Spotlight: Division of Hematology/Oncology

The division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplantation is made up of 10 Board certified or board eligible physicians, and 4 Nurse Practitioners, who practice at UNMC and at CHMC. Division members see almost all children and young adults with cancer and blood diseases in our catchment area, and the BMT service provides service for children with recurrent or high risk cancer, marrow failure syndromes, immunodeficiency and metabolic disease in Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota. The Division utilizes a truly multidisciplinary approach to caring for these complicated patients, working with varied pediatric subspecialists, with child life, education support services, psychology, physical and occupational therapy, and pediatric dietetics.

Bone Marrow & Stem Cell Transplant Program

The Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant Program was started at UNMC in September 1987 by physicians who still have a strong presence on campus today: husband and wife duo Drs. Peter Coccia and Phyllis Warkentin along with our current Division Chief, Dr. Bruce Gordon. Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant is unique to UNMC and to the Division. This allows the Division to provide a valuable service to children in the Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota area.

Our growing program consists of bone marrow transplants for a variety of malignant and non-malignant diseases, such as Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML), Neuroblastoma, Severe Aplastic Anemia (SAA), or Wiskott Aldrich Syndrome (WAS). The transplants are both autologous (where the patient is their own donor) and allogeneic (where the patient receives bone marrow from another individual). Allogeneic transplant donors can be related (sibling or parents) if they are a match or may be unrelated and chosen from the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP). Each sibling has a 25% chance to be a match to the child. Anyone can visit the National Marrow Donor Program site at www.nmdp.org to register to become a donor.

Since the program began in 1987, we have performed nearly 400 transplants on children and young adults, almost two thirds from
allogeneic donors and one third using stored autologous bone marrow or blood stem cells.

This year alone we have completed 14 transplants in children ranging from ages 11 months to 19 years. Of these transplants, 2 were autologous and the remaining 12 were allogeneic. The 12 allogeneic transplants included 4 matched sibling donors in which 3 of these siblings were harvested at UNMC. The remaining 8 allogeneic transplants were from unrelated donors all over the United States and other countries.

Today, our team continues to grow as we are staffed by fellowship trained physicians, masters level trained advanced nurse practitioners inpatient and outpatient, a transplant nurse coordinator as well as our floor and treatment center nursing staff and multi-disciplinary team.

Hemophilia Treatment Center

The CDC funded Hemophilia Treatment Center, under the leadership of Dr. Jim Harper, provides comprehensive care for children and adults with bleeding and thrombotic disorders. Our current research efforts focus on clinical trials of new factor products including long acting factor. Our educational efforts focus on the use of online tools to educate health professionals regarding the management of these diseases.

Hem/Onc Faculty & Staff

Physicians

- Bruce Gordon, MD, Professor, Division Chief, Executive Chairman, Institutional Review Board
- Peter Coccia, MD, Ittner Professor of Pediatrics, Vice Chairperson, Department of Pediatrics
- Minnie Abromowitch, MD, Professor
- Jill Beck, MD, Assistant Professor
- Don Coulter, MD, Assistant Professor
- David Gnarra, MD, Associate Professor
- James Harper, MD, Associate Professor, Director of Continuing Medical Education-Children's Hospital and Medical Center
- Christina Lettieri, MD, Assistant Professor
- Stefanie Lowas, MD, Assistant Professor
- Phyllis Warkentin, MD, Professor

Nurse Practitioners

- Amanda Arens, MSN, APRN, CPNP, Inpatient Nurse Practitioner
- Rebecca Swanson, MSN, APRN, CPNP, Outpatient Nurse Practitioner
- Linda Belsky-Lohr, APRN, Nurse Practitioner
- Jenilee Vogel, APRN, Nurse Practitioner

Nurses

- Jeannine Kean, RN, CPON, Nurse Case Manager
- Nancy Andrews, RN, BSN, Nurse Case Manager
- Tammy Burroughs, RN, BSN, OCN, Nurse Case Manager

*Journal Club and Patient Mgmt Conf is teleconferenced from CHMC Glow Aud. to UNMC UT 7412

Grand Rounds
A complete schedule for the month is located at www.unmc.edu/Pediatrics

Contact Us
Gary Beck, Ph.D.
gbeck@unmc.edu
402-559-7351

Newsletter Back Issues
Previous issues are available on the UNMC Pediatrics website (Link).


