The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences plays an important role in the assessment and treatment of epilepsy patients in Kansas. Via Christi Regional Medical Center’s St. Francis Campus has the state’s only Level 4 Epilepsy Center which serves all of Kansas as well as several surrounding states. Korei Liu, MD, director of the Via Christi Comprehensive Epilepsy Center also serves as clinical associate professor of Internal Medicine (Neurology) and Psychiatry at KUSM-W. Patients are referred to the Via Christi Comprehensive Epilepsy Center when standard treatment is ineffective or when special circumstances create challenges in epilepsy diagnosis and management. The goal of the Via Christi Comprehensive Epilepsy Center is to help patients achieve better control of seizures and improve their quality of life.

The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences is involved in this process in several ways. One method of seizure diagnosis and classification is video-EEG monitoring. Inpatients are videotaped and monitored continuously for several days. During video-EEG monitoring, Lyle Baade, PhD, associate professor, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, is consulted to conduct a neuropsychological evaluation, and Inna D’Empaire, MD, assistant professor, Psychiatry, is consulted to conduct a psychiatric evaluation. This evidence is of the comprehensive approach and the attention given to the psychiatric and neuropsychological needs of patients.

For some epilepsy patients, neurosurgery is a treatment option that can reduce or eliminate seizures. In surgical candidates, brain functioning is mapped prior to surgery to predict and minimize postoperative cognitive deficits. This is done with an intracarotid amobarbital procedure, often called the Wada test (named after its originator, John Wada). During the Wada test, Dr. Baade, assisted by Robin Heinrichs, Neuropsychology intern, KUSM-W, conducts cognitive testing to map language and memory of each hemisphere after the contralateral hemisphere is anesthetized. Anesthesia of each hemisphere is administered by Suryakumar Reddy, MD, interventional radiologist, Via Christi Radiology, who injects a catheter into the femoral artery, runs it up to the internal carotid artery and injects amobarbital into the middle cerebral artery. This collaborative procedure is coordinated by Dr. Liu, who monitors the patient’s EEG throughout.

Coincident with advancing the care of patients with epilepsy in Kansas and surrounding states, the involvement of Drs. Baade and D’Empaire in the evaluations being done by Via Christi Comprehensive Epilepsy Center, provide valuable learning opportunities for medical students, psychiatry residents, neuropsychology interns and others.

In summary, this involvement supports the three core functions of the KUSM-W Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences: (a) the training health care professionals to serve our community, (b) the advancement of scholarly knowledge for the greater good, and (c) enhancing the care of Kansans with various brain diseases.
Expediting public mental health science through clinical trials networks

Networks of clinics and clinicians are supported by the National Institutes of Health as a means of conducting clinical trials for over four decades. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is providing infrastructure support to maintain three large networks of investigative clinical teams that have evolved from the large practical clinical trials of interventions for major depressive disorder (Sequenced Treatment Alternatives to Relieve Depression – STAR*D), for schizophrenia (Clinical Antipsychotic Trials of Intervention Effectiveness - CATIE) and for bipolar disorder (Systematic Treatment Enhancement Program for Bipolar Disorder – STEP-BD) in adults. Each new study initiated on the Networks requires separate funding from public or private sources or a combination of public/private support. Because these Networks already provide rapid and efficient access to nation-wide clinical sites and staff that are well trained, efficient, and experienced, the Networks are ideally suited for addressing the kinds of real-world “effectiveness” questions that require large and diverse samples and aim to impact clinical practice.

The NIMH is currently reviewing the process for funding future research on the NIMH clinical trials Networks. The goal is to encourage an open and competitive arena to elicit the best science to improve clinical practice, while at the same time maximizing the efficiency of the conduct of that science.

The overarching principle is that the Networks will conduct research designed to improve the mental health of the public. It is critical that the research of the Networks also emphasize the public mental health importance, value to individuals living with mental illnesses and to practitioners, and be informed by broad scientific and public input. The Networks are poised to address the public mental health questions that cannot and are not being addressed by non-governmental entities, as well as research questions that are beyond the scope and timeframe of the RO1 process.

Starting in December 2006, suggestions for the most important research directions and projects for the Networks will be solicited via an open process from a broad range of investigators, stakeholders, and individuals living with mental illnesses, through the issuance of a Request for Information (RFI) to the Innovative Clinical Networks (NIMH). These suggestions, whether from the Networks principals or from the wide range of public and research stakeholders, will be reviewed by a workgroup of the National Advisory Mental Health Council (NAMHC). The workgroup will report its findings on top research areas and approaches to the full NAMHC for consideration.

Shaikh presented with 2006 NAMI Service Award

At the December meeting of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) meeting, Rafique Shaikh, MD, PGY 3, was presented with the 2006 Service Award from the local chapter. Certificates of appreciation also went to Jana Lincoln, MD, PGY 4, Lynn Ludvigson, MD, PGY 3, Victor McNerney, DO, PGY 3, Rafique Shaikh, MD, PGY 3 and Sheila Williamson, MD, PGY 3. Karla Eisele, MD, a recent graduate of our program and Guoouzel Nabvacia, MD, a past resident also received certificates of appreciation.

