fries RB. The role of topical oxygen in a swine dermal wound-healing model. Ohio Valley Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons, Annual Resident Paper Competition, Columbus, Ohio, April 24, 2004.


Go MR. Variability of vascular endothelial growth factor secretion in cancer patients in response to interferon-alpha and interleukin-12 immunotherapy. Ohio Valley Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons, Annual Resident Paper Competition, Columbus, Ohio, April 24, 2004.

Groner JI. Demographic and environmental factors predict pediatric pedestrian injuries in urban setting. Columbus Pediatric and Transportation Commission, Columbus, Ohio, March 11, 2004.


Groner JI. Pediatric firearm injuries. Central Ohio Pediatric Society, Columbus, Ohio, Jan. 21, 2004.


McConnell PI. Autologous skeletal myoblast survival correlates with changes in left ventricular remodeling in dilate ischemic heart failure. Columbus Surgical Society, 16th Annual Presidential Symposium, Columbus, Ohio, Feb. 7, 2004.


RECOGNITIONS

Three members of the Department of Surgery house staff received awards for papers they presented Feb. 7 at the 14th Annual Presidential Symposium of the Columbus Surgical Society:

• Dr. Richard B. Fries, a resident in the Division of General Surgery, who received the first-place award for his paper, “The Role of Topical Oxygen in a Swine Dermal Wound-Healing Model.”

• Dr. Jason E. Denny, a fellow in the Division of Transplantation, who received the second-place award for his paper, “Improved Clinical Outcomes in Renal Transplant Recipients using Steroid-Free Acute Rejection Prophylaxis.”

• Dr. Michael R. Go, a resident in the Division of General Surgery, who received the third-place award for his paper, “Variability of Vascular Endothel-
IN BRIEF

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- Dr. Robert R. Bahnson, professor of surgery and chief of the Division of Urology.
- Dr. Gerard S. Kakos, clinical associate professor of surgery in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery.
- Dr. Bradley J. Needleman, assistant professor of surgery in the Division of General Surgery.
- Dr. Robert L. Ruberg, professor of surgery in the Division of Plastic Surgery.
- Dr. William B. Farrar, professor of surgery and chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology, and Dr. Stephen P. Povoski, associate professor of surgery in the Division of Surgical Oncology, were quoted Feb. 17 and 18 in the Columbus Dispatch, and were interviewed on WSYX-TV/6, WTTE-TV/28, WBNS-TV/10, WOSU Radio, and WTVN Radio, in stories about a study finding an association between antibiotic use and an increased risk of breast cancer.

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Bahnson and Dr. Michael C. Gong, assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Urology, were mentioned March 30, in the Columbus Dispatch, in a story on laparoscopic prostate surgery.

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INSIDE:

1 Division experiences major growth

2 Chiocca chairs new department

4 Experimental procedure repairs heart tissue safely, study shows

5 Graduates, teachers honored

Mark Your Calendar

Advances in the Multidisciplinary Management of Pancreatic Disease

September 10–11, 2004
The Ohio State University
Longaberger Alumni House
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Columbus, Ohio

For information, call (614) 293-3576