

Introduction to Research Day

Julia L. Cook, PhD, FAHA

*Director, Institute of Translational Research, Molecular Genetics
Ochsner Clinic Foundation, New Orleans, LA
Section Editor, The Ochsner Journal*

This daylong affair, presented by Ochsner's Academic Division and The University of Queensland, Ochsner Clinical School, showcased the diversity of health sciences-related research at Ochsner and featured presentations by physicians, scientists, nurses, residents and fellows, and medical students from throughout the Ochsner system and the greater New Orleans area. This event continues to elevate awareness and appreciation of our research endeavors across departments, services, and specialties; to foster the exchange of information and the cross-fertilization of ideas; and to encourage the development of multidisciplinary efforts.

Initial abstract submissions were evaluated for scientific merit through a competitive jury process; 66 presentations were deemed worthy of acceptance. Twenty-two were categorized as **Translational**, 21 were **Clinical** in nature, 14 were **Health Service** related, and 9 were **Case Reports**. Poster coauthors included investigators from Duke University, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Tulane University School of Medicine, University of Maryland School of Medicine, University of Louisville, Vanderbilt University, Cleveland Clinic, Northwestern University, University of Alabama, and international pharmaceutical companies, among others. This broad collaborative representation is testimony to the pioneering quality of our research and the collegiality of our investigators.

Research Day began at noon with an innovative keynote address entitled "Can We Make an Effective New TB Vaccine?" by invited speaker Alistair Ramsay, PhD, Chair, Department of Microbiology, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center. The selected research posters were available for viewing beginning in the early afternoon as well as during the evening poster reception. Translational poster topics included novel transplant approaches; new drug combinations to battle infectious diseases; new preventions for myocardial fibrosis, heart failure, and hypertension; and progress in prognostics and biomarker development for lymphoma, leukemia, and solid tumors. Additional translational studies investigated the pathogenesis of autoimmune diseases, potential treatments for chronic nerve injury,

and developments to modify vascular diseases in diabetic patients. Clinical topics included new developments and comparative evaluations of intubation tools, echocardiography methods, surgical techniques, and xenograft technologies. Many clinical studies addressed coronary heart disease and, in particular, its relationship to obesity, psychosocial stress, and metabolic syndrome. Health Services posters included topics addressing medical adherence, drug cost containment, palliative care, and facilitation of emotional well-being in healthcare workers. The underlying inspiration for each of these studies was improved patient healthcare through science, technology, and research, with clinically established needs as the driving force.

Congratulations are in order for three residents who received Alumni Association Resident Research Awards. First place was awarded for the poster entitled "Which Echocardiographic Indexing Method for Left Ventricular Hypertrophy Best Predicts Mortality Risk in Women?" (Abstract 26) by Dharmendrakumar Patel. Second place was awarded to Nicolas Zea for his presentation entitled "Epidural Use During Pancreaticoduodenectomy" (Abstract 40), and third place went to Todd Rosenthal for his presentation "Collateral Benefits of Glycemic Control on Lipids" (Abstract 50).

Shelley Thibau, PhD(c), RNC, received the Nursing Research Award from the System Nursing Professional Development and Research Program for her poster entitled "Exploring the Use of Mothers' Own Milk as Oral Care for Mechanically Ventilated Very Low Birth Weight Preterm Infants" (Abstract 47), a study currently in its second phase.

The difficulty in initiating quality, direct communication among researchers—whether they are working in the same subject area or in interdisciplinary research—is well established. Ochsner's Research Day was designed to promote discussion and the free exchange of ideas at the frontiers of healthcare. This event provides a valuable means of disseminating information and ideas in a way that cannot be achieved through the usual channels of communication: namely, publications and presentations at large specialty scientific meetings. Please refer to pages 262–291 for the Research Day abstracts.