According to Ahsan Khan, MD, associate professor, the psychiatry residents do a great community service by their involvement in NAMI’s Share & Care meetings. NAMI is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of persons/families living with serious and persistent mental illness. Founded in 1979, NAMI has over 1,100 local communities across the country who join together to meet the NAMI mission through advocacy, research, support, and education. Dr. Khan has served on NAMI’s board of directors since 2000 and the residents have been involved with the “Share & Care Meeting” since 2001.

MPH student wins KPHA poster competition

Susan Carr, MD, assistant professor, won the student poster competition at the Annual Kansas Public Health Association Conference in Topeka, Kansas. Carr is an MPH student on the Wichita campus, as well as assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Carr has been involved with several Capstone projects at the Sedgwick County Suicide Prevention Task Force. She has special interest in the suicide rates and risks in Sedgwick County, public health and public mental health care.

Dr. Carr’s winning student poster was titled, “Who Is Calling? A Demographic Study of EMS Responses to Psychiatric Emergencies in Sedgwick County, Kansas 2002-2003.” She presented her poster at the Annual American Public Health Association Conference, Nov. 4-8 in Boston, Massachusetts.

PhD, are or have been principal investigators or co-investigators on research studies. Drs. Morgan and Veenstra were certified by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to do the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy as part of the STAR*D study. The department’s research activity also leads to scholarly activity. This year, the department of psychiatry produced more publications than any other department on the KUSM campus. The faculty also involved residents in their scholarly activity thus providing necessary mentoring for their residents. Connie Marsh, MD, collaborated with Jana Lincoln, MD, fourth year resident on a geropsychiatry poster which was presented by Dr. Lincoln at an international conference in Puerto Rico. Sheldon Preskorn, MD, teamed up with Jeremy Tan, MD, to write a paper for the E. E. Baumhaid award. Katherine Grimley, MD, produced and presented a poster for the research seminar. Don Morgan, PhD, has teamed up with Darwin Dorf, PhD, professor from our sister institution, Wichita State University (WSU) on an on-going study of psychology testing instruments. Numerous psychology graduate students from WSU are working on this research project. Lyle Baade, PhD, has worked with Robin

NAMI’s members find solace, support and assistance in coping with mental illness by sharing experiences and information in the share and care meetings. Advice and counseling are offered from the collective experiences of the group. By being involved with the Share & Care meetings, the residents have an opportunity to understand the impact of mental illness from the perspective of the family and community; become aware of the local community’s need for specific resources and current availability and limitations of local resources; become aware of the expectations of the consumers from their psychiatrist; understand the problems and frustrations of patients and their families dealing with mental disorders; educate family and patients about their mental illness, i.e. warning signs; talk about expectations of the psychiatrist from their patients; clarify myths and misconceptions about mental illness and to assess their own knowledge.

NAMI has benefited from the fact that psychiatry residents under Dr. Khan’s supervision have been attending NAMI meetings regularly for the last five or more years. This involvement helps the patient, their family, and the resident as each has much to share and learn from the other.

The involvement of the residents and faculty in NAMI is an example of how integrally the department of psychiatry is with the community in Wichita, Sedgwick County, and Kansas as a whole.

Matson, WSU student and KUSM-W MPA neuropsychometrician on MATRICS. Dr. Baade and Robin Matson have started working with Dr. Koren Lioy on a study in epilepsy on the WADA procedure. They have already been asked to present their experiences at an upcoming Psychiatry Grand Round.

Translational research is a major initiative of the National Institute of Health. The department of psychiatry is intimately involved in translational research by their involvement in the NIMH funded Translational Research in Clinical Trials Networks. Through these networks and other collaboration, the faculty of the KUSM-W department of psychiatry work with every major department in the country including Harvard University, Columbia University, Pittsburgh University, Duke University, Vanderbilt University, Northwestern University, UC-Los Angeles and UC – San Diego.
Dr. M. Perales’ thoughts on research

Mary: What was the name of your research project?

Dr. Perales: Pilot 3 study for the Depression Trial Network (DTN). This network was established by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) based on the sites which participated in the largest treatment trial in clinical depression ever sponsored by NIMH, the Sequenced Treatment Alternatives to Relieve Depression (STAR*D) trial.

KUSM-W was one of 14 sites selected to participate in this trial and subsequently, in the Depression Trial Network. Most of the leading academic medical centers in the country participated in the STAR*D trial and now are in the DTN including, universities of Harvard, Columbia, Pittsburgh, Northwestern, Vanderbilt, UCLA, and UCSF.

Mary: What were your goals going into this research project?

Dr. Perales: They were to learn about procedures and follow-up and questionnaires involved in a clinical trial research project.

Mary: What was the purpose of the study?

Dr. Perales: The purpose of the current study was to find out if a combination of medications, two antidepressants (Escitalopram & BupropionSR), will help people with major depression feel fully well.

Mary: What did the study involve?

