



BULLETIN

November 1, 2007

Annual Medical Student Research Forum

Some 20 medical students presented the fruits of their summer research projects at the fourth Annual Medical Student Research Forum, October 23.

A series of ten-minute oral presentations was followed by a poster session where the first and second year students fielded questions from faculty, fellow students and guests.

Topics ranged from diseases of particular concern to Qatar's population, such as asthma and diabetes, to protein crystallization.

Most of the placements were funded by eight-week summer research fellowships awarded by competition. The majority of the students were assigned to leading research teams in the labs of Cornell University and Weill Cornell Medical College in the U.S.

Among the projects were collaborative investigations between Weill Cornell Medical College in New York and in Qatar, and Hamad Medical Corporation, the state health care provider in Qatar.

For the first time, prizes were awarded to the top presenters. Anas Saleh, who worked in the lab of Dr. Robin Davisson in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, won second prize for his presentation on the role of NADPH oxidase in the brain in regulating blood pressure, with all that this implies for understanding cardiovascular disease.

Describing his experience as "very rewarding and gratifying," Saleh said the molecular biology techniques he learned, using mouse models, were applicable in medical research. "It was a building block in the research field. The point of this research is that it helps us understand the science on a low level and then extrapolate to humans."

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WCMC-Q's Vice Dean for Research, Dr. Javaid Sheikh, praised the students for their achievements. "The standard is first-rate. There is a lot of talent here."

<http://qatar-med.cornell.edu>

Reaching a regional audience

Teaming up with colleagues from Qatar Foundation and our sister campuses in Education City, WCMC-Q faculty and staff are taking the message about WCMC-Q to a regional audience.

First stop on the fall '07 tour was Egypt, where professor of surgery, Dr. Bakr Nour joined admissions and public affairs staff in the AMIDEast college fairs in Alexandria and Cairo, October 4 and 5.

The events attracted up to 900 visitors and provided a chance for the Alexandria-born transplant surgeon to bring home the attraction of studying at WCMC-Q. There were also visits to some of Egypt's most prestigious schools.

Later in the month (October 28), crowds flocked to Doha's Ritz-Carlton Hotel for the *Discover Education City* fair. Many medical and pre-medical faculty members, as well as students, volunteered to meet the potential students and their families, and spread the word about the opportunities offered by WCMC-Q.

The exhibition then hit the road, with visits planned for Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Abu Dhabi and Dubai from late October thru December.

<http://www.qf.org.qa>

On-line application forms go live

A new e-application system using state-of-the-art web-based technology is making life a whole lot easier for prospective students as they go through the process of applying to WCMC-Q.

Starting in October, applicants to both Pre-medical and Medical Programs access a web-based portal to fill out their application; another portal provides an electronic letter of reference facility, further streamlining the process of gathering supporting documentation. Applicants then track the status of their application and relevant documents on-line as they go through the process.

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Seamless integration of the applicant portal with additional portals used by interviewers and administrators allows faculty and staff to view and manage the applicant pool with ease.

"There is a buzz of excitement around this system since we already piloted it among our students prior to the launch. It provides a comprehensive and integrated solution to the prospective students' admission experience," said Dr. Maya Hammoud, Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs.

And the students' verdict? A great advance on the old paper-based system. "It is extremely well organized! The best on-line application I've ever filled," said Karl Migally, Class of 2011.

<https://premedapplication.qatar-med.cornell.edu> (pre-medical applicants)

<https://medapplication.qatar-med.cornell.edu> (medical applicants)

Faculty News

Dr. Powers Peterson, associate professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, attended the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Clinical Pathology in New Orleans, LA, October 17-20. A member of the organizing committee, Dr. Peterson chaired the Clinical Pathology Symposium; gave an invited presentation on heparin-induced thrombocytopenia and thrombosis; led two roundtable discussion groups; and judged the National Resident Research competition.

