

medicine minute

May 27, 2025

kudos



Novartis to Acquire Promising Kidney Disease Therapy Co-Developed by Patel

A novel therapeutic candidate for autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease (ADPKD), co-developed by **Vishal Patel, M.D.**, a Professor in the Division of Nephrology, is being acquired by global pharmaceutical company Novartis.

ADPKD, a genetic disorder characterized by fluid-filled renal tubule cysts and kidney failure, is caused by mutations in one copy of the PKD1 or PKD2 genes. Dr. Patel's research identified a microRNA, miR-17, that further suppresses the remaining healthy copy of these genes, exacerbating the disease.

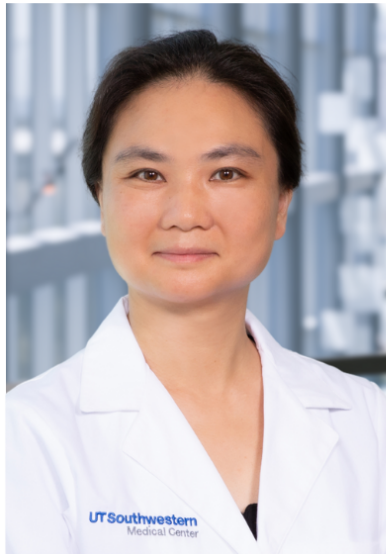
"ADPKD is one of the most common inherited diseases worldwide, affecting not only the kidney but also the liver, blood vessels, and other organs throughout the body," explains **Samir M. Parikh, M.D.**, Professor and Division Chief of Nephrology. "Because it is 'dominantly' inherited, there is a strong risk of inheriting ADPKD within affected families."

Dr. Patel partnered with Regulus Therapeutics to co-develop an anti-miR-17 oligonucleotide drug – now known as farabursen.

"This drug preferentially reaches the kidney cysts and blocks miR-17, allowing the kidney cells to increase production of PKD1 and PKD2 proteins," Dr. Patel says. "It essentially acts like an internal gene therapy. In preclinical studies, farabursen significantly slowed cyst growth, and early clinical trials showed increased PKD1/2 levels and promising signs of therapeutic benefit in patients."

Novartis' \$1.7 billion acquisition of Regulus will support Phase 3 clinical trials of farabursen. If proven effective, it would be the first therapy of its kind to directly boost PKD1/2 expression – offering new hope for patients affected by this progressive kidney disease. ■

Dr. Patel holds the Yin Quan-Yuen Distinguished Professorship in Nephrology.



Four Faculty Members Selected as IDSA Fellows

Sheena Knights, M.D., Susana Lazarte, M.D., Lenette Lu, M.D., Ph.D., and Ikwo Oboho, M.D. (pictured from left), have been selected Fellows of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA). Candidates for fellowship must demonstrate significant service to the profession, and have local, regional, or national impact.

Dr. Knights holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Princeton University in New Jersey. She earned her medical degree and completed internal medicine residency training at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. She then received advanced training through an infectious diseases fellowship at UT Southwestern. In addition to having a clinical interest in HIV care and a research focus on HIV-associated Kaposi's sarcoma, Dr. Knights also serves as Associate Program Director of the HIV Fellowship. She joined the faculty in 2019.

Dr. Lazarte is originally from Lima, Peru, where she earned her medical degree at the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia. She completed internal medicine residency training at UT Southwestern and fellowship programs in infectious diseases and in HIV medicine at Washington University in St. Louis, and currently serves on several committees of the Texas Department of State Health Services' HIV Medical Assistance Program and is a member of the Dallas HIV Task Force executive committee. Dr. Lazarte joined the faculty in 2015.

Originally from China, Dr. Lu holds a bachelor's degree in biology and Asian studies from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. She earned her medical degree and her doctoral degree in molecular virology at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. She completed an internal medicine residency at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center and a clinical fellowship in infectious diseases at Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. She then completed a postdoctoral research fellowship at Harvard School of Public Health and the Ragon Institute of Mass General, MIT, and Harvard. Dr. Lu joined the faculty in 2019.

Dr. Oboho, originally from Nigeria, holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology and human biology from Emory University in Atlanta. She earned her medical degree at Vanderbilt University in Nashville and completed internal medicine residency training at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. She then received advanced training through an infectious diseases fellowship program at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, while also completing a master's degree in clinical investigation at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. A Commander in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, Dr. Oboho has been an active-duty officer since 2013. She joined the faculty in 2022. ■

personnel updates



VanWagner Named Director of Clinical Scientist Training Program

Lisa VanWagner, M.D., an Associate Professor in the Division of Digestive and Liver Diseases and Director of its Clinical Research, has been named Director of the Clinical Scientist Training Program (CSTP), a training track within the Internal Medicine Residency. Structured similarly to the Physician Scientist Training Program (PSTP), the CSTP will also function under the umbrella of the Jean Wilson Society.

