

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The Center for Metabolic Bone Disease (CMBD) is currently active on a number of very important fronts. We have initiated our third round of pilot program grants. We received a total of twelve pilot projects, and four are being totally or partially funded. These projects and their principal investigators are:

- ◆ Integrin-Mediated Adhesion of Osteoblasts to Implant Materials – Susan L. Bellis, PhD
- ◆ Role of PYK2 and FAK in Regulating Osteoclastic Cytoskeletal Organization and Bone Resorption – Wen-Cheng Xiong, MD, PhD
- ◆ Glucocorticoid Receptor-SMAD3 Interaction and Bone Loss – Xingming Shi, PhD
- ◆ Long-Term Gene Therapy for Osteoporosis – Selvarangan Ponnazhagan, PhD

Having these pilot projects is extremely important for the acceptance of our upcoming research core center application to the NIH, which is due June 14, 2000. In addition, CMBD administration is submitting a training grant to the NIH for both pre- and postdoctoral fellows on May 10, 2000.

Our Visiting Experts/Speakers Program continues to be highly successful. The speakers during the past quarter include: Daniel T. Baran, MD, University of Massachusetts Memorial Health Care, Steven L. Teitelbaum, MD, Washington University, L. Daryle Quarles, MD, Duke University Medical Center, and Xu Feng, PhD, Washington University. Karl L. Insogna, MD, from Yale University will be visiting in May 2000.

The Osteoporosis Prevention and Treatment Clinic, directed by Sarah L. Morgan, MD, RD, FACP, continues to function well under the oversight of a interdisciplinary steering committee. A major component of the interdisciplinary clinical approach to osteoporosis is the "Tone Your Bones" program, which is described below.

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SPINE-TINGLING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PATIENTS WITH OSTEOPOROSIS

Getting out of bed, making breakfast, feeding the cat – your first five minutes of the day may pass without a thought. But if you've got osteoporosis in your spine those simple movements – as well as lots of others throughout the day – could increase your risk of vertebral microfractures. Patients with osteoporosis in the spine may not be aware that movements that bend or twist the spine (flexion and rotation) could put them in danger. And since so many things we do throughout our day involve these movements, patients need to be educated and trained on "neutral spine" techniques – how to move while keeping the spine properly aligned. Learning these techniques usually means unlearning a lifetime of habits.

While a good physical therapist can help patients learn neutral spine techniques, UAB's Osteoporosis Prevention & Treatment Clinic offers patients the training in a group setting – and patients love it! The *Tone Your Bones Exercise and Nutrition Group* was developed by clinic educators Don Lein, MS, PT, and Beth Kitchin, MS, RD, as well as physical therapy faculty Claire Peel, PhD, two years ago. The twice-weekly program lasts for four weeks at the Kirklin Clinic and costs patients \$30. Patients learn strengthening and posture exercises as well as nutrition, medication, and fall-prevention techniques to build better bones. Patients have ranged in age from the early 40's to late 70's – all have found the program to be instrumental in their continued quest for optimal osteoporosis treatment.

For more information about the Tone Your Bones program, call Beth Kitchin, MS, RD, at 934-7474. For patient education information about osteoporosis, call the Alabama Tone Your Bones Hotline at 1.888.934.BONE.

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