Dr. Peterson has been appointed a member of the Area Committee for Hematology of the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI), a global association of more than 2,000 organizations and institutions concerned with improving the quality of clinical laboratory practices, medical testing and healthcare services through the development and dissemination of consensus standards and guidelines.

Dr. Mohamud Verjee, assistant professor family medicine, has been chosen to receive the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) Award of Excellence.

The CFPC Award was given at the recommendation of the Alberta College of Family Physicians, in recognition of Dr. Verjee's "dedication, commitment and hard work."

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Before joining WCMC-Q, Dr. Verjee was clinical associate professor of family medicine at the University of Calgary and a chief examiner for the Medical Council of Canada Licentiate examination.

Dr. Michael Pungente: outreach with Qatar University. Cooperation with Qatar University (QU) has been growing for some time, particularly between WCMC-Q pre-medical faculty and colleagues in a number of QU departments. Now, assistant professor of chemistry, Dr. Michael Pungente is assisting QU's newly opened Pharmacy Program as coordinator of the Pharmacy 200/201 Introductory Medicinal Chemistry courses.

Last year, Dr. Pungente was part of a focus group that worked on drafting the curriculum for the Pharmacy Program.

In addition, Dr. Roger Hinrichs, WCMC-Q professor of physics, is teaching in the pre-pharmacy phase of the program.

<http://www.qu.edu.qa/qu/colleges/pharmacy/>

Autumn Watts, the coordinator of WCMC-Q's Writing Center, has been invited to join the board of a proposed regional branch of the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA).

This was one outcome of the first Middle East-North Africa Writing Centers Symposium, held in Doha, October 26-27. Sponsored by Qatar Writing Centers Network*, the meeting gathered representatives of academic institutions from across the Middle East region - from Lebanon to Iran to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

With the focus on developing students' communication skills, topics on the table included setting up a writing center, working with students as peer tutors and conducting research.

The new regional association is now in formation. Watts said: "Writing centers are gaining increasing attention for their innovative possibilities within education, and the new Middle East and North Africa network will facilitate dialogue and collaboration among universities in this region. The Symposium is just the beginning."

WCMC-Q was also represented by faculty members in the First Year Writing Seminars: Peter Fortunato, senior lecturer, and Dr. Rodney Sharkey, assistant professor.

In addition to WCMC-Q, the network includes writing center directors from Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Georgetown University School

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of Foreign Service in Qatar, Texas A&M University at Qatar, Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar and the College of the North Atlantic-Qatar.

<http://www.writingcenters.org/>

Forthcoming events

Dean of WCMC-Q, Dr. Daniel R. Alonso, senior faculty and administrators of WCMC-Q join colleagues from Weill Cornell Medical College in New York at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Medical Colleges in Washington, D.C., November 2-7.

Professor of pediatrics and of genetics, Dr. Ahmad Teebi, is the keynote speaker at the First Qatar International Newborn Screening Conference organized by Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), Doha, November 2-5. Dr. Teebi will speak on 'Genetic Disorders in the Arab World.' WCMC-Q is a sponsor of the meeting.

Prior to the conference, Dr. Teebi will also take part in teaching a two-day course on metabolic disorders in newborns at HMC, along with experts from Heidelberg University, Germany; The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada; and the Institute of Child Health in London, UK.

Dr. Frank DiSalvo, Cornell University's John A. Newman Professor of Physical Science and Head of the Cornell Center for a Sustainable Future is to give a presentation on the activities of the center in Education City, November 7. As part of his talk, Dr. DiSalvo will explore opportunities for strategic collaborations with institutions in Education City and government, as well as industries in Qatar.

Dr. Renee Richer, lecturer in biology, will speak on 'Biodiversity Conservation in Qatar in Light of Increasing Industrialization' - part of a panel discussion titled 'Environmental Degradation and Conservation: Challenges and Prospects' at the Center for International and Regional Studies, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, Education City, Doha - November 12.

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