In her new role, Dr. VanWagner will further define the structure of the track, including curriculum development, recruitment procedures, and coordination with fellowship programs.

“Dr. VanWagner is a talented and motivated clinical investigator,” says **Ezra Burstein, M.D., Ph.D.**, a Professor and Division Chief of Digestive and Liver Diseases, Director of the Jean Wilson Society, and Director of the Physician Scientist Training Program. “I am confident she will set this program on a pathway to success, with a target of selecting five recruits per year.”

More details about this training pathway will be shared with the Department in the coming months. ■



Carroll Appointed Inaugural Director of Basic Science Research in Nephrology

Thomas Carroll, Ph.D., a Professor in the Division of Nephrology, has been appointed Director of Basic Science Research in Nephrology. In his new role, he will conduct annual reviews for basic science faculty, coordinate speaker invitations and itineraries, manage recruitment and retention of lab-focused faculty, oversee Division-hired lab personnel and expenditures, develop collaborative grant proposals, review early-career faculty applications, and serve on the early-career faculty mentoring committee.

Originally from Woodland Hills, California, Dr. Carroll holds a bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of California, Davis. He earned his doctorate in zoology from the University of Texas at Austin and subsequently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard University in Boston. He then joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 2004.

Dr. Carroll is internationally recognized as one of the top scientists in kidney development and research in polycystic kidney disease. In recognition of his research contributions to the discipline of nephrology, he received the Distinguished Researcher Award from the American Society of Nephrology in 2023. ■

research roundup

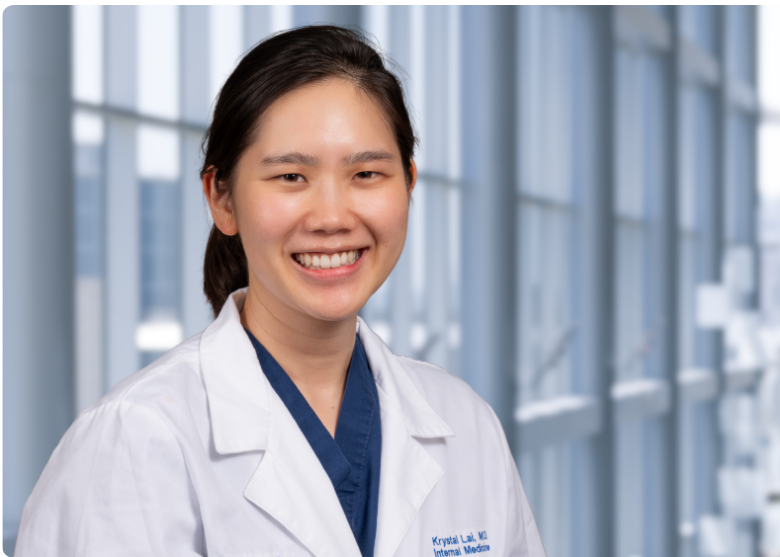
Pandey Presents Late-Breaking Clinical Science on Heart Failure Screening at European Cardiology Society Conference

Ambarish Pandey, M.D., M.S.C.S., an Associate Professor in the Division of Cardiology, presented data from a large study in Kenya evaluating the effectiveness of an artificial intelligence (AI) tool that uses electrocardiograms (ECGs) to detect early signs of heart failure at the European Society of Cardiology's Heart Failure meeting in Belgrade, Serbia.

The study enrolled nearly 6,000 participants across eight healthcare facilities who underwent screening for heart failure using ECG and echocardiography as part of the study protocol. Using this AI-ECG tool, Pandey and his team were able to identify abnormal heart function in 1 in 5 patients who were screened. Furthermore, the AI-ECG tool demonstrated excellent sensitivity (96 %) and specificity (~80 %), and very high negative predictive value (99 %) when compared to echocardiography.

"Heart failure is a problem everywhere, but particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where patients are younger and at greater risk of adverse outcomes, and have less access to echocardiograms – the usual test for heart function," Dr. Pandey says. "This study found that the AI tool was highly accurate, making it useful in determining who really needs an echocardiogram, saving time and resources." ■

education and training



Lai, Kapoor Selected for Chief Resident in Quality and Safety

Krystal Lai, M.D., a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine, has been selected to serve as the Dallas VA Medical Center's inaugural Chief Resident for Quality and Safety (CRQS) for the 2025-2026 academic year. In her new role, she will be responsible for leading and developing quality improvement (QI) curricula, mentoring Internal Medicine residents on improvement projects, and collaborating with VA academic faculty to drive institutional change. She will be succeeded by **Nilesch Kapoor, M.D.**, a third-year resident, who will assume the role for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Dr. Lai earned her bachelor's degree in biological engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and her medical degree from Stanford University.

