From the Director’s Desk:

Welcome to the Fall/Winter 2012 issue of the CTSC eNewsletter. We are thrilled to announce the Weill Cornell Clinical and Translational Science Center (CTSC) has been renewed for another five years by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 2012. This 5-year renewal of the CTSC is the largest Federal grant ever awarded to the Medical College by the NIH. This Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) bolstered the endowment of the CTSC with the mission of expanding new patient preventative interventions and treatments through translational research.

In this issue, we look at CTSC investigators who are making exciting advances in research, ranging from clinical applications of multiphoton microscopy to the impact of novel algorithms on diabetes screening. We will also look at how technology and medicine are merging for tracking and sharing health related behaviors using mobile technology and how novel CTSC-sponsored community research programs are making a difference in the lives of children in underserved neighborhoods by promoting fitness and nutrition education. Finally, we revisit the various programs and educational opportunities, hosted by the CTSC, to prepare young investigators for success in translational research.

As we look back on our accomplishments here at the CTSC, we look forward to continue fostering translational research while serving the needs of our research community.

Julianne Imperato-McGinley, MD
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NIH Awards CTSC $49.6 Million Grant

The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS), of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has awarded the Clinical and Translational Science Center an outstanding score, resulting in a $49.6 million grant to Weill Cornell Medical College. This Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) is a 5-year renewal of the largest Federal grant ever awarded to the Medical College by the NIH. First awarded in 2007, this CTSA grant award bolstered the endowment of Weill Cornell’s CTSC with the mission of expediting interventions and treatments to improve public health through translational research.

“We are thrilled,” says Dr. Julianne Imperato-McGinley, the CTSC’s principal investigator and

“This renewal grant represents an important acknowledgement of the progress we’ve made in strengthening collaborative relationships between leading research institutions in New York City, nurturing the next generation of translational researchers and building an infrastructure to support further medical innovation.”

— Julianne Imperato-McGinley, MD
Over this past summer, the CTSC announced the Pilot, Planning, and Community Engagement Award recipients from its most recent Seed Funding Award RFA. This is the seventh award cycle since the CTSC was funded by the National Institutes of Health in September 2007.

A total of over $1.16 million for 1 or 2-year grants was awarded in support of 24 multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary collaborative projects involving investigators from all CTSC partner institutions. This brings the number of awards to 149—86 Pilot, 21 Planning, 17 Community Engagement, 23 Novel Research & Methodology, and 2 Informatics Research Fellowships—for a total of over $7 million in Seed Funding Awards since the CTSC’s inception. In keeping with the CTSC’s mission, the awarded projects run the gamut of the translational research spectrum.

For more information about the most recent and past awardees, please visit: med.cornell.edu/ctsc/funding_opportunities/past_seed_funding_awardees.html

Clinical and Translational Science Awards are revolutionizing how clinical and translational research is conducted. The CTSA initiative flourished out of the NIH’s commitment to re-engineer the clinical research enterprise, one of the key objectives of the NIH Roadmap for Medical Research. The CTSC provides an environment for optimal use of the multi-institutional assets and the diversity of the Center’s patient population to move translational research seamlessly from bench to bedside and to the community. The CTSC acts as a channel through which essential resources, technological tools and educational programs for all partners can be shared and managed. The Center funds promising new areas of research, especially collaboration between multiple disciplines. In addition, the CTSC is devoted to fostering the next generation of clinical and translational scientists through pre- and post-doctoral training awards. The Center facilitates research at all levels by providing direct funding and also information on funding opportunities.

The NIH’s CTSA grants are directed by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) Division of Clinical Innovation. Launched in 2011, NCATS supports approximately 60 medical research institutions in 30 states that work together to improve the way clinical and translational research is conducted nationwide to enhance its efficiency and quality.
The Clinical and Translational Science Center of the Weill Cornell Medical College is continuously funding projects that not only lead to incredible breaks in the medical field, but help participants, like JP Pollak, find their true calling. He explained, “The CTSC seed funding allowed me to begin collaboration with some great people at Weill. Funding is hard to come by for projects […] which are nascent and risky, but we were awarded a seed grant from the CTSC—and a little has gone a long way.” After a successful seed funding project in 2008 that encouraged lymphoma patients to share emotions with peers, both strange and familiar, utilizing mobile applications, JP Pollak has continued to merge his two passions: technology and medicine.

