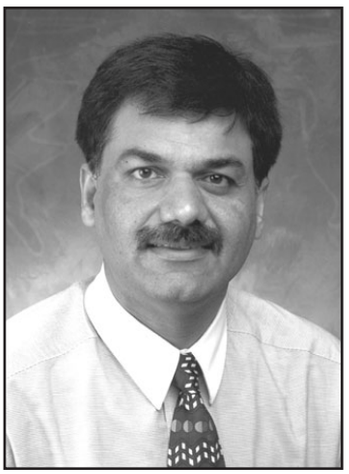
Volume 2 Number 3 November 2004

Update on Sequence Treatment Alternatives to Relieve Depression (STAR*D)



The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences was chosen as one of 14 sites by the National Institute of Mental Health to conduct this landmark study to determine, "what is the best sequence in which to use currently marketed antidepressants?" This study was designed to prospectively determine the comparative effectiveness of different treatment options for participants with Major Depressive Disorder who do not respond to initial treatment with a Serotonin Selective Reuptake Inhibitor. Other sites for STAR*D include Harvard, Columbia, University of Pittsburgh, Vanderbilt, University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of California at San Diego.

Enrollment for STAR*D closed on April 20, 2004. STAR*D enrolled 4,041 participants with non-psychotic Major Depressive Disorder, since October 1999. Unlike most research studies STAR*D involved only antidepressants which are already approved and marketed for the treatment of clinical depression. We ran this study at COMCARE and Via Christi Psychiatric Clinic. All participants were started on Celexa at Level-1 of STAR*D. Non-responders as well as those who responded but did not attain remission were randomized to the next level with switching and augmentation options. All together STAR*D had four levels with different treatment options including cognitive therapy. The STAR*D protocol allowed 12 weeks at each level, and if the participants achieved remission they could go to the follow-up phase for 12 months.

The third year Psychiatry residents were involved in this study. They followed all the patients in STAR*D under my supervision at VCPC. Residents enjoyed following the protocol and they learned a lot. They had the experience of using tricyclic antidepressants as well as monoamine oxidase inhibitors for their STAR*D patients as one of the treatment options at levels 3 and 4. The residents are still following the patients who are still active with the study.

One of the biggest advantages of STAR*D is that it enrolled patients from both primary and specialty care. It enrolled 1,653 participants through primary care physicians and 2,370 from specialty care. The STAR*D study has changed the way primary care physicians practice in terms of their treatment goals. The physicians have gained a better understanding about the antidepressants and the difference between response versus remission.

STAR*D provided state of the art care to 247 participants at our site between October 2001 and April 2004. Free care was provided to the majority of the participants. This free care included office visits and medications. This type of care could not have been possible without the department's involvement in the STAR*D study.

On the other hand, Pharmacogenetics has the potential to explain why some patients do specifically well or poorly with a medication. This will change the current trend into a targeted approach, which not only saves money, but pain, suffering and disability. Since very large samples of patients are needed to conduct genetic studies, STAR*D is playing a pivotal role in providing these samples.

The data that was collected at our site as well as the other 13 sites is now being analyzed by the STAR*D team in Dallas. The results of Level I and Level 2 are due to be presented by December 2004 and the results of Level 3 and Level 4 are due to be presented by December 2005. The data analyzed so far has generated approximately 15 publications and several faculty members from the department have been involved in the writing those articles. I am the lead author for the paper "Clinical and Demographic Factors Associated with DSM-IV Melancholic Depression" that has been submitted to the Journal of Affective Disorder.

[See Update on Sequence Treatment on Page 2]

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

Let us hear from you!

Contact: Mary Spachek
Call: 316/293-2669
Write: 1010 N. Kansas
Wichita, KS 67214
E-mail: mspachek@kumc.edu

COMMUNICATOR ON LINE

Share the Communicator without giving up your copy. It can be viewed at: http://wichita.kumc.edu/psych/
Archived issues can also be viewed.

Farewell to Dr. D'Empaire

As I am preparing to start my two-year fellowship in Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Md., I have to announce with sadness my departure from the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Starting from my first day, July 1, 2001, at the University of Kansas, I was genuinely interested in learning. My energy and enthusiasm were carefully guided and supported by the faculty and staff. I have met many challenges and made numerous resolutions.

I would like to thank everyone whom I have encountered during my training here.

I am excited about the future of psychiatry and especially want to acknowledge and thank Connie Marsh, MD for introducing me to the field of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry and teaching me to be daring; Sheldon Preskorn, MD for showing me how to accumulate knowledge, explore and see the prospective and Don Morgan, PhD for nurturing my confidence.

I wish you all farewell and hope to meet again to discuss advances in the field.

Inna D'Empaire, MD

What Happens When You Follow Your Dreams?

