As I looked back over the recent history of the department, one thing struck me. We are constantly changing, moving ahead, moving on. Sometimes, that movement involves our people. Robert Sweet, MD, moved to another department but retains his faculty appointment. He was just awarded a major DOD grant, which will enable him to continue working with us.

We congratulate our graduating residents on their fellowships: Robert Goldfarb, MD (fellowship at Columbia University Medical Center and New York Presbyterian Hospital); Sumit Isharwal, MBBS (fellowship at Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center), and Travis Pagliara, MD (fellowship at UT Southwestern in Dallas, TX). Our Reconstruction Fellow, Mya Levy, MD, also completed her work with us.

We are very excited to welcome a new faculty member, Assistant Professor Michael Borofsky, MD, who specializes in endo-urology (see page 2 for more details). Anindya Bagchi, PhD, from the Department of Genetics, Cell Biology and Development, will also join our department to focus more closely on his research collaboration with us.

And we welcome our new residents, Maria Uloko, MD; Ayman Soubra, MD; and Adam Defazio, MD; and Reconstruction Fellow Ronak Gor, DO. We are also excited to announce that we’re restarting the Oncology and Minimally Invasive Urology Fellowship in collaboration with Pratap Reddy, MD, and colleagues at Urology Associates. Our 2016 Fellow is Igor Pinkhasov.

We’ve had many successes that helped us move forward. We established the new Barry Lectureship that will host a visiting professor annually. We thank all our visiting professors for spending time with us this year, enlightening us with their knowledge and expertise.

(continued on page 2)
Message from the Department Head, continued

One of our biggest successes was establishing a system-wide group designed to coordinate urology services throughout the Fairview system. We provide services in Fairview locations throughout the state as well as coordinate care, bringing the latest research and cutting-edge practices. Because we constantly monitor outcomes, we could potentially increase the attention paid to quality throughout the system.

Our department had phenomenal community and patient support this year. We completed funding for the Doherty Chair and celebrated the fact with Mike Doherty and his wife, Cathy, and their family and friends. We had a great Kidney Cancer Climb fundraiser and our patients spearheaded the Donald Tremblay Walk for Bladder Cancer, raising $50,000 for research and support programs.

In addition, we published 73 papers, in addition to presenting several abstracts at regional and national meetings.

Lastly, I assumed the 2016–2017 presidency of the Minnesota Urologic Society and look forward to working on some exciting programs with colleagues and faculty in that capacity.

In summary, this has been a successful, dynamic period. One in which we’ve moved ahead in our quest to continuously improve urological education, research and patient care.

Department welcomes new faculty member

Michael Borofsky, MD, joined our department as an Assistant Professor in July. He recently completed a two-year Endourology Fellowship at Indiana University. He attended medical school at the University of Michigan and completed his residency at NYU in New York City.

Dr. Borofsky has focused much of his work on treating kidney stones. He is trained in one of the most effective ways of managing large, complex stones – percutaneous nephrolithotomy – whereby the kidney is accessed directly to facilitate stone removal, and in ureteroscopy, during which the surgeon guides a tiny telescope up the kidney’s natural orifices to find and ultimately remove stones.

Dr. Borofsky is also interested in treating benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and is trained in Holmium Laser Enucleation of the Prostate (HoLEP). “This procedure is technically demanding,” he said. “But it is maximally effective in completely removing the obstructing tissue, giving the most symptom relief and reducing the likelihood of needing another treatment later in life.” Although available for several years, HoLEP is offered in only a handful of organizations throughout the country.

In addition to clinical work, Dr. Borofsky will continue his research gaining insight about how kidney stones form and how patients with kidney stones differ from one another. Categorizing those differences may lead to more targeted treatments. He also looks forward to teaching residents.

One of the reasons Dr. Borofsky is excited to be part of the U of M is that it’s considered to be the birthplace of Endourology. “They were the innovators in percutaneous nephrolithotomy in the early ‘80s,” he said. “People who have been part of the U’s program have become world authorities in the field.”

Dr. Borofsky, his wife and two children, will live in the western suburbs of the Twin Cities.
Before my trip to the United States, the department of Urology and University of Minnesota (UMN) assisted greatly in procuring a visa for the program got me a decent accommodation as well as a return ticket. On my arrival in the United States on the 9th of September 2015, I was welcomed with great hospitality on my first day by Dr. Jane Lewis. She was extremely welcoming! She later took me round the Masonic Children Hospital and introduced me to Operating Room (OR) and Clinic. I later met with the Director of Institute of Paediatric Urology, Dr. Lawrence Cisek who equally welcomed me into the unit.

