

medicine minute

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

need to know

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

New Comprehensive Leave Program to Take Effect Sept. 1



UT Southwestern's new comprehensive leave program, Your Time Away, offers current employees more control over how they use their paid time off (PTO) while preserving their prior vacation and sick accruals for future use. In addition to PTO, the new plan, which will take effect in September, reduces the number of set holidays but adds a floating holiday, includes a paid parental benefit, and creates a medical hardship leave pool.

Human Resources leadership will hold in-person and virtual information sessions for employees [at noon on Wednesday, May 29](#), and at [9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 30](#). Questions can also be asked via [email](#) or phone, or by scheduling an in-person appointment.

For more information, visit the [Your Time Away webpage](#).

kudos

LEADERSHIP

Burstein to Chair DHMI Study Section



Ezra Burstein, M.D., Ph.D., a Professor of Internal Medicine and Chief of the Division of Digestive and Liver Diseases, has been appointed Chair of the Digestive System host Defense, Microbial Interactions and Immune and Inflammatory Diseases (DHMI) study section of the National Institutes of Health.

The study section reviews applications involving gastrointestinal innate and adaptive immunity, gut microbiota/microbiome, host-microbial interactions, intestinal infections, pathophysiology and immunobiology of inflammation including inflammatory bowel diseases, inflammatory processes in the exocrine pancreas, and epithelial cell biology as it relates to mucosal defense or repair.

Dr. Burstein holds the Berta M. and Dr. Cecil O. Patterson Chair in Gastroenterology.

MENTAL HEALTH

Assessment Tool Reveals Environmental Impact on Well Being



As Mental Health Awareness Month draws to a close, it's a good time to check the effectiveness of the Well-Being Fuel Gauge, a simple assessment tool developed by **Shannon Scielzo, Ph.D.**, an Associate Professor in Education Administration and Associate Director of Education.

"Resident well-being is an increasingly relevant issue in medical education, but there was no consensus on how to best measure it," Dr. Scielzo says. "We developed the fuel gauge nearly 10 years ago so that residents could have a direct line of communication with their program's administration, and program leaders could monitor and identify residents who were struggling with regard to their well-being."

The tool asks residents to report their "fuel levels" using a 1 to 5 Likert-type scale (1, empty; 3, half tank; and 5, full tank). Residents who provide low scores (1 or 2) are contacted by program leadership, and the program director sends weekly e-mail updates that address residents' comments on their well-being fuel gauge.

"From my perspective, well-being for our trainees is generally contextually-based—the environment or situation is the major cause, not the individual or personality," Dr. Scielzo says. "So, we strive to address the clinical learning environment whenever possible, and help trainees seek support and resources to address the rest."

Over the years, the tool underscored similarities among residents, she says.

"If they are sleep-deprived, sick, hungry, or have a bad interaction with someone, we can probably expect low well-being, and possible negative outcomes," she adds. "Similarly, we have examined the correspondence across scores on various rotations (from peers to other folks in the same environment) and the environment appears to account for a pretty strong portion of the variance in well-being scores. So, if a trainee is low on well-being, their peers, the faculty supervising them, and even the nurses on the team are likely low, too."

research roundup

PUBLICATIONS

PSTP Resident, Colleagues Show SGLT2 Inhibitors Work Across Multiple Disease Subgroups



A class of drugs initially developed to lower blood sugar may also reduce the incidence of cardiovascular death in patients with type 2 diabetes, heart failure, chronic kidney disease, and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, even when these conditions coexist, according a study published in [*The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*](#). The findings provide convincing evidence that sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 (SGLT2) inhibitors, when more widely used, could decrease the morbidity, mortality, and costs associated with these diseases.

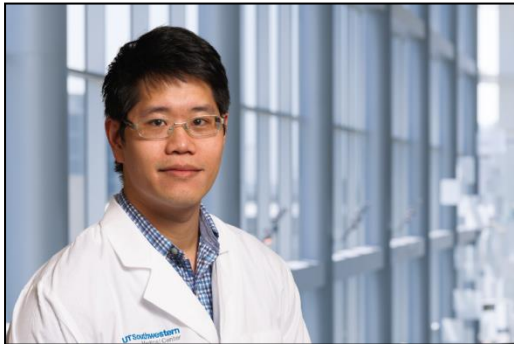
"Clinical trials with SGLT2 inhibitors were designed to study composite outcomes in broad populations," says lead author **Muhammad Shariq Usman, M.B.B.S.**, a first-year resident in the Physician-Scientist Training Program. "Their sample sizes were inadequate to assess important outcomes such as cardiovascular death and all-cause mortality. Moreover, these trials were too small to study whether the benefit of SGLT2 inhibitors was consistent in granular subgroups of patients."

By combining data from 15 clinical trials, the researchers were able to reliably analyze more than 50 subpopulations with cardiometabolic disease and show that SGLT2 inhibitors are broadly effective across these groups.

“The benefit of SGLT2 inhibitors is consistent regardless of patient age, sex, BMI, race, and other demographics,” Dr. Usman adds.

FROM THE NEWSROOM

Tumor Mutations May Not Predict Response to Immunotherapy



The number of mutations in the DNA of cancerous tumors may not be an indicator of how well patients will respond to immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICIs), a commonly prescribed type of immunotherapy, a team led by **David Hsieh, M.D.**, an Assistant Professor in the Division of Hematology and Oncology, reported in a retrospective study. The findings, published in [Nature Cancer](#), could lead to more effective ways of deciding which patients will benefit most from this type of treatment.