What started out as one little girl's dream of riding horses has turned into a family affair that has also fulfilled a dream of mine. When I was a child, I loved horses and rode from time to time on my Grandpa's farm and dreamed of showing horses. As I grew up, that dream had to take a back seat to high school, college and marriage. But then after my daughter, Jessica, was born and old enough to start liking animals - it was apparent that she, like her mother, had a fascination with horses.

At the age of eight, Jessica wanted riding lessons for her birthday and so after much investigation, I found a program at the Wichita Riding Academy and Jessica started taking lessons in September. By May of the following year, she was showing at her first show at the Kansas Coliseum.

After watching Jessica compete, I wanted to do that as well! I started taking lessons with a private trainer and by July, we were both competing in Walk-Trot classes using a horse that the barn owned and doing well. My husband, who is not really into riding, also joined into the process. Not by riding, but by learning **all** that goes into getting a horse ready to show and packing everything that we need to show: saddles, bridles, grooming supplies, show clothes, hats, boots, video equipment... We call him pack-mule Dad and he does a GREAT job!

Last year, we purchased a three-year old quarter horse named Cooper that Jessica and I show at open shows as well as 4-H shows. We have spent most of the summer competing at horse shows through the South Central Stock Horse Association (SCSHA) and at 4-H shows. I am proud to say that Jessica qualified for and showed at the Kansas State Fair 4-H Horse Show in Showmanship and Horsemanship. She made the top 18 out of 41 riders in her Horsemanship class at the State Fair, a real accomplishment for her first year. We also ended our season at SCSHA with Jessica placing fourth overall in her 10-18 Walk-Trot Division and I ended the season with Reserve Hi-Point in my 19 and Over Walk-Trot Division. Wow, what a summer!

We spend a lot of weekends at horse shows, everyone pulling together to get the horse and riders ready for each show. Jessica and I spend a great deal of time taking lessons and working with Cooper getting ready for shows and practicing. It is a great family activity that has taught us all a lot about working together and the dedication it takes to succeed.

By Michelle Hertel
Faculty Outpatient Clinic Supervisor

Keeping Up with PsyIG

The Psychiatry Interest Group's (PsyIG) year has gotten off to a good start. The group has participated in several community wide activities. The group participated in the National Suicide Prevention Day on Sept. 10. Several members from the group provided handouts and answered questions along with the Sedgwick County's Suicide Prevention Task Force.

On Oct. 3, the National Alliance for the Mentally III hosted a Candlelight Ceremony for the National Mental Awareness Week at the Wichita Boathouse. KUSM-W medical students Ben Davis, MS4, and Vadim Izgur, MS4, spoke along with the key speaker Lana R. Castle (author of "Bipolar Disorder Demystified: Mastering the Tightrope of Manic Depression"). With the help of the Psychiatry residents, PsyIG staffed a depression-screening booth at Via Christi-St. Joseph campus on Oct. 7.

Many events are coming up and the members are working hard to provide support and education to the community. PsyIG has created a "Yellow Card" that the group hands out at their events. The "Yellow Card" provides quick and easy information on suicide facts, warning signs, risk factors, and information on where get help.

By Benjamin S. Davis, MS4
President PsyIG
KU School of Medicine-Wichita

Update on Sequence Treatment *from Page 1]*

Finally, the results from the STAR*D data will help answer the following questions for the practicing clinicians which may change/modify the treatment options for depression:

1. What are the response/remission rates?
2. What is the cost associated with achieving response/remission?
3. What is the best medication switch?
4. What is the best medication augment?
5. Is it better to augment or switch?
6. Are there any clinical or demographic features that predict if cognitive therapy will work for specific patients?

Ahsan Y. Khan, MD
Assistant Professor

Getting to Know Our Interns and Residents

My name is Christi Houston and I am from a clinical psychology program at Forest Institute of Professional Psychology that is located in Springfield, Mo. My outside interests include time spent with family and friends, as well as music and photography. From this point, I hope to continue growing as a person and a professional to hopefully become an authentic clinical psychologist that specializes in neuropsychology.

Christi Houston, Psychology Intern

I am a native of Kansas. I obtained my undergraduate degree at the University of Houston in Psychology, an MBA at the University of Oklahoma, and a MA at Wichita State University. I am completing my PhD in Clinical Psychology. I am married and have one daughter who lives in Memphis. My husband, Thorn, and I are the proud parents of two elderly dogs, Arthur and Hannah. When I had free time (before graduate school), I enjoyed reading, cooking, gardening, travel, and whitewater rafting. After completing my internship, I hope to obtain a postdoctoral fellowship in Neuropsychology and ultimately a Neuropsychology practice.

