

Academic Affairs

The Roles of Research in an Academic Medical Center

William W. Pinsky, MD

Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer, Alton Ochsner Medical Foundation, New Orleans, LA



In addition to education, an integral part of any academic medical center's mission is its research agenda. While recognizing the value of teaching, academics requires asking questions. It is vital to understand the mechanisms of health and illness, how to treat patients and their diseases more effectively, and how to provide healthcare to a community more effectively.

Research can be represented in several different forms. Investigations can be performed at the bench, where in vitro questions are asked and answered. The research milieu may be in an animal laboratory, where by following all moral and regulatory directions of humane animal care, applications of disease understanding and treatment can be carried out. Health services research can enable us to have a greater longitudinal understanding of healthcare, which gives us great insight into how successful we are in preventing and treating disease, and the eventual effect of our efforts on our patients.

The remaining area of research, which has recently received quite a bit of attention, particularly in the lay media, is the area of clinical research and trials. In a sense, clinical research brings together all of the other aspects of medical research, encompassing all of the goals previously listed. The end product of clinical research is the knowledge that allows us to understand disease processes and the prevention and treatment of these diseases. Clinical research is vital to achieving our ultimate goal of promoting health.

Because of the recognized importance of clinical research, the Association of American Medical Colleges organized a task force in clinical research. The task force emphasized the need for

teaching hospitals and medical schools to reaffirm that clinical research is part of their fundamental mission. As Dr. Ralph Snyderman states in the task force's report, "...these institutions can be the enablers of the clinical research revolution and best practice healthcare."

At Ochsner, we envision clinical research truly as a critical part of our community and academic mission. At any given time, we may have over 600 active clinical protocols. We also understand our obligation to ensure that all clinical research is undertaken by the most diligent efforts with a primary focus being the protection and welfare of the patients involved in the study. Our investigational review board that reviews and oversees all of the clinical protocols works tirelessly to ensure the optimal performance of these studies.

We feel that clinical research and trials are best conducted in an academic environment. Unfortunately, in recent decades industry sponsored clinical trials have declined from an 80% prevalence within academic medical centers to only 40%, the larger component now being carried out in commercial clinical research organizations. To be able to shift that trend, academic medical centers must address the needs of government and nongovernment sponsors, develop strategic plans to engage investigators and partner with the medical product industry, improve the administration of these grants so that they can be run efficiently and cost effectively, and remain flexible enough to change in order to continue to meet the community needs.

The investment in clinical research by academic medical centers is a wise investment. At Ochsner, we plan to continue and enlarge that investment. We feel that our institution is well suited to be successful in this arena for several reasons, including our access to a large and diverse sample of patients, experienced and interested investigators across multiple specialty areas, organizational support for the infrastructure necessary to carry out this research, complementary ongoing basic laboratory research, multiple-niche areas of clinical excellence, a long history of philanthropic partnership with the community, long-standing relationships with local insurance companies including our own health maintenance organization, and a large Graduate Medical Education program. Many of our clinical research activities spawn the articles published in this journal.

At Ochsner, we plan to follow the advice of the Association of American Medical Colleges task force by inculcating clinical research into our education and training programs and further developing and maintaining our research infrastructure to support investigators and protect our patients ❁

The Ochsner Journal Salutes the 2000 Graduates of Ochsner's Graduate Medical Education Program

Hamid Afshar-Kharaghan, MD; Electrophysiology, Further training.

Farshid Y. Araghizadeh, MD; Colon & Rectal Surgery, Academic, Jackson, MS.

Lee M. Arcement, MD; Heart Failure/Transplant, Further training, Cardiology.

Rainer W. Bagdasarian, MD; General Surgery, Bristol Surgical Group, Bristol, CT.

Layne T. Barker, MD; Internal Medicine/Family Practice, Tanner Clinic, Layton, UT.

Katherine L. Baumgarten, MD; Infectious Diseases, Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, LA.

Michael B. Beres, MD; Ophthalmology, Logan General Hospital, Logan, WV.

Steven M. Beverly, MD; Obstetrics and Gynecology, OBG-1, Lake Charles, LA.

William T. Bottoms, Jr., MD; Magnetic Resonance Imaging Quantum , Northwest Radiology, Marietta GA.

James W. Bragg, MD; Internal Medicine, Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, LA.

Ernest G. Burch, MD; General Surgery. Private Practice, Mobile, AL.