Dr. Perales: The study involved evaluating candidates with treatment resistant depression who had not benefited from previous trials of single antidepressant regimens.

Mary: Was this your first clinical trial?

Dr. Perales: Yes.

Mary: Given that this study was your first as a PI, did anything about it surprise you?

Dr. Perales: Yes, the amount of paperwork that goes into a research study and the precision expected for that paperwork.

Mary: What did you think of the research project?

Dr. Perales: I enjoyed it and would like to be involved in other projects.

Mary: What did you learn from it?

Dr. Perales: The format and procedures of research projects is different and much more demanding than clinical practice.

Dr. Perales’ thoughts on research

Mary: What was the period of time covered by the project?

Dr. Perales: The study lasted approximately five months of seeing participants.

Mary: Were there other investigators working with you?

Dr. Perales: I was the only investigator here at KUSM-W that worked on this project and Diane Hilger was the head coordinator from the Clinical Research Institute (CRI). I participated in a weekly teleconference where concerns and questions about the project were discussed. These teleconferences involved investigators from all of the aforementioned academic medical centers. I was interacting on a weekly basis with leading depression researchers from the leading academic medical centers throughout the United States.

Mary: Did you have anyone to help you?

Dr. Perales: Sherry Copenhaver, RN, former Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences registered nurse; Diane Hilger, LPN, CRI clinical research coordinator, and Dr. Sheldon Preskorn in his role as CEO of CRI. Sherry was the coordinator who assisted me with the participants. She made sure the participants showed for appointments, were doing OK, took blood pressures and weight at every visit, and answered questions about the forms they (the participants) filled out. Sherry also dispensed the study drug and helped set up follow-up appointments.

Diane was the coordinator and she saw that the study protocol was followed by both myself and Sherry and she was available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for emergency calls for questions, concerns or issues regarding the study from myself, Sherry or the participants. Diane came over and trained Sherry and me on completing the study forms that had to be entered into STAR*D after each participant visit.

Dr. Preskorn helped as needed with the logistics of the study, with the recruitment and management of subjects, as needed, and with the interactions with the overall DTN. Additionally, Bryan Baker with CRI provided important “behind the scenes”, as did Mark Taylor from the CRI grants and contracts office. The ability to do this study in collaboration with CRI was invaluable to me as a first time principal investigator.

Serving the community

On Oct. 21, Mercedes Perales, MD, associate professor, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, spent the day doing depression screenings for the Hispanic population in Wichita. The depression screening was sponsored by the American Cancer Society. Dr. Perales, assisted by 3rd and 4th year medical students, screened approximately 100 individuals.

Research activities in Psychiatry department

E very faculty member in the department has been involved in clinical research over the last several years. This year alone seven faculty members have been a principal investigator (PI) on one or more clinical trials as summarized below:

Lyle Baade, PhD, was PI on the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) funded Treatment Research to Improve Cognition in Schizophrenia (MATRICS) which concluded this year. He has been assisted by Dr. Richard Matson, neuropsychometrician and Dana Soetaert, PRN neuropsychometrician. Dr. Baade is also the PI on the “A Study to Evaluate the Performance Characteristics and Potential Clinical Utility of Neuropsychological Tests for Use in Studies of Patients with Schizophrenia” study. This study’s objective is to evaluate various neuropsychological test batteries for assessing cognition in patients with schizophrenia and to assess the cognitive effects of two different psychostimulants versus placebo in individuals with schizophrenia.

Michael J. Burke, MD, is PI on two ongoing studies on the Vagal Nerve Stimulator device which is the first implantable device approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of patients with otherwise treatment refractory clinical depression. The current study is being funded by Cyberonics, Inc. which produces this device. Dr. Burke was also the local PI on the original study that lead to this device receiving FDA approval. Like the other studies listed here, this work makes a device available to citizens of Kansas who otherwise would not have access to it.

Connie Marsh, MD, is PI for the Depression Trials Network which is the new entity created from the STAR*D study.

Dr. D’Empaire presented “Medical Condition Affecting Psychological Factors” on Nov. 16 at the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine in Tucson, AZ. Ahsan Khan, MD, was the PI on the NIMH funded Clinical Antipsychotic Trials of Intervention Effectiveness (CATIE II) study. He is now the PI on the NIMH funded Schizophrenia Trial Network and is the PI on the network’s next study, “Clinical Management of Metabolic Problems in Patients with Schizophrenia: Switching to Aripiprazole versus Continued Treatment with Olanzapine, Quetiapine, or Risperidone (CAMPy)” study. The primary objective of this study is to compare the effects of switching to aripiprazole versus continued treatment with olanzapine, quetiapine, or risperidone on risk of cardiovascular disease as indicated by non-HDL cholesterol. A secondary objective is to compare the effects of switching to aripiprazole versus continued treatment with olanzapine, quetiapine, or risperidone on the clinical stability of schizophrenic illness. This study like CATIE is designed to provide real answers to real clinical problems.

John Boher, MD, Susan Carr, MD, Don Morgan, PhD, and Glenn Veenstra, ...