

Urologic Diseases

Research Updates

National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse

Spring/Summer 2007

NIDDK Plan Underway to Promote Urologic Research

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) convened a meeting with leaders of the urologic community—scientists, clinicians, department chairs, and deans—academic leaders from related fields outside urology, NIDDK program and review staff, and American Urological Association (AUA) representatives to discuss barriers to urologic research and possible solutions.

NIDDK funding for urologic research is declining more quickly than other NIDDK programs, according to Robert Star, M.D., acting director of the NIDDK Division of Kidney, Urologic, and Hematologic Diseases. Few new investigators are entering the field, and better-paying patient care jobs are drawing clinicians away from research.

In addition, there is not enough translation of basic science findings into clinical studies and clinical findings back to the laboratory. New ways are needed to stimulate the quality and quantity of basic and clinical urologic research and to promote research resources development—tools, models, and databases—to provide a foundation for initiating new urologic projects.

“What we’re hearing,” said Star, “is that these problems have been around a long time. They have not been addressed at a systems level—only piecemeal by various groups.”

For example, the NIDDK’s career development grants, or K awards, allowed urologic surgeons to have 50 percent, rather than the



typical 75 percent, minimum protected research time so they could keep up their surgical skills. Although essential, this policy change had limited success because other parts of the system were not changed simultaneously.

The participants discussed a shared vision—to create a vibrant, sustainable urologic research and training community that efficiently translates basic research and clinical discoveries to solve critically important benign urologic public health needs. This shared vision will take time and coordination to achieve.

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National Institute of
Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Diseases



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Finding Solutions

Group members spent 2 days addressing this challenging mission by developing specific recommendations to improve recruitment and retention of researchers and to advance the evidence base for the care of people with urologic diseases. The specific recommendations included

- expand and formalize training and mentoring programs across departments and institutions
- approach potential researchers earlier in their careers
- put greater value on research by clinicians in academic departments
- offer joint appointments
- establish multidisciplinary centers of excellence and clinical trial networks that include a training component
- expand and increase the flexibility of training and loan repayment programs
- help basic researchers understand the potential clinical relevance of their work and increase interactions between clinicians and scientists
- change certification board requirements to reflect divergent career paths in urology
- open AUA membership to other specialists and give research presentations higher priority at meetings
- identify and invest in high-priority public health problems and speak with one voice to secure research resources



The NIDDK is actively working on several research, training, and mentoring initiatives for 2008 and 2009.

Next Steps

Participants agreed that close collaborative teamwork with the NIDDK, the AUA, academic training programs, and universities will be necessary to facilitate and promote urologic research into the future. The NIDDK is actively working on several research, training, and mentoring initiatives for 2008 and 2009. The Institute is preparing a Request for Applications to re-compete O'Brien Urology Centers, which will be responsive to recommendations for fostering multidisciplinary and translational research.

The NIDDK also is considering changes to National Institutes of Health training and career development awards to better prepare urologic researchers for multidisciplinary studies and will attempt to strengthen the NIDDK/AUA Surgeon-Scientist Awards program, of which the first award was made last fall. The awards, developed to help urologic researchers offset their debt from medical, surgical, and residency training, offer up to 5 years of salary supplementation to researchers who have competed successfully for NIDDK career development funding.

At the summit, institutional representatives indicated the need to rethink traditional department-based research and training

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Urologic Diseases Research Updates



Urologic Diseases Research Updates, an email newsletter, is sent to subscribers by the National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NKUDIC). The newsletter features news about urologic diseases, special events, patient and professional meetings, and new publications available from the NKUDIC and other organizations.

If you would like to subscribe, send an email to niddk@info.niddk.nih.gov. You can read or download a PDF version of the newsletter at www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov/about/newsletter.htm.

Editor: Leroy M. Nyberg Jr., Ph.D., M.D.