Kenneth J. Byrd, Jr., MD; Obstetrics and Gynecology, Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, LA.

Vidyasagar Chodemilla, MD; Cardiology. Private Practice, Abilene, TX.

Douglass C. Conner, MD; Diagnostic Radiology, Further training, MRI.

Jorge M. Contreras, MD; Internal Medicine/Family Practice, East Bank IMG, Metairie, LA.

Kenneth M. Deen, MD; Ophthalmology, Upson Eye Clinic, Thomaston, GA.

Jayant Dey, MD; Endocrinology, Endocrine Consultants, Tupelo, MS.

Richa Dhawan, MD; Internal Medicine.

Erica A. Diggs, MD; Internal Medicine, Chief Medical Resident, Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, LA.

James L. Duncan, MD; General Surgery, Hattiesburg Clinic, Hattiesburg, MS.

Quenyatta Echols-Williams, MD; Chief Medical Resident, Ochsner Clinic, Kenner, LA.

Jonah A. Ezieme, MD; Internal Medicine.

Timothy D. Faul, MD; Anesthesiology, Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center, Lafayette, LA.

Alan E. Hananel, MD; Urology, West Houston Med Center, Houston, TX.

Angela Hanga, MD; Anesthesiology.

Antoinette T. Harvey-Fields, MD; Family Practice.

Terrell M. Hemelt, MD; Ophthalmology, Northlake Eye Center, Slidell, LA.

Suresh P. Jain, MD; Cardiology, Louisiana State University, New Orleans, LA.

Susan F. Julius, MD; Family Practice, Vina Family Medicine Clinic, New Orleans, LA.

Daniel A. Linarello, MD; General Surgery, Ochsner Clinic, Mandeville, LA.

Shelly A. Lovitt, MD; Obstetrics and Gynecology, Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, LA.

Paul D. McNeely, MD; Internal Medicine, Further training, Gastroenterology.

Michael H. Meadors, Jr., MD; Internal Medicine, Chief Medical Resident, Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, LA.

Paul D. Murphree, DO; Internal Medicine/Family Practice, Ochsner Clinic, Baton Rouge, LA.

Natarajan Murugan, MD; Hepatology.

Rafael Neiman, MD; Orthopedic Surgery, Further training, Orthopedics/Traumatology.

Tuong T. Nguyen, MD; Retina/Vitreous, Eye Associates NW, Seattle, WA.

Chika E. Okereke, MD; Internal Medicine, Further training, Cardiology.

Scott E. Olsson, MD; Thoracic Cardiovascular Surgery; Cardio,Thoracic, Vascular & Pediatric Surgical Association, Macon, GA.

Leonardo A. Orejarena, MD; Cardiology Private Practice, Bogota, Colombia.

Ahmed F. Osman, MD; Cardiology, Further training, Electrophysiology.

Ray T. Ramirez, MD; Colon & Rectal Surgery, Proctology Associates, Chesapeake, VA.

John M. Reynolds, MD; Orthopedic Surgery, Further training, Sports Medicine.

Juan E. Rubio, Jr., MD; Ophthalmology, Further training, Retina.

Khashayar Salartash, MD; Vascular Surgery, Salartash Surgical Association, Atlantic City, NJ.

Emad Shenouda, MD; Glaucoma, Further Training.

Edward C. Sherling, MD; Diagnostic Radiology, Further training, MRI.

Sergio T. Solis, MD; Cardiology, Further training, Interventional Cardiology.

Guillermo J. Tanaka, MD; Diagnostic Radiology, Further training, Interventional Radiology.

Cydney T. Teal, MD; Internal Medicine/Family Practice, Private Practice, Virginia.

William E. Thompson, MD; Diagnostic Radiology, Further training, Interventional Radiology.

Koichi Toda, MD; Pediatric Thoracic Surgery, Academic, Brown University, RI.

Luis J. Victores, MD; Gastroenterology, Private Practice, Hialeah, FL.

Krishnamoorthy Vivekananthan, MD; Cardiology, Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, LA.

Christopher L. Westervelt, MD; Internal Medicine/Family Practice, Further training, Nephrology.

Esther L. Wylen, MD; Ophthalmology, Further training, Glaucoma.

In Soo Yo, MD; General Surgery, Bay Choice Surgeons, Friendswood, TX.

Sharon R. Yoder, MD; Obstetrics and Gynecology, Ochsner Clinic, Baton Rouge, LA.

Note: List does not include residents completing preliminary or partial training.