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— JP Pollak

While looking back on his career, JP came to the realization that he has always been interested in technology. As an undergrad, JP studied genetics and computer science and went on to receive his MA in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI). But before returning to school for his PhD in Information Science, JP worked as a software developer in the life science and healthcare fields. Now, as a Postdoctoral Associate in Information Science at Cornell University and Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of Medicine at Weill Cornell Medical Center, JP Pollack has taken the project he completed nearly five years ago and expanded on it through various channels.

The main ongoing and successful project JP developed post-seed funding is called VERA. It is a mobile application for tracking and sharing health related behaviors, feelings, etc. in a group of like-minded peers. While successful in its own right, VERA led directly to the creation of an image-based, single-item measure of affect (emotion, more or less) called PAM, the Photographic Affect Meter, which is utilized within VERA. Currently, PANAS, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, is the ‘gold-standard’ for measuring affect, but PAM aims to deal with the ambiguity present in emotion—both in our own understanding of emotion and how it manifests itself in others, especially by a computer.

Previous scales, JP explains, were either too concrete (allowing the subject to rate his or her emotions only on 1-5 scale) or they required the subject to have sufficient knowledge of the scientific understanding behind an emotion (asking the user to quantify based on arousal or valence). Therefore, this dichotomy placed a lot of pressure on the subject and the researcher to find accuracy. With PAM though, JP discovered that through selecting photos that people felt reflected their current emotional state, the image could predictably quantify the chosen emotional state in terms that researchers and clinicians could use in studies and practice.

The relationship between emotion and health has been studied fairly extensively, but mostly using older methods such as large population studies in which participants are asked to report a general emotional state over the course of a year then comparing that report with the participant’s blood pressure or number of doctor visits. PAM is a revolutionary step forward.

“I’m hopeful that with tools like the ones I’m developing, researchers and clinicians will begin to be able to put measurements of emotion, and other things like stress, into the context of patients’ day-to-day lives, behavior, [or any] condition they might be dealing with” JP explained. But he is also hopeful that PAM, and programs like it, will expose new information about the quotidian and emotion; information which will be able to create more beneficial interventions for the future.

While VERA is incontrovertibly designed to be a research tool, JP does not discourage anyone who might be interested in tracking and sharing his or her health related behaviors. In fact, the application is currently available to android users and undergoing final review for iOS users and should be available in the App Store in the near future.
Research Community

Dance Study

Early one February morning investigators filled a typical yellow school bust with children and their families. Although a familiar scene for a school field trip, this trip was unique; these children were on their way to NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital to complete their first study visit in a 6-month long research study. For Jeannette Hogg, MA, RD, Senior Research Bionutritionist at the CTSC, this marked the start of a long, albeit musical, journey. Ms. Hogg, a dancer herself, has been a passionate advocate for the prevention of childhood obesity. Ms. Hogg, along with pediatric endocrinologists, Alejandro Diaz, MD, Maria Vogiatzi, MD, and Saroj Nimkarn, MD, collaborated to create a research study to evaluate dance as a tool for reducing risk factors for cardiovascular disease and diabetes in children.

The integration of the traditional clinical research setting with an elementary school environment helped to facilitate a mutual exchange of knowledge and experience between clinical staff and family located in Washington Heights neighborhood. During pre- and post-intervention visits, children were given a first-hand look at the CTSC outpatient unit, and had the opportunity to interact with dietetic interns and medical residents as they waited to complete study procedures. At one of the post-intervention visits, children treated staff to an impromptu performance that highlighted dance routines learned over the course of the program. Similarly, research staff stepped out of their usual environment to implement the 16-week intervention at the school. There, they taught children about healthy eating habits and the importance of physical activity, while also getting a chance to interact regularly with family members. Research staff even learned how to do “the Charleston” and how to dance “Bachata” alongside their young counterparts. Although a challenge, the CTSC staff gained valuable knowledge in working with parents and adapting good clinical practice guidelines to a community research setting. The CTSC was able to expand beyond the boundaries of the medical campus to reach underserved populations in the community.

