Message from the Chair

This summer brought us new colleagues, students and discoveries all bringing us great pride and satisfaction. Drs. Johnson and Chandler joined the department bringing their novel programs in Women’s Health Research. We have many students seeking Obstetrics and Gynecology as a career this year speaking to their tremendous clerkship performance and experience. We are grateful to each of our dedicated faculty who shepherded our students to their career choice. Our researchers traveled across the country and globe sharing new discoveries and mentoring new graduate students. Our Departmental faculty, students, staff and families converged on Portland for fellowship and celebration of a wonderful Michigan summer.

Richard M. Leach, M.D., FACOG, FACS
Professor and Chair
Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Biology

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Dr. Johnson joins us from Brown University, and is the first member of the MSU’s new Public Health Research Group in Flint. Dr. Johnson is a clinical psychologist who conducts NIH-funded randomized trials of effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and implementation of mental health and substance use interventions for high-risk women (including perinatal women) and justice-involved populations (such as prisoners and jail detainees). She has been Principal Investigator of 7 NIH awards, with overall total costs of more than $7.5 million.

Ronald Chandler, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

Dr. Ron Chandler joined the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in Grand Rapids in August 2015 after pursuing postdoctoral training in the laboratory of Dr. Terry Magnuson at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Ron has long standing interests in the role of chromatin remodeling and epigenetics in development and cancer. His long-term goals are to elucidate the molecular and cellular events required to maintain female reproductive tract homeostasis and to determine how these processes go awry in inflammation-associated cancers. Dr. Chandler received his B.S. in Biology at Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee, and his Ph.D. in Molecular Physiology and Biophysics from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.
Cristian Meghea, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

Responding to the National Institute of Health’s plan to “take science where the problems are [and] address global health disparities through the development of new tools to apply evidence-based knowledge”, Dr. Cristian Meghea began field research in Romania this summer designed to address the country’s high levels of smoking during pregnancy and preconception. His research focuses on couples beginning their reproductive life and attempts to reduce smoking during and after pregnancy by using an adapted and enhanced intervention founded on the Motivation and Problem Solving (MAPS) approach which has proven effective in the U.S. The proposed work is anticipated to advance understanding of pregnancy and postnatal smoking cessation interventions.

After finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding between MSU’s College of Human Medicine and Seoul National University’s College of Medicine late last year, the MSU Department of OB/GYN hosted its first visiting scholar: SuBeen Hong. Seoul National University Hospital (SNUH), with its renowned international medical training program, selects approximately 20 outstanding medical doctors and offers them international training opportunities every year, including financial support for one month of training abroad. SuBeen, in her third year of residency in the SNUH Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, was selected as an awardee of the international medical training program this year after being referred to the lab of Dr. JaeWook Jeong in Grand Rapids by Dr. Chang Suk Suh, Chairman of the Department of OB/GYN at SNUH. While SuBeen was in training, she learned about the Jeong lab’s molecular biology research and animal modeling techniques for biomedical research. She also shadowed Dr. Bitner, an OB/GYN medical doctor from Spectrum Health during her visit.
Department Barbeque!

With summer winding down, it was a great time for the department to gather at Willow Wood Golf Club in Portland to welcome new staff and to reconnect. Faculty and staff from the clinic, East Lansing, and Grand Rapids had fun catching up and painting pottery.
Bethany Brown, DNP, CNM, WHNP, EFM-C
Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner

MSU HealthTeam would like to welcome Bethany Brown to her role as Certified Nurse-Midwife / Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner in the MSU Women’s HealthCare practice. Dr. Brown has been a Doctor of Nursing Practice since December 2014, Certified Nurse-Midwife & WHNP for eight years, and a Registered Nurse for 11 years. Her work involves all areas of women’s health, including obstetrics, gynecology, contraceptive and sexual health.

Dr. Brown uses patient-centered care to help improve patient health and quality of life. Dr. Brown completed her doctorate of nursing practice in 2014 with her research focus on improving outcomes in obstetrical triage through nurse-midwives, prioritization tools, and standardization of care.

Dr. Brown is currently completing her training in sexology, where she plans to certify through ASSECT to be a certified sexual health counselor and educator. She gladly accepts patients with sexual health concerns and from the LGTB-QIA community.

Plavita Sharma, M.S.
Research Technologist

Plavita joined the lab of Dr. Jose Teixeira, Principal Investigator with the OB/GYN research team based in Grand Rapids, in July. She earned an M.S. in Cell and Molecular Biology from Grand Valley State University in 2013 and a B.S. in Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering in 2010. As a research technologist Plavita will be responsible for conducting research experiments focusing on molecular pathways and interactions in human disease.
3rd Quarter Report

PUBLICATIONS


PRESENTATIONS

- Meghea CI. Oral presentation of research at the International Health Economics Association Congress in Milan, Italy. Jul 2015.

FUNDED GRANTS


Department of OB/GYN and Reproductive Biology

Michigan State University College of Human Medicine