“Our study challenges the paradigm that tumor mutational burden is a universal marker of how immunogenic a cancer will

be. Current standards that rely on this assumption could lead to both undertreatment and overtreatment of patients,” Dr. Hsieh says.

To read the press release, click [here](#).

TEAM BUILDING

CTSA to Present Behavioral Skills Module on Adaptation and Correction

The Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) Program will present a behavioral skills training program designed to increase collaboration and effectiveness of scientific teams on **Wednesday, June 5, at noon**. Presented by **Victoria Lutgen Gronau, Ph.D.**, a senior research scientist in the Department of Clinical & Translational Research, the TeamMAPPS (Team Methods to Advance Processes and Performance in Science) module will focus on the competencies of adaptation and correction.

To register for the virtual event, click [here](#).

alumni news

REUNIONS

Class of 1974 Alumni Honored at Events



UT Southwestern Medical Center Medical School alumni gathered on May 10 and 11 for Alumni Reunion, an annual event that includes opportunities to hear from leadership, tour the campus, and celebrate the institution’s alumni network.

The weekend celebration honored Medical School alumni from the Class of 1974, who were celebrating their 50th anniversary, as well as platinum alumni who graduated more than 50 years ago. Both groups were honored at a special lunch on Friday, featuring a panel of current and newly graduated students.

Other invited alumni who graduated from the Medical School in 1984, 1994, and 1999 joined the group for a reception Saturday evening to cap off festivities.

To view photos from the weekend's events, click [here](#).

in case you missed it

CONFERENCE REPORT

Division Faculty, Trainees Make Significant Impact DDW



Faculty, trainees, and staff members from the Division of Digestive and Liver Diseases were prominently featured at Digestive Disease Week (DDW), which took place from **May 18 to 21** in Washington, D.C., participating in more than 50 lectures and poster sessions throughout the event.

Sponsored by the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases, the American Gastroenterological Association, the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, and the Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract, the conference brings together more than 13,000 participants annually to share the latest science and innovations in digestive disease care.

To read the complete listing of UTSW posters and lectures presented during the conference, click [here](#).

Articles and Videos Featuring Internal Medicine Colleagues

- [It's a Love Story: Wife Gifts Husband a Kidney at Parkland Hospital](#) (Via WFAA-TV, with **Joe Lockridge, M.D.**)
- [The Stress Hormone Isn't All Bad. What to Know About Your Cortisol Levels.](#) (Via *The Wall Street Journal*/MSN, with **Sasan Mirfakhraee, M.D.**)



Internal Medicine News Portal
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this week

INTERNAL MEDICINE GRAND ROUNDS

Bird to Lecture on Food Allergy Therapies on May 31



Drew Bird, M.D., a Professor in the Division of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics and Interim Chief of the Division of Allergy and Immunology, will deliver the [Internal Medicine Grand Rounds](#) lecture at **8 a.m. on Friday, May 31**, in D1.502. His topic: "A Hard Nut to Crack: Unraveling Novel Food Allergy Therapies."

Dr. Bird received his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical School in San Antonio. He completed a pediatrics residency at Baylor College of Medicine, where he also finished his advanced training with a fellowship in allergy

and immunology. He was the first recipient of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology/Food Allergy Initiative Howard Gittis Memorial Award, which allowed him to complete a clinical research fellowship in food allergy under the direction of Dr. Wesley Burks at Duke University.

A Dedman Family Scholar in Clinical Care, Dr. Bird's research focuses on diagnosing, understanding, and treating life-threatening reactions to foods; his clinical research is centered on novel food allergy therapies.

Dr. Bird joined the faculty at UT Southwestern in 2009.

Noteworthy Lectures & Events

- **Thursday, May 30, 8 a.m.:** [Infectious Diseases Grand Rounds](#) with **Dr. Jeffrey Tessier** (Infectious Diseases & Geographic Medicine) – “The Versatile Blender: Novel Uses of Fecal Microbiota Transplantation”

reminders

PROFESSIONAL ENRICHMENT

Faculty Wellness Retreat Scheduled for June 7



The Office of Faculty Wellness will host its second annual Faculty Wellness Retreat on **Friday, June 7, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.** at Pegasus Park. The in-person, CME-certified event will focus on maximizing professional efficiency and include workshops, facilitated discussions, and networking opportunities to advance a culture of wellness at UT Southwestern. The theme is “Enhancing Efficiency, Embracing Trust to Maximize Professional Fulfillment.”

The keynote address will be delivered by **Jody Hoffer Gittel, Ph.D.**, a Professor at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management. She is known for having

developed the Relational Coordination theory – coordinating highly interdependent work through shared mutual values and based upon high-quality relationships and communication.

To register for the retreat, click [here](#).

LEADERSHIP LECTURE SERIES

Ahn to Speak on Transformational Communication on June 13



The Leadership Lecture Series concludes on **Thursday, June 13, at noon** with a presentation by **Christina Ahn, Ph.D.**, Leadership Coach in the Office of Women's Careers. Her topic: “Transformational Communication Using Coaching Skills.”

All lectures are virtual, informal, and brown bag. Faculty, APPs, administrators, and trainees are welcome to attend.

To register for the virtual event, click [here](#).



Internal Medicine Events Calendar

[Click to view additional events](#)

Look for the next *Medicine Minute* on **Tuesday, June 4, 2024**.
Share feedback and news items with us at IMNews@UTSouthwestern.edu

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