Now with successful completion of two community research projects, Ms. Hogg hopes to continue her work in the schools. Currently, she is teaming up again with the CTSC and the Cornell University Cooperative Extension (CUCE) to expand the dance program to multiple sites throughout New York City. Ultimately, Ms. Hogg would like to offer the program to a larger audience, and make it a more permanent fixture in the community. “I would like to see it as an afterschool program in NYC. I think all children should benefit from getting exercise on a regular basis. They should also be able to participate in an activity that promotes socializing with their peers in a safe and stimulating environment.” Four years and three cohorts later, the data analysis is complete and the manuscript has been published in the Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology and Metabolism.

More information on the dance and lifestyle education program can be found in the June 2012 issue of the Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology and Metabolism (J Pediatr Endocrinol Metab 2012; 25(5-6):509-16.)

CTSC Stimulates Multiphoton Microscopy Advances in Medical Imaging Technology

Dr. Sushmita Mukherjee (Department of Biochemistry), 2011 graduate of the CTSC’s Clinical and Translational Education Program (CTEP), and Dr. Ranjith Ramasamy (Department of Urology), a CTSC Planning Award recipient, have productively teamed together in a new research initiative. Dr. Mukherjee’s research project while in the CTEP program was to develop multiphoton microscopy (MPM) tissue imaging to identify cancerous human bladder tissue. Dr. Ramasamy’s Planning Award was to apply MPM for sperm extraction, to be used in fertility treatment. Dr. Mukherjee is quick to point out the role the CTSC played in the research. “No federal agency will give funding so early in the [research] process,” she explains. “The CTSC was instrumental in allowing us to pursue the technology and develop it to a point where federal funding sources may be interested.”

Dr. Mukherjee describes multiphoton microscopy as “one of a spectrum of technologies that are just coming into the fore. We call them optical biopsy techniques. The idea is you’ll be able to look at a tissue at high magnification without needing to use exogenous contrast agents or to excite the tissue. MPM has some real advantages over other methods.” A specific advantage of this methodology is the potential to provide a diagnosis within minutes of obtaining a biopsy sample reducing turnaround time dramatically. Additionally, MPM provides physicians with deeper penetration into
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Living tissue, improved light detection in reading samples, and reduced distortion in the resulting image.

Invented in the lab of Watt Webb at Cornell University, MPM technology has proven to be an effective and efficient method for imaging. The first of Dr. Mukherjee and Dr. Ramasamy’s co-authored articles, “Identification of Spermatogenesis With Multiphoton Microscopy: An Evaluation in a Rodent Model,” was published in December in The Journal of Urology (J Urol. 2011 Dec;186(6):2487-92). Drawing upon the work of Dr. Peter Schlegel, James J. Colt Professor of Urology at Cornell, the team showed that MPM could identify the stage of spermat cell creation (spermatogenesis) in living tissue and was effective in harvesting sperm cells by allowing real-time visualization. The results have clinical applications in extracting sperm cells from men as part of in vitro fertilization.

Dr. Mukherjee and Dr. Ramasamy co-authored another article, “Multiphoton Imaging and Laser Ablation of Rodent Spermatic Cord Nerves: A Potential Treatment for Patients With Chronic Orchialgia,” published in the February 2012 issue of The Journal of Urology (J Urol. 2012 Feb;187(2):733-8). The team successfully imaged rat spermatic cord nerves using a low-power MPM laser. The new technique will aid urologists treating men with chronic testicular pain caused by injury, surgery, cancer, or infection, known as chronic orchialgia. The MPM technique will allow the doctors to quickly and efficiently image spermatic nerves and remove the pain-causing nerves while avoiding the risk of testicular atrophy and internal fluid build-up, often complications of surgical denervation.

