Lung Transplant: A New Chapter Begins

The Division of Cardiac Surgery approaches completing the final preparations needed to relaunch the lung transplant program. The lung transplant program will function out of The Ross Heart Hospital at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Clinical protocols have been updated and revised and all aspects of the care process have been addressed – from initial candidate experience in the Ambulatory Care Clinic to post-transplant family support and education. The multi-disciplinary care team has been assembled and they are anxiously awaiting the first transplant.

The multi-disciplinary approach is a collaborative effort of: surgeons, pulmonary medicine, anesthesia critical care, cardiac anesthesia, infectious diseases, cardiology, palliative care, nephrology, nutrition, respiratory care, inpatient and outpatient nursing, operating room nurses and technologists, perfusion medicine, tissue typing, physical therapy, pastoral services, endocrinology, hospital administration, pharmacy, social work, psychology, transplant coordinators & Lifeline of Ohio.

This small village has been assembled to provide state of the art care to patients and their families who have their life-saving and life-enhancing care at The Ross. To help coordinate these many service providers and to help facilitate an optimum outcome, a dedicated inpatient transplant nurse practitioner has been hired, Jody Krisley, CNP. Ms. Krisley will support Thoracic Transplantation Surgery (both heart and lung). She is quickly becoming acclimated to the program and becoming one of many contributors to our success.

From The Director

2012 was an exciting and important year for the Division of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery. Not only did the faculty and staff of the division provide outstanding patient care outcomes and satisfaction, but also diversified its programs and strengthened our commitment to the educational mission.

Dr. Bryan Whitson joined the division as a graduate of the University of Minnesota with a focus and interest in heart and lung transplantation and adult cardiac surgery. With his arrival the lung transplant program will be reinitiated in 2013. In addition to developing this advanced therapeutic initiative, the Division developed a Level 1 Acute Aortic and Vascular Surgical Referral Program in concert with the Heart and Vascular Institute. The program also continued to enroll patients in the Transpercutaneous Aortic Valve Replacement Program (TAVR) sponsored by Medtronic and Edwards as clinical trials enrolling dozens of patients with critical aortic stenosis.

The academic programs were strengthened with the recruitment of Dr. Jianjie Ma, PhD, as the Karl P. Klassen Chair in Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery. Dr. Ma, an accomplished NIH funded researcher and innovative scientist, also recruited his research faculty to join the Department of Surgery. In addition to this outstanding recruitment Dr. Toshiharu Shinoka joined the division as a congenital cardiothoracic surgeon who will work at Nationwide Children’s Hospital with particular focus and interest in tissue engineering vascular grafts, regenerative medicine and cerebral protection during heart surgery. Dr. Shinoka was the first to be awarded the Certificate of Conceded Eminence by the Medical Board of the State of Ohio.

On the educational front, the Cardiothoracic Surgery Residency Program had a comprehensive ACGME Review and also matched 2 categorical residents through the National Resident Matching Program who will begin in July 2013. The faculty and staff also supported the 3rd year of the Summer Scholars Early Cardiothoracic Surgery Experience for medical students between their first and second year of medical school. These medical students were exposed to cardiac, thoracic and congenital heart surgery at the Ross Heart Hospital and Nationwide Children’s Hospital during the summer of 2012. The Division also assisted in the development and initiation of a Cardiothoracic Surgery Interest Group with close to 40 medical students considering a career in cardiothoracic surgery. Each of these activities including the clinical, educational and research activities suggest that there is a bright future for the Divisions of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery.

Robert S. D. Higgins
We continue to be focused on creating an environment of scholarly inquiry in addition to research programs in ischemia reperfusion and solid organ transplant preservation models. The faculty has been clinically busy but a number of important contributions to the literature have been made by faculty members with publications in high-impact journals such as Circulation, Current Heart Failure Reports, Journal of Heart and Lung Transplantation, Journal of Surgical Research, The Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery and The Annals of Thoracic Surgery. In 2012 divisional faculty members first authored or were senior authors in 25 publications and contributed to 27 other publications during the academic year. The Division has also been involved in the initiation of active research programs in ischemia reperfusion and solid organ transplant preservation models. We continue to be focused on creating an environment of scholarly inquiry in addition to being successful clinicians, teachers and surgeons.

CT Surgery Program Welcomes Two New Fellows

In July the Divisions of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery welcomed two outstanding trainees into our Cardiothoracic Surgery Training Program. In the past 7 months these fellows have engaged immensely in their surgical skills and medical acuity, significantly contributing to our charge in developing the best and the brightest in the field.

Kathryn L. O’Keefe, MD
- Medical School - University of Toledo College of Medicine- Toledo, OH; 2007
- Specialty Training - Grand Rapids Medical Educational Partners/MSU- Grand Rapids, MI; 2012

Nikhil P. Jaik, MBBS
- Medical School - Sri Ramachandra Medical College & Research Inst.- Tamilnado, India; 2003
- Specialty Training - General Surgery Residency, St. Luke’s Hospital- Bethlehem, PA; 2010

Welcome to the OSU Cardiothoracic Surgery family Katie & Nikhil!

Noteworthy News

- Dr. Mark Galantowicz, Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Nationwide Children’s Hospital and Co-Director of the hospital’s Heart Center, was awarded “Central Ohio’s Practitioner of the Year” by Columbus C.E.O. Magazine. Congrats Dr. Galantowicz!

Academic Achievements

- Fellow Dr. Katie O’Keefe and faculty member Dr. Bryan Whitson have been invited to present at this year’s AATS Annual Conference about their research in lung transplant outcomes and pulmonary hypertension.
- Dr. Nikhil Jaik presented an abstract presentation on Donor-Related Characteristics in Patients with Mechanical Circulatory Support Undergoing Heart Transplantation: Factors That Really Influence Survival” as well as a poster presentation entitled “Silent aspiration following esophagectomy: Assessment and management through pathway driven patient care can reduce costs” at the Society of Thoracic Surgeons 49th Annual meeting in Los Angeles, California January 26-30th, 2013. In addition, while in Los Angeles Dr. Jaik was selected to participate in the Thoracic Resident Symposium hosted by Duke University Medical Center.
- CT Surgery Fellowship Program Coordinator Corey Ferguson, with guidance of Dr. Thomas Williams, presented “The Summer Scholars Program in Cardiothoracic Surgery 2012” via poster presentation at The Ohio State University College of Medicine Center for Education and Scholarship 4th annual “Celebration of Educational Scholarship” Conference.
- Faculty member Dr. Juan Crestanello was selected to participate in the AATS Leadership Program being held spring 2013.
- Faculty member Dr. Bryan Whitson received the Benson Wilcox Award at the 2013 Society of Thoracic Surgeons Annual Meeting for his abstract entitled “Utilization of the Donor Lung After Asphyxiation or Drowning: Effect on Survival and Rejection in Lung Transplant Recipients”. The TSDA Benson R. Wilcox Award was established in 2010 to acknowledge the best scientific abstract submitted by a cardiothoracic surgery resident to The Society of Thoracic Surgeons Annual Meeting.
- Program graduate and Division of Cardiac Surgery faculty member Dr. Michael Firstenberg has begun a new chapter in his career continuing his practice with Summa Health System in northeast Ohio. We thank Dr. Firstenberg for his years of service and contributions at Ohio State University as both a trainee and faculty member. Congratulations, Dr. Firstenberg. We wish you the best!