

ENT UPDATE

Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery at The University of Mississippi Medical Center

Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Faculty Members Contribute to COVID Safety Initiatives.

As the number of positive COVID-19 cases increased across the state, so did the number of concerns and challenges in treating patients both surgically and clinically. Aggressive use of personal protective equipment, exercise of extreme caution and avoidance of unnecessary risks are key components in minimizing transmittal of the virus in a medical setting.

For medical providers in the otolaryngology specialty, the risk of encountering aerosolized viral particles is particularly high while instrumenting the nose and upper airway.

For example, a mastoidectomy creates a large volume of irrigation and bone

dust during drilling and a face shield impedes vision through a microscope. Otolaryngology faculty members Dr. Jeffrey Carron, Dr. Thomas Eby and Dr. Claude Harbarger, along with chief resident Dr. Lauren Buck, set out to research methods to significantly reduce droplet spray, lessening the risk of infection during surgery.

A study carried out on a cadaveric temporal bone resulted in a safe method to conduct mastoidectomy without the need for face shields. This study, "A Simple Technique for Droplet Control During Mastoid Surgery" was published in JAMA Otolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery on April 28, 2020.

Key strategies for preventing the spread of COVID-19, including social distancing and the use of masks, may significantly affect communications for our hearing and speech impaired patients. Medical masks, such as the N-95 mask, filter high frequencies and lead to distortion in speech perception, and both cloth and medical masks eliminate visual cues important for speech understanding.

Hydroxychloroquine was initially considered among the alternatives for treatment of COVID-19 positive cases.

Possible side effects of this treatment, as well as any quinine derived medications, include transient episodes

of hearing loss, tinnitus, and/or dizziness.

Dr. Christopher Spankovich, Dr. Thomas Eby and 3rd year resident Dr. Alberto Arteaga discussed these considerations and provided strategies to mitigate communication challenges arising during COVID-19. Their work, *Otologic and Audiologic Considerations for COVID-19* was also published in JAMA Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

Faculty members in the department conducted teleconferences for alumni and Mississippi care providers to foster the sharing of best practices for telehealth care and return to safe surgery and clinic based care in the COVID-19 environment.

We remain committed to discovering safe, innovative ways to continue to provide excellent care to our patients and referring colleagues during this unprecedented global pandemic. ■



Dr. Lauren Buck performs mastoidectomy study with drape system in place.

Kudos, Award Winners!

2020 Alumnus of the Year
Dr. Justin Garner

2020 Consultant of the Year
Dr. Todd Nichols



Chairman's Message

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We hope this newsletter finds you, your families, and your teams safe and healthy. We are proud of the manner in which our team members have responded during this pandemic to provide outstanding service to our patients and fellow practitioners. Our head and neck team has operated on advanced cancer patients throughout the crisis. Our faculty, residents, and advanced practice providers saw urgent inpatient and outpatient consults under ever changing and potentially dangerous conditions. The faculty and residents contributed new pandemic-related safety information to the literature as highlighted in this issue. Within one week of the initial shutdown, our entire team worked together to shift to a robust telehealth program. And, over the last several weeks, they have pivoted back to a nearly full clinic and surgery schedule in an entirely new safety environment. We continue to offer strategic telehealth visits for the most vulnerable when the care can be provided in this manner.

We are very excited to welcome Dr. Anne Kane as a new member of our head and neck team this August. She will be highlighted in our fall newsletter and will visit with as many of you as possible in person over the next several months.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve you and your patients as well as our past and future learners. Continued best wishes to you all as we navigate these challenging times together!

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

Department News and Highlights

- Dr. Gina Jefferson earned her Master's Degree in Public Health from University of Illinois at Chicago.
- Dr. Catherine Cheney earned her Doctorate of Nursing Practice from the University of Alabama.
- Dr. Steven Curti earned his Masters of Business Administration from the University of Mississippi.
- Speech-language pathologist Mallory Upchurch is now one of three Certified Neonatal Therapists in the state, and the only one in the Jackson-metro area.
- February 8th was our 3rd Annual Day of Giving event at the Mississippi Food Network. This year's event had 65 volunteers who packed over 5,300 meals for distribution to children in need across the state.
- Our department was well-represented at the 43rd annual Association for Research in Otolaryngology (ARO) Midwinter Meeting in San Jose. Highlights include:
 - Dr. Hong Zhu co-chaired a symposium titled "Coming to our senses: Vestibular research, from molecules to systems, commonalities and differences with the auditory system". Drs. Wu Zhou and Hong Zhu also had their work featured in 3 posters on vestibular function in various genetic models.
 - Dr. Bradley Walter's lab presented several posters on topics ranging from gene expression in cochlear tissue, effects of mild-TBI on hearing function, and a model of Schwann cell proliferation that may provide some insight on the genesis of vestibular schwannomas.
 - Dr. Christopher Spankovich's lab presented data on application of localized hypothermia for prevention of cisplatin induced hearing loss.
- Dr. Brad Walters was awarded \$387,500 for his project "Matrix metalloproteinases in the degeneration of cochlear synapses". This grant is funded by CDMRP (Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs) and HRRP (Hearing Restoration Research Program).
- Dr. Hong Zhu was awarded \$30,000 in funding by the University's Intramural Research Support Program (IRSP) for her proposal titled "Mechanisms of Blast-Induced Vestibular Injury".