To this end, Drs. Mukherjee and Ramasamy are studying the clinical applications of MPM technology, aiming to bring it to patients who will benefit from it. “We are in the late pre-clinical stages,” Dr. Mukherjee says. “We have a lot of data on ex-vivo human tissue, and ex- and in-vivo animal tissue. I am working very closely with the applied physics group in Ithaca to miniaturize MPM for specific situations — colonoscopy would need one kind, laparoscopy would need another. We see maybe a 5-year timeline before clinical trials.”

CTSC Researchers Aid Fight Against Type 2 Diabetes: New Algorithm Adapted by ADA to Identify Undiagnosed Diabetes

Undiagnosed diabetes is common, affecting approximately 7 million people in the United States. Surprisingly, clinical guidelines have disagreed on which people should be screened for diabetes with a blood test. The disagreement stems, in part, from differences in expert opinion.

With a grant from the CTSC, a group of investigators based at Weill Cornell Medical College developed a novel algorithm for selecting patients for diabetes screening. The team of investigators included Dr. Lisa Kern, Dr. Heejung Bang, Ms. Alison Edwards, Dr. David Brillon and Dr. Alvin Mushlin. Dr. Kern, Dr. Bang and colleagues used data from the publicly available National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) to derive their algorithm. They found that 6 variables can be used to identify patients at high risk for diabetes: age, gender, family history of diabetes, personal history of high blood pressure, obesity, and physical activity. Their findings, including the formula combining these variables, was published in the December 2009 issue of Annals of Internal Medicine (Ann Intern Med. 2009 Dec;151(11):775-783). This formula was found to outperform the guidelines of the American Diabetes Association, the Centers for Disease Control and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

In March 2012, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) recognized the contribution that this formula made and replaced its previous guideline with Dr. Kern’s and Dr. Bang’s formula. In their publication, Dr. Kern and Dr. Bang had expressed their formula in the form of a patient survey. The ADA converted this survey to an online interactive tool, the Diabetes Risk Test, which can be found at http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/prevention/diabetes-risk-test/. A paper version of the Diabetes Risk Test is also available at http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/prevention/diabetes-risk-test/risk-test-flyer-2012.pdf and includes the citation for the CTSC-funded work.

The online test is easy for patients to use and takes less than 1 minute to complete. Immediately upon taking the Risk Test, patients receive their score and the interpretation of that score, whether they should seek medical attention and get tested for diabetes or not. In the first 2 days the Risk Test was live, 70,000 people took the online test, of whom 1/3 were found to be at high risk. In the first 4 months the Risk Test was live, 275,000 people took the online test.

Dr. Kern says, “We are very pleased that the American Diabetes Association has recognized our work. We are also very impressed at the rapid dissemination of information they have been able to achieve through their website. This is an excellent example of how patient-oriented technologies can be powerful tools for improving public health.”
This spring, the CTSC hosted a series of professional development programs at Weill Cornell Medical College, themed around grant writing. Courses in the program include “Writing Winning NIH Grants” “Write Winning Career Development Awards and Biomedical Publications”. Taught by grant writing experts, these seminars are designed to comprehensively address successful strategies for the idea development and proposal-writing process in an in-depth, workshop-style format. In addition to the daylong Write NIH Grants seminars on March 27 and 28, a half-day workshop on April 18 covered principles of proven strategies for a successful proposal; candidate and mentor partnering principles/ fundamentals for any agency’s CDAs and on April 24 a full day workshop was dedicated to Write Winning Biomedical Publications. Discussion surrounded on tips and strategies for composing a manuscript, including revisions and resubmission; choosing the appropriate journal or publication; efficiently producing data necessary to publish; writing with clarity and precision.

With a total of 303 participants from WCMC and our partner institutions, the excellent feedback and gratitude expressed regarding this series attested to the need in our research community for step-by-step guidance on how to best generate competitive applications that would result in funding from agencies such as the NIH. Ninety percent of the participants of the popular “Write Winning Grants” agreed the workshop was well-presented and the program is useful should be a regular part of faculty/student development program.

