

# ENT UPDATE

DEPARTMENT OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY & COMMUNICATIVE SCIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI MEDICAL CENTER

## *Robotic device provides flexibility in treating head and neck cancers*

Painful throat problems have been Greg Meadows' lifelong nemesis. "You say the word strep, and I'd get it," said Meadows, a Laurel resident and corporate jet pilot. "Whenever I got sick, it would settle in my throat."

When his throat turned red and swallowing became difficult in January 2019, it was an irritation but not a big concern. Meadows' general practitioner diagnosed it as post-nasal drip and gave him an over-the-counter allergy medicine that made him feel better.

In May, he noticed a lump forming on the side of his neck. A CT scan showed thickening of the throat and Meadows' was referred to UMMC's Dr. Gina Jefferson.

"I went there a week and a half later," Meadows said. Jefferson biopsied his throat; it was squamous cell carcinoma, an often aggressive cancer that is best and most easily removed in its early stages.



*Greg Meadows of Laurel is a cancer survivor*

Surgeons typically cut through the jaw line to reach the tumors in the "gutters" of the throat, dividing muscles that help you swallow and putting into jeopardy the function of nerves on each side of the tongue.

Jefferson instead performed a minimally invasive procedure: flexible robotic surgery, in which surgeons approach the tumor through a patient's mouth rather than the more traumatic step of splitting open his jaw. UMMC is the only facility in the state offering the procedure.

"If a patient's disease state, including the size of



*Using a flexible instrument, Dr. Lana Jackson is assisted by fifth-year resident Dr. Steven Curti*

tumor and its location, makes them a flexible robotic surgery candidate, "it's important for them to have that option," Jefferson said. "The reason we offer this surgery is so that the patient potentially has just one type of treatment, while preserving their function."

The robotic system allows surgeons access to anatomical locations that were previously difficult or impossible to reach in a minimally invasive manner. Surgeons guide a flexible scope through a patient's mouth toward the tumor. Arms of the flexible robot can bend and reach around the pharynx and larynx as they approach the tissues of the respiratory tracts and the upper part of the digestive tract. Using 3D technology, they get a clear view of the path to the surgical site. Then, they pass small, flexible surgical instruments through the scope and use them to cut out the cancerous area.

Meadows' surgery was June 20. He went home the next day.

"The benefits were pretty astounding. Dr. Jefferson warned me that I would have the mother of all sore throats afterward, but that was about it", Meadows said. "The pain subsided pretty quickly, and I was off pain meds in four days."

Meadow's medical team removed 46 lymph nodes and recommended 30 days of radiation to ensure all cancer cells were gone.

Using the flexible robotic approach minimizes potential harm to patients as surgeons access tricky

areas, which also can require cutting into the neck and potentially removing a patient's voice box, said Dr. Lana Jackson. "This allows us to do it through the mouth," she said.

A multidisciplinary group of caregivers, including a medical oncologist, radiation oncologist, neuroradiologist, pathologist, speech therapist and prosthodontist decides who is a good candidate for surgery, Jefferson said. She leads the Interdisciplinary Head and Neck Cancer Program at UMMC's Cancer Center and Research Institute.

"We make the recommendation in concert so that we can give patients the best care," she said.

"For most of the surgeries, this is similar to a tonsillectomy," Jackson said. "Most will have some discomfort for a week to two weeks, but it starts to get better pretty quickly. That's very different from having your jaw cut. They can go home the same day, or the next day. The other way requires a minimum three to four days in the hospital."

Surgeons anticipate use of the flexible robotic procedure will only grow from here. "One of the challenges is when patients come to us with a large or advanced tumor. If so, this is not the instrument for that patient," Jackson said.

"We're educating the public and those in primary care on what to do if something feels wrong. As soon as we can see someone with a throat tumor, the better." ■



## A Letter from the Chair

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It was gratifying to see many of our outstanding alumni at

our annual reception at the recent Academy meeting in New Orleans. Our resident and student alumni are serving patients and students across the nation in both private and academic practice. They are an exceptional group of people in not only their professional lives, but in their personal lives as well. We are all very proud to be represented by this outstanding group.

Serving others by training the otolaryngologists of the future and by providing world-class medical care to our mutual patients is the “why” of our department and informs all we do. Our team is comprised of talented, innovative, and passionate individuals who consistently strive to excel no matter what the obstacles may be.

Dr. Jumin Sunde, who is highlighted in this issue, is an exciting new addition to this team. He brings new surgical skills and improves our ability to see your head and neck patients even more quickly. He will be on tour throughout the region soon to meet as many of you as possible.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve you and your patients as well as our past and future learners. Please let us know any way that we can serve you better!