Caria Alcazar, Psychology Intern

I grew up in Surat, India where I received my first degree in medicine. I have lived in several cities viz. Toronto, Canada, San Jose and Irvine, Calif. and worked different interesting jobs viz. public health and medical officer, welfare visitor, mobile crisis intervention worker, case manager, research associate and mental health worker before getting into the Psychiatry Residency Program at KUSM-W. My wife, Mizna Aziz, and I feel blessed to be here in Wichita. Both of us are interested in traveling, meeting people from different cultures, playing board games, reading and watching TV and movies. Mizna is pursuing a career in psychiatric nursing. We are looking forward to having some meaningful, interesting and fun-filled years in Wichita, Kan.

M. Rafique Shaikh, MD

My name is M. Minhas Kapadia and I am a first year Psychiatry resident at KUSM-W. I was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan and received my medical degree there, before immigrating to the United States a few years ago. I lived in San Jose, Calif, and worked in the mental health field for almost four years before moving to Wichita in June to start my residency. I am single, never married, and have no kids. I am interested in people and cultures. Having lived in California, this gave me a chance to come across people from all comers of the world. I also like to read and enjoy traveling. I wish to complete my four years of residency training from this program and then practice adult Psychiatry in or around this area. So far, Wichita and its people have treated me well. I am sure in the next few years, this feeling will become mutual.

Thanks for giving me a chance to say something about myself.

M. Minhas Kapadia, MD

Graduation Ceremony Held

On June 26, the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences held their Residency Graduation ceremony. The following awards were presented:

- **The Teacher of the Year Award**
  Ahsan Khan, MD.

Dr. Khan is an assistant professor at KUSM-W and medical director for Via Christi Psychiatric Clinic. Dr. Khan has been with the department for four years.

- **The Excellence in Research Award**
  Laurie Coyner, MD and
  Mohamed Ramadan, MD

- **The Ralph Bharati, MD Award for Outstanding Patient Care**
  Inna D'Empaire, MD and
  Talat Tayyaba, MD

- **The Chief Resident Award**
  Laurie Coyner, MD

- **The Resident of the Year Award**
  Jana Lincoln, MD

Dr. Lincoln is a first year resident.

Student Participation In Psychiatry Rises

In the last few months, the medical student program has seen an increased interest in Psychiatry electives. Several medical students have completed electives with our paid faculty and volunteer faculty. They are as follows:

- Dana Hawkinson
  Clinical Addictionology with Tim Scanlan, MD
  Geriatric Psychiatry with Connie Marsh, MD

- Monica Raposo
  Clinical Addictionology with Tim Scanlan, MD
  Geriatric Psychiatry with Connie Marsh, MD
  Adolescent Psychiatry with DeAnn Jenkins, MD

- Alex Samuel
  Special Topics in Psychiatry with Michael J. Burke, MD, PhD and Glenn Veenstra, PhD

The following medical students will be taking Psychiatry electives in the near future:

- Ben Davis
  Clinical Psychopharmacology with Sheldon Preskorn, MD

- Gene Weston
  Geriatric Psychiatry with Susan Carr, MD

FACULTY, STAFF, RESIDENT AND STUDENT NOTES . . .

CONGRATULATIONS

Robin Matson on promotion from PRN psychometrician to our full time psychometrician, replacing Caria Alcazar who is now one of our psychology interns.

WELCOME

Robin Kerby, RN who has recently joined our department as our part-time nurse.

Dana Soetaert who has joined us as our PRN psychometrician.

Kerri Kamm who has recently joined our billing department.

GOODBYE

After fours years of service, we said goodbye to **Debbie Conrady, RN**, in early September. Debbie left due to the recent change of her husband's job move to Independence, Kan. Debbie plans to spend time fixing up their new home and enjoy being an empty-nester.

PUBLICATIONS

Preskorn SH, Feighner JP, Stanga CY, Ross R: *Handbook of Experimental Pharmacology Antidepressants: Past, Present and Future, Vol. 157*, Springer-Verlag, Heidelberg, 2004. (RM# 6491)

Preskorn SH, Flockhart D: *2004 Psychotropic Drug Interactions Guide*. MBL Communications, New York, 2004.

PRESENTATIONS

Sheldon H. Preskorn, MD, was a visiting professor to the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California-San Francisco in August. He visited with their faculty who are working on the human genome project as it relates to psychiatric illness.

Susan L. Carr, MD, presented "Antidepressant Pharmacology of the Future," for the Neuroscience Group who met Friday, Sept. 17, Holt Auditorium at Via Christi-St. Francis Campus.

Sheldon H. Preskorn, MD, was a visiting professor to the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in September.

Michael J. Burke, MD, PhD, presented "Trends in Undergraduate Medical Education: Clerkship Learning Objectives" for the Psychiatry Grand Rounds, Sept. 28. His presentation summarized work that has been completed to date by the National Task Force on Psychiatry Learning Objectives, which he chairs for the Association of Directors of Medical Student Education in Psychiatry.