To continue to aid in their grantsmanship development, participants were given a step-by-step guide to writing a competitive application, “The Grant Application Writer’s Workbook – National Institutes of Health” published by the Grant Writers’ Seminars and Workshops, LLC. “Considering the funding climate, as a junior investigator applying for career development funding, it is important that I minimize the mistakes and side steps during the proposal preparation. The topics covered addressed all the aspects of the preparation and submission process, many of which I have not considered to need a great deal of attention until now. These workshops have been invaluable to me,” stated Dr. Diana Bratu, Assistant Professor at the Center for Study of Gene Structure and Function at Hunter College.

With the overwhelming success of the grant writing series, the CTSC decided to extend the program and add a smaller intensive program for 30 scholars. This environment was ideal for open exchange; students received individual guidance and engaged in group exercises that took them through the NIH grant writing process from inception to submission of the fully completed application. This is the first time a program of this nature has been offered at WCMC.

The series Specialized Training Seminars held throughout June was intended to be a basic framing for people who are not familiar with drug development process. Led by industry experts with a wide variety of experience, the seminars covered the following topics 1) Drug Development and FDA Regulations, an overview of the drug development process geared toward new industry professionals who need to develop an understanding of the drug development process 2) Preparing IND Submissions where trainees learned how to work with the regulations, guidance documents and style guides to produce submissions that comply with the requirements 3) Medical Device DCP course provided information across the full range of medical device clinical trial activities and practical aspects of medical device clinical research and 4) Investigator-Initiated Trials and the Role and Responsibilities of the Investigator, provided an overview of the role and responsibilities of the individual investigator who acts as an investigator and a sponsor in conducting the study.

Overall, the programs were highly praised for providing practical and, in the words of one participant, “do this/don’t do that” insider tips and for emphasizing the strong mentor relationship that one participant claimed “should be heavily encouraged.” Another participant wrote they wished that they had attended this seminar “three grants ago!” Participants found the seminar to be a thorough and helpful overview on publishing, with excellent presentation and useful supplemental materials. The need for this type of opportunity is ultimately reflected in the participants’ interest in one-on-one mentoring. The CTSC will continue to offer “Write Winning Grants” and Biomedical Publications in Spring 2013. The format, instructor covered tips and strategies for manuscript composition, and practical aspects of writing with clarity and precision will be similar to the 2012’s workshops.

“Considering the funding climate, as a junior investigator applying for career development funding, it is important that I minimize the mistakes and side steps during the proposal preparation.”

— Diana Bratu, PhD

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This year, the CTSC sponsored a Drug Discovery and Development (3D) Workshop to familiarize participants with the intricacies and difficulties in bringing medication to market.

“Pfizer developed the 3D Workshop to educate participants in the drug discovery and development process,” stated Charles Thomp-son, MD, Pfizer’s Senior Medical Director of Pediatrics and Vaccines, and a workshop facilitator. “Since then, the workshop has been administered to hundreds of participants from a variety of institutions including academic medical centers, schools of pharmacy, managed care organizations, government agencies, and healthcare administrators.”

In this initiative drug development teams were formed, and each participant was assigned a role that corresponded to a role in the actual drug development process. The roles included discovery scientist, project manager, regulatory affairs representative, toxicologist, and market assessment analyst, among others. The participants were guided through each phase of the drug discovery and development process—from identifying promising chemical compounds, or “leads,” to assessing toxicity in animals; from parameters for human clinical trials to seeking FDA approval. During the 3D Workshop the participants experienced a computer-based simulation of the actual process of bringing a drug from a promising chemical compound, through testing, to the final stages of obtaining FDA approval and marketing the drug.

The program simulates real-life considerations in the drug development process, with participants deciding what studies must be performed, how long they take, and how much drug compound must be manufactured, all the while keeping an eye on the overall timeframe of the drug’s development. The teams are required to manage resources efficiently, utilizing only as much of the drug compound as is necessary, to avoid cost overruns. They must also test the drug thoroughly to guarantee regulatory approval, and develop marketing strategies to identify which drugs are the most promising, as well as the areas of medical need. For the final step of the process, the teams participated in a simulated FDA approval hearing, presenting their work and petitioning for approval based on their drug’s performance, safety, and marketability.

