The Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine at UPMC

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RESPIRATORY reader

In This Issue

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In this issue of Respiratory Reader, we are privileged to provide updates from the Dorothy P. and Richard P. Simmons Center for Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD) at UPMC.

The Simmons Center was generously endowed in 2001 by the Simmons family with a charge to find the cause and the cure for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), and to care for patients and their caregivers. Over the past 15 years, the Center has seen more than 4,000 ILD patients from all over the United States. Due to the generous spirit of our patients who have enrolled in research studies, and our visionary leadership including former Director, **Naftali Kaminksi, MD**, Medical Director, **Kevin Gibson, MD**, and clinical nurse specialist, **Kathleen Lindell, PhD, RN**, we have achieved international recognition for seminal discoveries in IPF. Samples from the Simmons Center have led to the discovery of the MUC5B and TOLLIP genes that are very highly associated with the development of IPF. We also have identified several proteins and genes, sampled from simple blood testing, to predict prognosis of IPF. We were privileged to serve as one of the centers for the clinical trials that tested the new FDA-approved therapies for IPF. In collaboration with **Steven Duncan, MD**, at the University of Alabama, **Michael Donahoe, MD**, has shown for the first time that the dreaded 'IPF exacerbation,' a frequently fatal complication of IPF, can be treated with therapies that target autoimmunity.

In April 2015, **Daniel Kass, MD**, assumed leadership of the Simmons Center in April 2015 and his laboratory explores the pathogenesis of IPF at its most basic levels to help devise new therapies for IPF and for all ILDs. Through his work alongside **Dr. Gibson, Luis Ortiz, MD**, and **Kristen Veraldi, MD, PhD**, referrals to the Simmons Center continue to grow. Additionally, **Jared Chiarchiaro, MD**, and Lauren Tomsic, RPA-C, have joined the Simmons Center team.

This issue includes highlights from the laboratory of **Mauricio Rojas, MD**, who has spearheaded studies of bone marrow-derived mesenchymal stem cells as therapies for respiratory failure and IPF; new data on the role of mitochondrial dysfunction in alveolar epithelial cells in IPF from **Ana Mora, MD**; and the critical importance of palliative care for patients with IPF from Dr. Lindell.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Respiratory Reader and we extend our best wishes for 2017.

Daniel J. Kass, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Director, Dorothy P. and Richard P. Simmons Center for Interstitial Lung Disease

Rama K. Mallampalli, MD
Professor of Medicine
Division Chief, Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine
UPMC Endowed Professor and Director, Acute Lung Injury Center of Excellence
Department of Medicine
University of Pittsburgh