Featured CFAR Cores

SCID-Hu Mouse Core

Truman Grayson and Li Fang Li

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SCID is an acronym for "Severe Combined Immunodeficient" mice that are amenable to transplantation with various human tissues. SCID mice have proven to be a valuable tool with which to study HIV pathogenesis, antiviral efficacy, gene therapy, immunologic development and opportunistic pathogens. The services offered by the CFAR-SCID-Hu Mouse Core are made possible by the breeding, maintenance and reconstitution of SCID mice for experimental use by investigators of the UAB CFAR. These services include the following:

1. Providing high-quality, pathogen-free SCID mice to UAB CFAR investigators.

2. Providing specially designed, centrally located BSL 2/3 animal space so that infectious HIV/SIV research can be safely restricted to specific areas.

3. Upon request, constructing hu-PBL SCID mice and SCID-Hu (Thy/Liv) for AIDS-related research.

4. Administering ongoing training, supervision and monitoring of investigators and their research staff regarding ABSL-2/3 practices required for HIV research.

5. Offering expertise on the construction and manipulation of mouse/human chimeras and providing high-cost equipment on a shared basis within a core facility in order to facilitate and broaden the research capabilities of all investigators and to avoid redundancy in equipment purchases.

6. Developing new mouse/human chimeric models for HIV related research.

7. Fostering the development of HIV/AIDS research by new investigators and encouraging multidisciplinary research by new and established investigators.

In the past year the SCID-hu Core has dramatically increased its breeding colony and the numbers of SCID-hu thy/liv mice they have produced. The breeding colony has produced over 4,000 SCID mice. The majority of these have been used to construct SCID-hu thy/liv mice. They continue to construct approximately 50 mice a week. SCID-hu mice are important components in grant application for numerous UAB investigators.

Prevention/Behavioral Sciences Core

Dr. Leslie Clark and Jason Avery

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The mission of the Behavioral Science Core is to provide services for HIV prevention related activities and for behavioral aspects of HIV infection. The Core offers the following services:

1. Grant proposal development.

2. Intervention activity development for projects in school, community, and clinical settings.

3. Evaluation methodology and planning.

4. Survey instrument development.

5. Assistance in the development of study-specific community advisory panels.

6. The conduction of face-to-face interviews.

7. Training in the conduction of focus groups and in-group data collection.

Additional services include the following:

1. The conduction of focus groups.

2. Assessment of community advisory panels.

3. Behavioral data analysis and manuscript preparation.

The Behavioral Science Core has provided expertise in the development of intervention activities for:

(a) young men who have sex with men (MSM)
(b) family planning for serodiscordant couples and at-risk adolescents in developing countries.

Future plans for the Behavioral Sciences Core include continued development in these areas:

1. Dissemination of findings of effective HIV prevention interventions in ways that can be implemented in community settings.

2. Provision of training and research opportunities for interns, research assistants and post doctoral fellows working with the core to increase the overall capacity of behavioral science within the CFAR.

Prevention/Behavioral Sciences Core faculty also include:

Drs. Diane Grimley and Snigdha Mukherjee, School of Public Health, Department of Health Behavior. Dr. Katherine Stewart, School of Medicine, Department of Preventive Medicine.
Developmental Award Applications Now Being Accepted

The CFAR will fund a limited number of research grants to assist faculty members at UAB and SRI in initiating new research programs in basic and/or clinical AIDS-related areas.

There are three categories for these awards:

(i) Developmental funds for junior faculty: To initiate research programs in AIDS-related areas and to obtain data that will allow a more competitive application to be submitted for extramural support. Support is limited to approximately $30,000 per award.

(ii) Developmental funds for established investigators: To initiate previously unsupported AIDS-related research programs. Support is limited to approximately $30,000 per award.

(iii) Developmental funds for interdisciplinary programs: To initiate a novel, collaborative, interdisciplinary, AIDS-related research effort. Support is limited to approximately $60,000 per award.

The application is available at:
http://www.uabcfar.uab.edu/core/development

There will be a firm deadline of June 29th for receipt of your completed application.

Questions? Call Rob McDonald at 934-2437

HIV Vaccine Trial

The Alabama Vaccine Research Clinic (AVRC) at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is dedicated to finding a vaccine that will prevent disease caused from HIV infection. This organization is continually testing a variety of candidate vaccines. One such vaccine is a recombinant pox virus that is made to express HIV proteins. This recombinant pox virus is harmless in humans, but it is designed to give immune responses that are specific to HIV. If results from this trial show promise, an efficacy trial using this vaccine is planned.

The AVRC is also testing two new and exciting vaccines developed by Merck. These products have shown promising results in animals and are now being tested in humans.

It is important to understand that none of the products tested will cause HIV infection, as they do not contain the actual HIV virus. Anyone interested in finding out more about these vaccines is encouraged to call Leslie Cooper at 5-2839, or visit their website at http://www.uab.edu/avrc

Care Team Network Events

The Fabulous Mrs. Oil

On Tuesday, June 5, 2001, at 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. the Patient Advisory Board at the 1917 Clinic invites you to an entertaining and educational talk about safer sex. The show will be performed at the Terrific New Theater, located at 2821 2nd Avenue South. There will be a reception between shows. Admission is free but tickets are required. For more information or tickets, call 975-9126. Sponsored by Dupont and GlaxoSmithkline.

Upcoming Care Team Leadership Training Conferences:

August 11, 2001-- Birmingham, Alabama
November 10, 2001 - Birmingham, Alabama

Would you like to host a Care Team Leadership Training Conference? Contact Malcolm Marler, 975-8923. You may also obtain more information about the Care Team at http://www.careteam.org

What's New?

If you have a topic of interest for the Quest newsletter, please contact the Editor, Vicki Byrd at 975-7045 or e-mail at vbyrd@uab.edu

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