Participants in the workshop represented Weill Cornell Medical College and CTSC partner institutions Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Hospital for Special Surgery, Hunter College, and Lincoln Hospital. The participants represented a wide-range of specialties within the medical field, from practicing surgeons to researchers; faculty members and post-doctoral fellows in fields ranging from biochemistry and neurology, to pediatrics, genetic medicine, and oncology.

The 3D Workshop was a great success, with all three working groups achieving regulatory approval of their virtual project within the allotted time frame—a first for this program. “The workshop simulates approximately 15 years from idea generation through regulatory approval in a day long experiential teaching model,” Dr. Thompson explained. “[We] were encouraged by the fact that 3 separate teams working independently were successful in achieving regulatory approval for their ‘products.’ Clearly, the enthusiasm, preparedness coming into the workshop, and team spirit exhibited by all three teams were instrumental in their success.”

The participant evaluations indicated an exceptionally high level of satisfaction with the workshop, with 90% of participants reporting they would recommend the workshop to a colleague, and 100% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the content was both useful and relevant to their current or future careers. The team-based format of the workshop was instrumental in teaching the intensely collaborative nature of drug discovery and development. “[The workshop] gave a wonderful overview of the teamwork involved in the drug development process,” one participant commented, “and in a way that could not be simulated in any more effective way.” With the workshop’s popularity and the overwhelmingly positive response from participants, the CTSC plans to host another in the near future and continue to equip the next generation of medical professionals with the knowledge and experience needed to improve the medicines available to patients.
On Friday, May 11, 2012, the Clinical and Translational Science Center teamed up with the Weill Cornell Autism Research Program (WCARP) to host an Autism Symposium for families and professionals entitled, “Growing up with Autism: Life Transitions.” The all-day Symposium took place at the Uris Auditorium and Griffis Faculty Club of Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC), and was attended by nearly 200 individuals engaged in the autism community, including parents of individuals on the spectrum, clinicians, school professionals, service providers, and academic researchers.

A survey of participants at the symposium revealed the diversity of roles held by those in attendance. When respondents could select all of their relevant affiliations, 28% identified as school professionals, 27% identified as parents, and 23% identified as clinicians (including MDs, Occupational Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, and Physical Therapists). In addition, attendees came from near and far to join in on the discussion – local participants hailed from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, Virginia, and Florida, while international participants represented both Sweden and Israel.

Opening remarks by Dr. Gerald Loughlin, Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at Weill Cornell Medical College; Dr. Julianne Imperato-McGinley, Director of the Clinical and Translational Science Center at Weill Cornell Medical College; and Dr. Barry Kosofsky, Director of the Weill Cornell Autism Research Program, emphasized the timely topic and the importance of continuing research to improve scientific understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). “We are really in the midst of a revolution, in both diagnosis, therapy, and our understanding of this enigmatic brain disorder”, stated Dr. Barry Kosofsky as he introduced the first of two panel discussions, designed to highlight a number of these current research efforts.

The program began with a Basic Science panel, featuring four WCMC researchers: Dr. John Walkup, Vice Chair in the Department of Psychiatry and Director of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; Dr. BJ Casey, Director of the Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology; Dr. Francis Lee, Professor and Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Psychiatry; and Dr. Anjali Rajadhyaksha, Associate Professor in the Division of Child Neurology. The panelists discussed progress made in their research projects related to anxiety, adolescent brain development, and the genetic bases of autism spectrum disorders.

Following the basic science discussion, a Clinical Panel focused on topics such as parent-mediated interventions for children with ASDs, teaching children with autism to imitate peers, refining the ASD diagnostic criteria, and meeting the needs of adults with ASDs. Clinical panelists included Dr. Michael Siller and Dr. John Brown, co-directors at the Hunter College Autism Center; Dr. Linda Meyer, Executive Director of the advocacy organization Autism New Jersey; Dr. Catherine Lord, world-renowned autism expert and director of the Center for Autism and the Developing Brain; and Dr. Martha Herbert, Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School. At the end of each panel, speakers fielded questions from the audience in an interactive roundtable discussion.