Dr. Kapoor earned his bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and his medical degree from The Ohio State University. ■

in case you missed it

News and Digital Media Featuring Internal Medicine Colleagues

- [Radiofrequency Ablation: A First-Line Treatment Option for Autonomously Functioning Thyroid Nodules](#) (Via *Medscape*, with Iram Hussain, M.D.)
- [Teaching Teamwork and Patient Safety to Future Health Care Providers](#) (Via *CenterTimes Plus*, with Thomas Dalton, M.D., and Hina Mehta, M.D.)

need to know

Help Needed to Ensure Successful Onboarding of New Employees

Training Specialist Cheryl White, M.S., M.Ed., holds onboarding sessions for new employees on the first, second, and third Mondays of each month from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. (unless noted otherwise). She sends an email invitation to new employees on Fridays before an onboarding session but only has access to external hires. If you have a new employee who is joining the Department from within the university, please [contact Ms. White](#) so she can set up an onboarding session.

this week



Karp to Discuss Autoimmune Diseases on May 30

David Karp, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Division Chief of Rheumatic Diseases, will present the [Internal Medicine Grand Rounds](#) lecture on Friday, May 30, at 8 a.m. in D1.502. His topic: "Redefining Autoimmune Diseases: The Pathway to Prevention."

Originally from Cleveland, Dr. Karp holds dual bachelor's degrees in chemistry and biological sciences from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He received his medical degree and his doctorate in cellular and integrative biology from Washington University in St. Louis. He completed his residency and clinical fellowship training at Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis. He then completed advanced training through fellowships in immunogenetics at the National Institutes of Health.

His research interests include the underlying mechanisms of the immune system. He currently focuses on preclinical immunity – the transition from a healthy state to an asymptomatic activated immune system to symptomatic autoimmune disease.

Dr. Karp has served on the UT Southwestern faculty since 1991. ■

Dr. Karp holds the Fredye Factor Chair in Rheumatoid Arthritis Research and the Harold C. Simmons Chair in Arthritis Research.

Other Noteworthy Lectures & Conferences This Week

- Wednesday, May 21, 8 a.m.: [Geriatrics Grand Rounds](#) with Dr. Roshni Pranav (Geriatric Medicine) – “Role of Physical Therapy in Older People Living with Dementia”
- Thursday, May 22, Noon: [Pathology Seminar](#) with Dr. Shohei Koyama (Osaka University) – “Impact of the Tumor Immune Microenvironment on Immunotherapy Sensitivity”
- Friday, May 23, 1 p.m.: [Endocrine Grand Rounds](#) with Dr. Gayane Tumyan (Endocrinology) – “Comparing Survey Delivery Methods in Healthcare: A Randomized Study”

reminders

Kidney Cancer Program Grant Submissions Due June 6

The Kidney Cancer Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE) is again sponsoring an [intramural competition](#) for three to six grants of \$25,000 to \$40,000 (direct costs) as part of its Developmental Research and Career Enhancement programs.

The **Developmental Research Program** supports high-risk/high-payoff projects and projects with a translational projection. The **Career Enhancement Program** supports pilot projects from junior faculty, as well as established investigators refocusing their careers to include kidney cancer research.

Deadline for submission is **Friday, June 6**. ■

For more information, contact Program Coordinator [Kathy Worland](#).

Nominations For Outstanding APPs Accepted Through June 27

To honor the work and impact of Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) during Advanced Practice Providers Celebration Week in September, the Office of Advanced Practice Providers and the APP Recognition Subcommittee will accept nominations for six UT Southwestern-employed APPs who consistently go above and beyond in their roles, demonstrating excellence in the following categories:

- Teaching
- Ambulatory Practice
- Inpatient Clinical Practice
- Leadership
- Professional & Community Service
- Scholarly Endeavors

Additionally, an APP Champion of the Year will also be selected from among faculty and staff nominees. ■

Nominations will be accepted through June 27. To submit a nomination, click [here](#).

Look for the next *Medicine Minute* on **Tuesday, June 3, 2025**.

Share feedback and news items with us at IMNews@UTSouthwestern.edu

Copyright 2025 UT Southwestern Medical Center. All rights reserved.

Medicine Minute is a publication of the Department of Internal Medicine at UT Southwestern Medical Center.