Scott P. Stringer, M.D., M.S.  
Professor and Chairman  
sstringer@umc.edu  
601.984.5167

## Department News and Highlights

- Scott Stringer, MD was presented the Distinguished Service Award at the American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery Foundation in October. This award acknowledges Dr. Stringer for distinguished service on committees, in scientific programs, exhibits, continuing education and instructional courses of the society.
- Dr. Christopher Spankovich hosted an experiment station for children and adults called “Good Vibrations” at the 4th Annual Science Fest at the Mississippi Children’s Museum (MSM) on September 19th. Proceeds from this event help support MSM’s Literacy and STEM initiatives.
- Speech-Language Pathologist Rinki Desai was among forty AuD and SLP faculty members across the U.S chosen to participate in the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s first Faculty Development Institute program from Sept 20-22nd in Rockville, Maryland.
- UMMC's Excellence in Research Awards ceremony was held October 25, 2019. This annual ceremony recognizes faculty members for their achievements in gaining outside funding. Congratulations to Dr. Bradley Walters, recipient of a bronze level award.
- Drs. Lana Jackson, Gina Jefferson and Jaxon Jordan (PGY-4) embarked on a surgical mission trip to Migori, Kenya in early November with KenyaRelief. Joined by two additional surgeons, the group performed sixty-six surgeries in three days of operating room time.



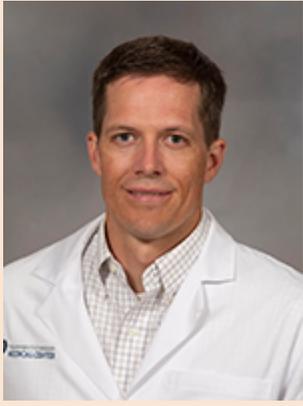
*Drs. Gina Jefferson and Lana Jackson of University of Mississippi Medical Center pose with Dr. Tammara Watts of Duke University School of Medicine during a mission trip to Kenya.*

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



**Dr. Jamie Sisk** was born in Dallas, Texas and spent his first 14 years in the Dallas area. He moved to Gwinnett County, Georgia his freshman year in high school where he graduated. He received his undergraduate degree from Rhodes College, his Master’s Degree from Georgia State University and his medical degree from Medical College of Georgia (2002). He completed his Otolaryngology residency at UMMC in 2007. After residency, Jamie and his family moved to Laurel, MS where he joined a solo private practice with Dr. Rusty Stevens. The practice covers general otolaryngology treating patients of all ages. Jamie and his wife, Nicole, have 4 children (3 daughters and 1 son) ranging in age from 10 to 16. Nicole primarily works as a mom but also owns a small toy booth in the local antique mall. Jamie enjoys spending time with his family and watching his kids in various sports. He also enjoys golf, fishing and running. He maintains close friendships with many of his fellow residents and continues to appreciate the clinical support of his former faculty. ■

## NEW FACULTY: *Jumin Sunde, MD*



We are thrilled to announce Dr. Jumin Sunde has joined our faculty specializing in Head and Neck Oncology. Dr. Sunde earned his M.D. from University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine in 2010 before completing his Otolaryngology residency at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Following residency, Dr. Sunde practiced general Otolaryngology for three years in north Alabama before completing a head and neck ablative and microvascular surgery fellowship at the University of Michigan.

Certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology, Dr. Sunde is a member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery and the American Head and Neck Society. He has numerous peer-reviewed publications and has presented at several national meetings.

Dr. Sunde and his wife Sarah were born and raised in rural Mobile county, Alabama. They and their children Anna (6), Jeremiah (5), Eleanor (3) and John (1) are excited to call Jackson home. In his free time, Dr. Sunde enjoys playing sports with his children, hunting, fishing, running and cycling.

Dr. Sunde joins Dr. Gina Jefferson and Dr. Lana Jackson to complete our exceptional head and neck cancer team.

## Interesting Case: *Parathyroid*

A 17 y.o. male presented to the UMMC Emergency department for vasovagal syncope. The patient developed back pain, and mother was concerned for dehydration following a tough week of basketball practice. The patient also reported some bone pain, fatigue, and was found to have non-obstructing kidney stones. He is otherwise healthy except for some abnormal labs discovered by his dermatologist a few days prior to admittance. He was admitted by the UMMC hospitalist who performed further work-up and discovered hypercalcemia due to a hyperfunctioning parathyroid adenoma.