I registered in the Hospital and the University and commenced the programme immediately. The registration gave me access to the OR, library and online resources of the University. The distribution of cases in paediatric urology was similar to ours at home but the management approaches differ significantly based on the available infrastructures and expertise. I witnessed the important roles of endoscopy and laparoscopy in paediatric urology. I participated in almost all paediatric urology cases that took place while at the centre. Altogether I observed about a hundred different paediatric urology procedures within these three months. I learned some alternative ways of carrying out some of the common open procedures. My experience with laparoscopy at the centre made me develop profound interest in Uro-laparoscopy more than ever before. I realized that there were very few procedures that could not be accomplished laparoscopically and endoscopically other than reconstructive urology cases even in children.

Aside the paediatric urology procedures, I also joined many adult endoscopic procedures (including TURP, Green laser prostatectomy, Ureteroscopy etc.), robotic surgeries (Radical Nephrectomy, Radical Prostatectomy etc.), and reconstructive surgeries (buccal mucosa urethroplasty, bladder reconstruction etc.). The vast experience of the urologists as well as high patients load at UMN offered me a panoramic perspective of urologic practice. I spent quality time at the SIM-PORTAL practising laparoscopy, ureteroscopy and green laser prostatectomy techniques. The staffs of the centre were very cooperative and supportive. They gave me unhindered access to the facility throughout my stay. Other notable activities include my presentation at the departmental grand round on the topic entitled ‘An overview of Urologic Healthcare Delivery in Nigeria and my visiting scholar experience at the University of Minnesota’. I attended a Legacy Dinner organized by the department of Paediatrics, UMN to mark the hundred-year anniversary of the department where I had the opportunity of meeting the Leo Fung family. I also attended ‘One Team’ dinner organized by the Department of Urology. A send forth dinner was also organized by the department for me.

No doubt, this UMN-SIU scholarship-training program has afforded me the opportunity of a wider exposure in urology. I also had the privilege of meeting and establishing relationships with many of the urologists in the centre. This I consider as a major achievement.

I want to first thank Prof. Badrinath Konety, Professor and Chair of the department for accepting me to be part of the department and for always being available for assistance throughout my stay. Special thanks to Dr. Lars Cisek and Dr. Jane Lewis who I worked with. They are talented, tolerant and accommodating. They gave me all the necessary attentions while with them. Many thanks to Dr. Rob Sweet, Dr. Sean Elliot and Dr Christopher Warlick who allowed and integrated me into their units anytime I joined them for procedures. Special thanks to other faculties and the resident doctors who were equally helpful and contributed significantly to the overall success of my program, especially Dr. Travis Moncrief and Dr. John Schomburg who I worked directly with in the paediatric urology unit. I also thank all the administrative staff of the department and the hospital for their assistance throughout my stay.

Finally, I’m very grateful to the family of Leo-Fung who sponsored my trip to the United States and I do hope that this dream of assisting aspiring and young urologists especially from the developing nations will be kept alive to future generations.
Cochrane Urology Update 2016

Cochrane Urology Welcomes Managing Editor Alea Miller

Ms. Alea Miller joined Cochrane Urology as its new Managing Editor in March 2016, taking over from Mrs. Molly Neuberger who had continued to fill this role working remotely since the Group’s relocation from the University of Florida. Ms. Alea Miller’s office location at the Minneapolis VAMC will greatly facilitate communication, workflow and ultimately productivity of the Group.

Cochrane Urology Fellow Jae Hung Jung (2016-2018)

In August 2016, Dr. Jae Hung Jung, Assistant Professor of Urology from Yonsei University, Wonju College of Medicine in Korea joins Cochrane Urology and the UMN Department of Urology to learn advanced systematic reviews and Cochrane methods. He will be joined by his wife Juhyeon Lee and his 2 sons Sumin Jung and Yunseo Jung for a planned 1 ½ year stay in the Twin Cities. His clinical interests lie in male lower urinary tract symptoms attributable to benign prostatic hyperplasia. His long-term plans are to institute a Cochrane Urology Satellite in Seoul, South Korea upon his return.

Featured Research

A collaborative research project led by Cochrane Urology assessed the quality of systematic reviews in the urological literature. The study documents a dramatic increase in the number of published systematic reviews but a stagnation of methodologic quality. Approximately one-third of systematic reviews scored 3 or less using the validated AMSTAR instrument (range 0 – 11, higher scores indicate higher quality) that measures systematic review quality. To enhance the validity and impact of systematic reviews, more authors and editors need to apply well-established methodologic standards. (The study has been submitted to BJU International for publication).