Kirk Grauf, RN, Pediatric Bone Marrow Coordinator  
Claudia Besco, RN, Nurse Case Manager  
Anisa Hoie, RN, Nurse Case Manager  
Heidi McIntire, RN, BSN, Nurse Case Manager  
Theresa Lyons, RN, BSN, CPN, Nurse Case Manager  

Data Managers  
Sheree Gilmore, BA, CCRC, UNMC Supervisor  
Tamra Olson, BS, CCRC, Clinical Research Coordinator, COG  
Regulatory Affairs  
Peggy Boggy, RHIA, CCRP, Clinical Research Coordinator, COG  
Registrar  
Pam Reilly, BS, Transplant Donor Search & Collection Center Coordinator  
Garrett Frost, Transplant Donor Search & Collection Center Coordinator  
Angie Boettner, RN, Coordinator for Clinical Research  
Nancy Berounsky, Certified Clinical Research Associate  

Office Associates  
Betty Esser  
Crystal Upshaw  
Sandy Quist  
Debra Denniston  

Hem/Onc Fellowship Program  
Under the leadership of Don Coulter, MD, the division has completed the necessary work to reopen the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology fellowship. Currently, the application is being reviewed by the ACGME, and the fellowship should be open in 2014. Jill Beck, MD will serve as assistant program director for the fellowship. Christina Lettieri, MD will serve as curriculum director for the program.  

Hem/Onc Research & Scholarly Activities  
In addition to the busy clinical service, division members are active in clinical and translational oncology research, as well as participating in a variety of academic activities in support of the missions of Children's Hospital and Medical Center, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center.  

Both CHMC and UNMC are full members of the Children's Oncology group (COG) the largest NCI funded pediatric cancer cooperative group, encompassing more than 250 University and Children's hospitals in the US, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Switzerland and New Zealand. Peter Coccia, MD and Minnie Abromowitch, MD are the principal investigators for COG studies at UNMC and CHMC respectively. Stefanie Lowas, MD will serve as the COG Responsible Investigator for Cancer Control activities thru the COG at both institutions. The Division also actively participates in the Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplantation Consortium  

This year, Dr. Coulter was the recipient of a $250,000 grant from the Hyundai Hope on Wheels Foundation, to extend his studies to better

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understand the molecular and genetic basis of autophagy in human neuroblastoma cell lines. In several separate but related projects, Dr. Coulter, in collaboration with senior scientists at the University of Nebraska Medical Center Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacology, and the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center, has submitted grant proposals to develop and study mouse models of Ewing's sarcoma, and develop new molecular treatment approaches to these tumors.

Dr. Jill Beck was recently accepted into the highly competitive Children's Mercy (KC) Center for Bioethics certificate program in pediatric bioethics. The nine month program trains students to become knowledgeable in pediatric bioethical issues such as the role of ethics committees, ethics consultations, futility and moral distress, and end-of-life decisions.

Pediatric Oncology/Hematology Clinical Trials Office

Children's Oncology Group data management at CHMC is coordinated by a certified clinical research associate and a nurse research coordinator. At UNMC, the five person Pediatric Oncology/Hematology clinical trials office supports both the pediatric and adult oncology and hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT) service lines.

At both institutions, the data management teams coordinate all Children's Oncology Group clinical trial activities, from regulatory affairs to subject registration and data submission to specimen retrieval and send out. Approximately 30-40 clinical trials are open for accrual at any given time and another 20 studies are in follow-up status, requiring administrative tasks such as data and specimen submission. Children's Oncology Group develops a variety of studies - therapeutic, biology/pathologic, and supportive care - covering many different diseases-leukemia, lymphoma, neuroblastoma, and sarcoma, to name a few.