Dr. Nyberg is the director of urology and urology centers programs at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD. Dr. Nyberg is a graduate of Tufts University in Boston, Columbia University in New York, and the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester and completed residency training in urology at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. He has also held faculty positions in urology at The Johns Hopkins Medical School, in urology and biochemistry at the Medical University of South Carolina, and in urology at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Nyberg received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Urological Association for significant clinical and research contributions to urology. He also received the NIH Directors Award for excellence for the development of urologic research programs at the NIH.



Rodgers Named NIDDK Director

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D., announced the appointment of Griffin P. Rodgers, M.D., as director of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) effective April 1, 2007.



Rodgers, who was appointed deputy director of the NIDDK in January 2001, has been the Institute's acting director. Rodgers also has served as chief of the NIDDK's Clinical and Molecular Hematology Branch since 1998.

As NIDDK director, Rodgers oversees an annual budget of \$1.8 billion and a staff of 650 scientists, physician-scientists, and administrators. The Institute conducts and supports research on many of the most serious health issues affecting the public, including diabetes, endocrinology, and metabolic diseases; digestive diseases and nutrition, including obesity; and kidney, urologic, and hematologic diseases.

"Griff Rodgers is an outstanding physician-scientist and molecular hematologist," said Zerhouni. "He has made singular contributions to the study of globin disorders and is internationally recognized for his contributions to the development of effective therapy for sickle cell disease and other genetic diseases of hemoglobin. In addition to his research experience, Dr. Rodgers is a dedicated and knowledgeable clinician and a first-rate research administrator. He has all the qualities we seek in an Institute director."

Rodgers received his undergraduate, graduate, and medical degrees from Brown University. He completed his residency and chief residency in internal medicine at Barnes Hospital and the Washington University School of Medicine. His fellowship training in hematology/oncology was in a joint NIH program with George Washington University and the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

In addition to his medical and research training, Rodgers earned a master's degree in business administration, with a focus on the business of medicine, from the Johns Hopkins University in 2005.

As a research investigator, Rodgers is widely recognized for his contributions to the development of the first effective—and now U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved—therapy for sickle cell disease. He was a principal investigator in clinical trials to develop therapy for patients with sickle cell disease and also performed basic research that focused on understanding the molecular basis of how certain drugs induce gamma-globin gene expression. He was honored for his research with numerous awards, including the 1998 Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Foundation Award, the 2000 Arthur S. Fleming Award, the Legacy of Leadership Award in 2002, and a Mastership from the American College of Physicians in 2005.

"It is truly an honor to be given the opportunity to lead an organization with a mission as far-reaching and varied as the NIDDK's," said Rodgers. "While the NIDDK has a long and distinguished history of accomplishment as an Institute, we must look to the future to capitalize on the opportunities for disease prevention that new technologies and discoveries are giving us. The health problems we face as a nation are real and the results of research offer substantive promise for solving the difficult questions faced by millions of Americans every day and the health professionals who treat them." ■

"Dr. Rodgers is a dedicated and knowledgeable clinician and a first-rate research administrator. He has all the qualities we seek in an Institute director."

Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D.
NIH Director

NIDDK Welcomes Seven New Members to Advisory Council

Seven new members have joined the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) Advisory Council, which met in Bethesda, MD, on February 21. The Council meets three times a year to advise the NIDDK about its research portfolio.

Advisory Council members, who come from the scientific and lay communities, serve 4-year terms and provide second-level peer review of grant applications scored by scientific review groups. Council members are an important liaison between the research communities they represent and the NIDDK, which supports each community's research efforts. The new members are

Charles O. Elson, III, M.D., vice chair for research in the department of medicine and the Basil I. Hirschowitz chair in gastroenterology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Elson joins the Digestive Diseases and Nutrition (DDN) Subcommittee.

James W. Freston, M.D., Ph.D., the Boehringer Ingelheim chair of clinical pharmacology and professor emeritus at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine in Farmington. Freston, a member of the NIDDK-funded National Drug-Induced Liver Injury Network, joins the DDN Subcommittee.

Mark A. Magnuson, M.D., the Earl W. Sutherland Jr. professor of molecular physiology and biophysics and director of the center for stem cell biology at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in Nashville, TN. Magnuson joins the Diabetes, Endocrinology, and Metabolic Diseases Subcommittee.