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Ben Jeffcoat was born in Dallas, TX, but moved to McComb, MS, at a young age where he was raised. He graduated from McComb High School and attended Millsaps College where he played baseball. He received his medical degree from UMMC School of Medicine in 2004 and completed his Otolaryngology residency in 2010. After residency, Ben joined Mississippi Ear Nose and Throat Surgical Associates (MENTSA) which is a private practice in Flowood, MS, covering general

otolaryngology for all ages. Ben and his wife, Lisa, have 2 children, Addison (13) and Wells (10). In his free time Ben enjoys coaching his son's baseball team, exercising, and playing golf. "The relationships that were built during my otolaryngology training at UMMC are as strong as ever. I am forever indebted to the program for the training I received as a resident as well as their continued support over the years." ■

Congratulations to our graduates!

Lauren Buck, MD received her medical degree from Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, Louisiana. During her residency, Dr. Buck had a variety of presentations and publications and received numerous awards including several Resident Teacher of the Year Awards. She has vast research experience and was winner of the American Society of Pediatric Otolaryngology Ped-Videoto Presentation in 2018. Following graduation Dr. Buck will go on to complete a Pediatric Otolaryngology Fellowship at Cincinnati Children's Hospital.



Steven Curti, MD, MBA received his medical degree from the University of Missouri School of Medicine in Kansas City, Missouri. During residency, Dr. Curti had many presentations and publications and received several awards including the 2020 AOA Resident Teacher of the Year award. While completing his otolaryngology residency, Dr. Curti earned his MBA from University of Mississippi. Following graduation Dr. Curti will go on to complete a Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery fellowship in Palo Alto, California with Drs. Mittelman, Parikh, and Leiberman.



Amrita Ray, DO received her medical degree from Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine in East Lansing, Michigan. During residency, Dr. Ray had numerous presentations and publications and received a variety of honors and grants including the 2019 AAO-HNS/F Resident Leadership Grant, and the 2018 and 2019 SUO AADO OPDO Combined meeting Travel grant. Following graduation Dr. Ray will be completing a Rhinology and Skullbase Fellowship with Columbia and Cornell in New York.



"Having done an away rotation at UMMC during medical school, I was overjoyed to match here for residency. The past five years exceeded my expectations, and I am forever grateful for the lifelong friends I've made in addition to the superb training that I have received. I am most thankful for the encouragement I received when applying for a pediatric fellowship. The faculty could not have been more supportive, and it really gave me the confidence to pursue my goals. And of course you could not find a more fun or caring group of residents anywhere. UMMC will always hold a special place in my heart, and I am honored to be a graduate of this residency program."

"One thing that has stood out to me the most during my residency at UMMC is the camaraderie amongst our group. Some of my favorite memories are of us all getting together outside the hospital. From a post in-service get together at Dr. Jackson's house to renting pontoons for a day on the Reservoir, we always found a way to take our minds off work outside the hospital. Similarly, when in the hospital, my work was never a chore to me. We have a unique schedule of being paired with the same three senior and junior residents on rotations through out residency which allows you to get close and really enjoy who you are learning from or teaching. The same goes for our staff. We are lucky to be taught by physicians who truly care about resident education and outstanding patient care. I will be extremely proud and honored to be able to say I graduated from UMMC."

"Reflecting back on the last half decade makes me incredibly grateful for the family that is our residency program. My co-residents are have become more than just colleagues, not only flying cross country to be there for me on my wedding day, but being there every day to laugh, vent and cry with. Despite spending most of our days in the hospital, we still find excuses to still hang out together more after work. Each person in this department goes above and beyond to invest in us not only as residents but also become trusted, lifelong mentors and friends. I couldn't be happier to have trained at UMMC and cherish the experiences, friends and memories I've made here."

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

- Speech-language pathologist Rinki Desai presented at both the 73rd Annual Conference of the Indian Radiological & Imaging Association and the Annual Indian Speech Hearing Association.
- The Speech-Language Pathology Division had a great turnout for their annual course, “Best Practices in Dysphagia Management in Children and Adults: Digestion, Respiration and Swallowing”, featuring guest speaker Angela Mansolillo on Saturday, February 8th.
- We were honored to welcome several visiting professors over the last several months:
 - Dr. Susan McCammon from University of Alabama - Birmingham visited the department December 12-13th. Dr. McCammon presented “Getting What You Want and Wanting What and Wanting What You Get: Getting to Goal Concordant Decisions” and “Surgical Faces of Palliative Care: Cases and Discussion”.
 - Internationally renowned rhinologist, Dr. Fred Kuhn, visited the department March 5th. He presented, “Frontal Sinus Embryology, Anatomy and Surgery.”
 - Dr. Matt Spector from the University of Michigan gave a virtual lecture on May 15th including “Current Paradigms for Management of Oropharyngeal Squamous Cell Cancer” and “Hypopharynx Reconstruction”.

For direct referral or cell phone access to our providers, download the **UMMC 4Referrals Mobile app** for Apple or Android devices today.



Welcome, New Residents



Dr. Shelby Barrera
University of Texas HSC at
San Antonio School of
Medicine



Dr. Trace Palmer
University of Mississippi
Medical Center



Dr. Kacie Oglesby
University of Alabama
School of Medicine



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

University Medical Center
Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
2500 North State Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39216-4505

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
JACKSON, MS
PERMIT NO. 247