Collaboration with BJU International

At a recent meeting in London, UK Coordinating Editor Philipp Dahm and BJU International Chief Editor Prokar Dasgupta discussed their mutual interest in the development and dissemination of high quality systematic review to guide the practice of urology. Building on a longstanding co-publication agreement, which allows abbreviated versions of Cochrane reviews to be simultaneously published in BJU International, the editors agreed to enhance coordination of the development and dissemination of high impact systematic reviews. This initiative will build on Cochrane Urology’s methodological expertise and editorial processes and capitalize on BJU International’s impressive social media presence. Watch this space for future updates.
Published Protocols


Chemoprevention agents for prostate cancer. Philip M Zegelbone, Tea Reljic, Danyell Wilson, Rahul Mhaskar, Branko Miladinovic, Ambuj Kumar, and Benjamin Djulbegovic. 

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD012206/abstract;jsessionid=75D3AC173E59210FD333C536C3BE8E09.f02t01

Future Events

Cochrane Colloquium in Seoul, North Korea (October 23-27, 2016) This is the main meeting of the Cochrane Collaboration  
www.colloquium.cochrane.org

GRADE Workshop in Orlando, FL (November 2-4, 2016) Hands-on workshop for systematic review authors and guideline developers  
www.gradeconf.org

The Phillip G. Semmer Fund for Prostate Cancer Research

The Phillip G. Semmer Fund for Prostate Cancer Research
Karine lost her husband, Phil, to prostate cancer August 2012. Grateful for the care Phil received from Drs. Konety and Jha, Karine and Phil provided their own philanthropic support and Karine directed Phil’s memorials to the IPUC. In early 2013, she created the The Phillip G. Semmer Fund for Prostate Cancer Research.

Since then, Karine has made a mulit-year pledge to the fund, works with General Mills and Medtronic on providing matches and engages others in support of Phil’s fund. She and Dr. Konety decided that a rotating Semmer Scholar award would be an appropriate way to honor Phil and provide support to advance research for prostate cancer.

Karine is a dedicated, passionate volunteer and supporter of the IPUC. She serves on UMF’s Vision 2017 Cancer Advisory Committee, co-leads a prostate cancer patient and caregiver support groups, engages others in the Movember run to benefit the MN Prostate Cancer Coalition, and carries the banner of prostate cancer education and awareness wherever she goes.
Anindya Bagchi, MD, PhD, loves tackling the most difficult problems in the fight against cancer… particularly the ones that go unaddressed because of the risk involved. “I believe we cannot make significant progress in finding cures for the more difficult cancers without a certain level of forward thinking that allows young researchers to take some amount of risk,” he said.

Dr. Bagchi found the support he needs for that kind of risk taking in the Department of Urology and the U’s Masonic Cancer Center. “Their philosophy is aligned to my high-risk, high-reward style of research,” he noted.

One of his most recent discoveries is being looked at as a potential breakthrough in cancer treatment. “We discovered a key regulator [PVT1] of a major cancer-causing gene [myelocytomatosis oncogene or MYC],” he said, adding that this is considered a breakthrough for two reasons:

1) A high level of MYC is generally associated with poor outcome in cancer patients
2) Cancer researchers have tried to target MYC as a therapeutic intervention for these patients for many years, which had not been very successful.

“Recently, the emergence of bromodomain inhibitors is showing some promise in targeting MYC,” said Dr. Bagchi. “We believe that targeting PVT1 is an attractive and powerful strategy to inhibit MYC in these aggressive cancers.” He is working with Drs. Badrinath Konety and Scott Dehm to extend this work in prostate and bladder cancer.

A native of India, Dr. Bagchi received his bachelor’s degree in chemistry and master’s degree in biochemistry from the University of Calcutta and University of Kalyani, respectively. He completed his doctoral studies in molecular genetics from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi and then his postdoctoral fellowship at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York, where he worked on the genetic basis of cancer and schizophrenia.
2016 Graduating Chief Residents

The Department of Urology Graduation Dinner was held on Friday, June 17th at the McNamara Alumni Center. We honored our three graduating Chief Residents: Robert Goldfarb, MD, Sumit Isharwal, MBBS and Travis Pagliara, MD (pictured top to bottom at right). Dr. Goldfarb is moving on to a Combined Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Urology Fellowship at Columbia University Medical Center and New York Presbyterian Hospital. Dr. Isharwal is moving to New York City to a Urologic Oncology fellowship at Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Dr. Pagliara is heading south to complete a Genitourinary Trauma and Reconstruction fellowship at UT Southwestern in Dallas, TX. We wish them all the best as they continue their urology training!