Attendees continued networking throughout the afternoon, as local advocacy groups were represented during a lunchtime tabling session, and service providers generated discussions during three age-specific breakout group presentations. The event concluded with an evening reception that brought together attendees and the day’s presenters to exchange information and answer any last minute questions.

The Autism Symposium was the second of its kind and the first hosted at Weill Cornell Medical College. The first symposium was held last spring at CTSC Partner Institution Hunter College, in collaboration with the Hunter College Autism Play Lab. As WCARp works toward an improved understanding of ASDs through both basic science and clinical research projects, investigators will continue to share research findings and unite families and professionals through its annual symposiums.

Visit the CTSC Facebook page to view speaker presentations: www.facebook.com/WeillCornellCTSC.
The Clinical and Translational Science Center and Weill Cornell Medical College joined nearly 2,000 select sites across the nation in hosting a live simulcast of the TEDMED 2012 Conference from April 16-19th. Each of the 11 Main Hall Sessions were live-streamed directly from The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., to medical schools, research institutions, teaching hospitals, universities, foundations, health-focused corporations and state and federal agencies.

TEDMED is a yearly conference that connects the world's most creative minds across all disciplines to imagine the future of health and medicine. For three and a half exciting days, this uniquely diverse community explored the ideas, innovations and challenges that will help shape the future of healthcare for 300 million Americans and the world. Nearly 200 faculty, students, and staff of the CTSC partner institutions registered to attend. “The sessions covered the full range from basic, translational, and clinical science to public policy with dynamic presentations by carefully selected outstanding persons,” commented Dr. Jack Barchas, Chair of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell.

Weill Cornell Medical College was represented by two Main Hall Session speakers. Dr. Gregory Petsko, Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry and Chemistry at Brandeis who is also an appointed Professor of Neuroscience at Weill Cornell, spoke about major new approaches to Alzheimer’s Disease, including work from his own group, and warned that the incidence of the disease is increasing dramatically and will reach 300 million cases worldwide by the end of the century. This impending “tidal wave” affects not only those with Alzheimer’s, but also the caregivers who represent an estimated 10% of the world’s population. With passion for both the science and the policy aspects, Dr. Petsko used this opportunity to sound the alarm and instill a sense of urgency in the biomedical community.

Sandeep Kishore, student in the Weill Cornell Medical College/Rockefeller/Sloan-Lettering Institute Tri-Institutional M.D.-Ph.D. program, spoke about the role of the next generation of leaders in tackling health challenges of the 21st century. “My main message,” said Kishore, “is that the medical students of today are not being prepared at all for the challenges of tomorrow.” With the incidence of chronic disease eclipsing that of infectious disease in many countries worldwide, he encouraged medical schools to incorporate public health courses within the traditional curriculum.

The next TEDMED event will take place in Washington, D.C., from April 16-19, 2013.

Videos of all Main Hall Sessions can be found on the CTSC Facebook page: www.facebook.com/WeillCornellCTSC

“The sessions covered the full range from basic, translational, and clinical science to public policy with dynamic presentations by carefully selected outstanding persons,” — Jack Barchas, MD

Photo: TEDMED
The Weill Cornell CTSC is connecting our broad networks of students, researchers, physicians and community members through our Facebook page. With over 100 fans following us on Facebook, the CTSC continues to expand its reach to the 42,000 individuals who comprise our expanded network of users. CTSC Facebook page content is viewed by individuals from over 270 countries worldwide including Brazil, India, Serbia, and Taiwan.

Check out our Clinical Studies tab to learn about our extensive list of CTSC supported research studies open to enrollment. Participating in a research study is a great way to advance medicine and gain access to new therapies before they become widely available.

Click on the Outreach tab to find out about free health services and outreach programs available to the community. These programs aim to bring awareness of health issues to underserved communities and to empower residents to maintain healthier lifestyles.

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