William E. Mitch, M.D., the Gordon A. Cain professor of medicine and director of the division of nephrology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. Mitch joins the Kidney, Urologic, and Hematologic Diseases (KUH) Subcommittee.



NIDDK Director Griffin P. Rodgers, M.D. (standing front row, middle), meets with new council members (front row from left) Lisa H. Richardson; William E. Mitch, M.D.; and (back row from left) Anthony J. Schaeffer, M.D.; Mark A. Magnuson, M.D.; James W. Freston, M.D., Ph.D.; Charles O. Elson, III, M.D.; and Patrick Tso, Ph.D.

Lisa H. Richardson, national emeritus chairperson of the board and volunteer for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America. Richardson joins the DDN Subcommittee.

Anthony J. Schaeffer, M.D., the Herman L. Kretschmer professor and chairman of the department of urology at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University in Chicago. Schaeffer joins the KUH Subcommittee.

Patrick Tso, Ph.D., professor of pathology, associate director of the Cincinnati Obesity Research Center, director of the Cincinnati Mouse Diabetes Phenotyping Center, and director of the Center for Lipid and Atherosclerosis Research at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. Tso joins the DDN Subcommittee. ■

Council members are an important liaison between the research communities they represent and the NIDDK, which supports each community's research efforts.

NKUDIC Answers More Than 8,000 Queries in 2006

The National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NKUDIC) responded to 8,244 inquiries in 2006. About half of the inquiries were from the general public, patients, and their families or friends, while 22 percent were from nurses and dietitians.

Most of the inquiries—4,178—came through online orders. The NKUDIC also responded to 1,962 email messages; 1,462 phone calls; and 397 letters.

The NKUDIC inventory includes 125 publication titles. Last year, the Clearinghouse produced 10 new publications. The most popular Clearinghouse publications were

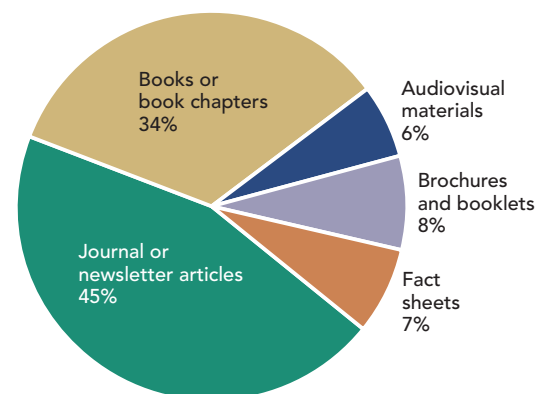
- *Your Kidneys and How They Work*
- *Kidney Failure: Choosing a Treatment That's Right for You*
- *High Blood Pressure and Kidney Disease*
- *Interstitial Cystitis/Painful Bladder Syndrome*

NIDDK Reference Collection

New items about kidney and urologic diseases are added continuously to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

(NIDDK) Reference Collection. More than 2,900 resources in the Reference Collection pertain to kidney and urologic diseases. The chart below depicts the kind of kidney and urologic diseases materials that are available through the Reference Collection. ■

Kidney and Urologic Diseases Materials Available From the NIDDK Reference Collection



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programs. The group is encouraging institutions to consider ways to create a culture that values research and rewards discovery, allows both M.D. and Ph.D. researchers to flourish, and facilitates multidisciplinary collaborations across departments and institutions, perhaps via formal meetings or registries of scientists and their research interests.

Participants also discussed ways to create new training programs that alter the timing of research training, match trainees to well-crafted mentorship teams, and reward research training with continued financial support. In addition,

group members proposed that faculty at all levels help recruit students at early stages of undergraduate and graduate education for careers in urology.

The group is expected to meet again within the year to develop additional innovative programs, using the joint efforts of the NIDDK, along with the AUA and universities, to promote the future of urologic research.

For more information about NIDDK career development and training, visit www2.niddk.nih.gov/Funding/TrainingCareerDev. ■