One Team Event

Faculty and staff gathered in October from all across our different locations for camaraderie, magical entertainment, trivia, food and recognition of accomplishments from the past year. We had close to a total of 100 individuals who enjoyed the fellowship time together.

Faculty Promotion

The department would like to congratulate Dr. Sean Elliott on being promoted to full professor. He recently attended the acknowledging reception where he and other promotees were honored by the Dean.
Suprita Krishna, M.D.

One of Dr. Krishna’s current research projects focuses on active surveillance for prostate cancer in the African American population. “Prostate cancer can range from low to high risk,” she said. “We want to see how beneficial surveillance is for this population as they have higher incidence of prostate cancer and it tends to be more aggressive.”

Dr. Krishna has been working with the department for about a year under the mentorship of Dr. Badrinath Konety, M.D., M.B.A. She will continue her work for another year before applying for residency. “A lot of our work has been related to bladder and prostate cancer,” she said. “It’s very interesting.”

While she was born in Florida, her parents moved their family to India where she would complete medical school. Even though urology wasn’t a requirement for a medical degree in India, Dr. Krishna became interested in the specialty after completing a two-week rotation during medical school.

She returned to the United States following graduation to spend time rotating at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio and Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

Ronak Gor, D.O.

Dr. Gor is working with research mentor Sean Elliott, M.D., M.S., on several projects, including an application for an American Urological Association Data Grant to evaluate contemporary practice patterns for urethral stricture disease. They are also gathering data to analyze quality of life outcomes for patients who require terminal ileum resection, and the role of surveillance cystoscopy in patients with bladder augments.

Dr. Gor’s research interests include quality improvement and outcomes research for patients with urethral stricture disease, prosthetic devices, genitourinary trauma, and neurogenic bladder caused by congenital diseases or spinal cord injury.

A Philadelphia native, Dr. Gor earned his medical degree from the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Erie, PA, and his undergraduate from the University of Pittsburgh.
Genri Pinkhasov, M.D., F.A.C.S.
For the past four years, Dr. Pinkhasov has been a practicing urologist on Long Island, NY. When he realized he needed to sharpen his skills in robotic surgery, a one-year opportunity at the University of Minnesota that starts in October was just what the doctor ordered. “I look forward to doing a lot of cases and getting a lot of experience in robotic surgery and oncology,” said Dr. Pinkhasov. “I want to get as much out of this opportunity as I can.”

Fluent in Russian, he and his family lived in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, until the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. They fled to the United States and landed in Queens, NY. Dr. Pinkhasov attended college and medical school at State University of New York (SUNY) Downstate in Brooklyn. He completed his surgery/urology residency at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, PA.

Kojiro Tashiro, M.D.
A graduate of Tokyo Medical University, Dr. Tashiro has been practicing urology for 10 years. As a research fellow at the university, he is working with Dr. Anindya Bagchi, Ph.D., on projects involving cancer genetics and molecular biology, especially in prostate cancer.

One of their projects focuses on non-coding RNA, particularly PVT1. Research has shown that PVT1 is known as an oncogene that has the potential to cause cancer. The underlying mechanisms for its ability to do that are not yet known. According to Dr. Tashiro, “The large scale and many resources of the university,” may help him and his colleagues shed some light on that mystery.

Dr. John M. Barry Endowed Lectureship Series
To create a lectureship series that will focus on the science relevant to urology - a lectureship that will provide current and future residents, faculty and alumni the opportunity to learn from the best and brightest scientists from across the field; to permanently illustrate Dr. Barry’s appreciation of the education he received at the U of MN and for others to recognize his exemplary contributions to medicine; to enrich intellectual and community life and create the same sense of curiosity in the attendees that was the cornerstone of Dr. Barry’s career.
2015 Publications


Rostambeigi N, Goldfarb R, Hunter DW.


The Donald Tremblay Walk for Bladder Cancer

The fifth annual Walk for Bladder Cancer was a huge success! We had 200 participants and volunteers in attendance and raised over $45,000 for the Minneapolis walk. The Institute for Prostate and Urologic Cancers at the University of Minnesota Health partnered with the University of Minnesota Foundation to raise proceeds to benefit bladder cancer research and support programs for patients.