ENT was consulted for surgical evaluation of the localizing parathyroid adenoma. During his hospitalization he was taken to the OR for excision of his parathyroid adenoma with normalization of his calcium labs. The patient is well healed from his surgery with a normal calcium level and his genetic testing has all been negative.

Primary hyperparathyroidism is due to a benign growth of the parathyroid glands called a parathyroid adenoma. Parathyroid adenomas secrete parathyroid hormone which increases blood calcium levels. Long-term symptoms of this condition include kidney stones, bone pain, weakness, depression, confusion, and osteoporosis. Treatment is surgical excision of the parathyroid adenoma which cures the disease.



Pre-operative Thyroid Ultrasound

## Now Open: Head and Neck Oncology Clinic

The head and neck oncology team celebrated the opening of a new clinic located in the UMMC Cancer and Research Institute on June 26th. The space features five exam rooms, a patient education area and is supported by its own dedicated clinical and clerical staff.

"The transition to utilizing ENT personnel has provided a sense of ownership and pride in delivering efficient and effective patient care", said Dr. Gina Jefferson, Division Chief of Head and Neck Surgery.

The bright new space provides a sense of healing, hope, and positivity and has taken the patient experience to new level as indicated by verbal feedback since the clinic's opening.



Head and neck oncology celebrates the opening of new space

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*Dr. Jaxon Jordan and Dr. Lana Jackson performing surgery in Migori, Kenya*

"I'm grateful to have been a part of a surgical team that performed sixty-six operations and numerous other clinical procedures in the small rural community of Migori, Kenya. Our group also clinically evaluated and medically treated over one hundred additional patients during our time at the Brase Eye and Surgery Center.

The primary goal of our mission was to remove head and neck masses from patients who could not afford healthcare. The spiritual impact of our surgeries went far deeper than we could have expected, as many patients had been told that their tumors were a sign that their lives had been cursed.

The gratitude we received was unparalleled, and it will have a lasting impact on everyone who was involved with the mission. Our team removed close to thirty thyroid goiters, as well as numerous parotid and submandibular tumors. A handful of other otolaryngology surgeries such as tympanoplasty, adenoidectomy, direct laryngoscopy, excision of oral lesions, branchial cleft fistula removal, and multiple keloid removals were also performed."

-Dr. Jaxon Jordan (PGY-4)

Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to the department of Otolaryngology and Communicative Sciences by visiting our website.

# ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

- We hosted our Annual Soft Tissue Sinus Course July 27th-28th. Instructors included Drs. Lana Jackson, Andrea Lewis, Kyle Lewis, Gina Jefferson, J. Randall Jordan and Scott Stringer. This course provided residents with hands-on experience and practice in sleep, flap, sinus, and soft tissue surgery that accelerates their mastery of surgical skills.
- Our 5th Annual Simulation Bootcamp took place August 17-18th. This one-day preparatory course provides an experience to help junior ORL residents rapidly acquire emergency "on-call" as well as basic surgical skills. It featured hands-on simulated emergency scenarios and interactive triage sessions and was instructed by over a dozen department faculty members and residents. We were thrilled residents from LSU Shreveport were able to participate in this annual event.
- Our department was well represented at the AAO-HNS/F Annual Meeting and Oto Experience held Sept. 14-18, 2019, in New Orleans. Jaxon Jordan, MD, (PGY-4) gave an oral presentation at the American Rhinological Society 65th Annual Meeting "Effect of an Evidenced based Peri-Operative Pain Protocol on Postoperative Opioid Use after Endoscopic Sinus Surgery." Dr. Andrea Lewis participated in a panel discussion, "Allergy and OSA: Where does Allergy Play?" Scott Stringer, MD, and Tristen Harris, PA participated in 2 panels including "APPs in ENT: Justify, Recruit and On Board for Success Part I and II." Dr. Stringer also presented "Innovations in Treatment of Chronic Sinusitis: From Bench to Clinical Practice." Abby Street presented "Insights and Best Practices from an Integrated Academic Medical Center to the Reg-ENT Users Group."
- Speech-Language Pathologist Josephine Alston was an invited speaker at the Ole Miss Department of Communication Science and Disorders 2019 Fall Institute on October 11th. Her presentation, "Let's Get Ethical", was given to 170 SLP graduate students from across the state.

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## SAVE THE DATE

The Department of Otolaryngology and Communicative Sciences

## Nineteenth Annual Lectureship and Resident Graduation

May 29, 2019

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University Medical Center  
Department of Otolaryngology and Communicative Sciences  
2500 North State Street  
Jackson, Mississippi 39216-4505

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