At UNMC the unrelated donor stem cell transplant team is responsible for all search and procurement activities for patients who need a stem cell transplant but do not have a suitable match within their family. Successful search coordination requires knowledge of Human Leukocyte Antigen compatibility and unrelated stem cell donor standards set by the TNMC HSCT program, the FDA, as well as the discipline's broader community of clinicians and researchers. This dynamic process is an international endeavor in which coordinators are engaged even beyond the product delivery, submitting recipients' transplant data to local and national databases. In addition, this team coordinates the work up and collection of unrelated donors who have been chosen to donate cells for patients in need of a donor throughout the world.

Hem/Onc Patient Care Services

UNMC Lied Transplant Center (3rd Floor)
M-F 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM
Appointments:  402-559-7257

Children's Specialty Pediatric Center
M-F 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM
Appointments:  402-955-3950

Inpatient services at Children's Hospital & Medical Center and The Nebraska Medical Center
Hem/Onc Other Highlights

The Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Division plays a major role in the lives of many children across our nation. Because of the extreme impact that we have on our patients, we take pride in participating and leading special events that positively affect our patients. Two major events we sponsor annually include St. Baldrick’s and Camp CoHolo.

St Baldrick’s is an annual head-shaving event held to raise funds for pediatric cancer research. For the last 7 years, our department has proudly sponsored this event at The Nebraska Medical Center. Many people from around the region, both old and young, have participated in this event. With the leadership of Amanda Arens, RN, MSN, CPNP, over $10,000 was raised in this year’s event.

Camp CoHoLo is another event sponsored by our team. An annual event since 1985, this camp serves children between the ages of 6 to 17 that are personally impacted by cancer or blood disorders. It gives patients with specific medical needs an opportunity to participate in a summer camp experience. Members of the division, as well as nurses and other professionals from both CHMC and UNMC, team up to staff this fun and exciting event for our pediatric patients. Don Coulter, MD is the medical director of the camp.

Pediatric Interest Group Receives Small Grant

Childhood should be a time of freedom, exploration and the development of social bonds. Children who spend extended time in the hospital, especially those with chronic illnesses, are at an increased risk for social, physical and academic impairment. The Buddies Program seeks to benefit this population and their families.

The Buddies Program began in 2009 and is a cooperative effort between the University of Nebraska College of Medicine Pediatric Interest Group and The Nebraska Medical Center. Medical students work closely with a Child Life Specialist to coordinate, plan and carry out activities with the current pediatric population and their families in the hospital. Students have the opportunity to volunteer approximately 1 afternoon per month during the 9 months of the school year. Depending on patient population, 5-7 students may sign-up to go to the pediatric department as a group for 2-3 hours of science education activities, medical play, and other socializing with the patients. Generally 4-6 patients are able to come to this group activity, allowing one on one interaction between patients and students. With patient, parent, and physician permission, medical students are also invited to the patient’s room in cases where the patient is unable to attend the group activity due to his or her medical condition. Activities are tailored to the age, interests, and abilities of the current patient population.

While students volunteer their time, the quality and variety of the activities and the supplies available are often limited by the availability of funds. The College of Medicine Alumni Association has generously offered a grant of $500 to fund the program for a year and has indicated that renewal of the grant for another year is possible. Thanks to Bret Gardner, M2 and President of the Pediatric Interest Group, for submitting the grant request. Due to this generosity, the Buddies
Program will continue to flourish. Patients will benefit from increased social interactions, alleviating some of the stress of an extended hospital stay. Students also reap a plethora of benefits from participating. Their indefatigable desire to help others is edified, their understanding of patients and their needs is enhanced, and their spirits are lifted as they serve this special population of pediatric patients.

**Faculty/Resident Development Seminar**

**Focusing to Fill the Knowledge Gap: Constructing Answerable Clinical Questions**

Teresa Hartman, MLS  
Associate Professor, Head, Education Department  
McGoogan Library of Medicine  
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Learning how to construct good clinical questions is an important facet of patient care. This session will cover methods used to focus clinical questions into searchable topics and lead into using those questions when searching electronic information resources.

When: Wednesday, November 13th, 2013 at 12:00 PM  
Location: Glow Auditorium - 3rd Floor Children's Hospital  
Televised to: UNMC RM 7412 and Creighton RM 6850

Please RSVP to Jennifer Mobley @ jmobley@unmc.edu