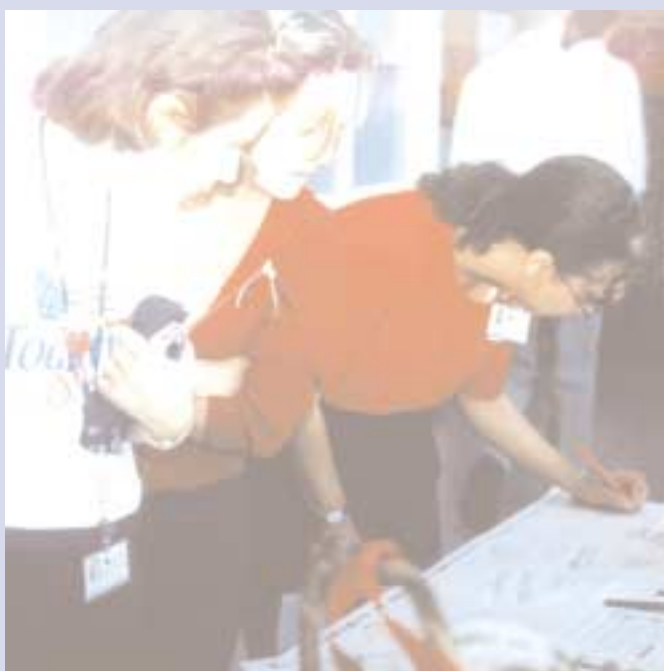


## Words From the Heart



An employee writes her thoughts on the Table of Remembrance while others read the words left about 9-11. The table was set up in the University Hospital Cafeteria hallway on Sept. 11 by the Chaplaincy Department as one small way for people to take part in the day of observance to remember the victims of the terrorist attacks one year earlier.

### ICU Excellence

The UVa medical, surgical and trauma intensive care units have been recognized for reducing medical errors.

3

### Team Support

Emergency Medicine teams up with other departments to supply first aid kits to SOCA and other area sports leagues.

7

### Health Plan

Council Connections answers questions about dental coverage and the status of the UVa Health Plan ombudsman.

7

## Nurse Turns Waste Into 'Gold'

**H**elen French has been mining "gold" at the Medical Center for a decade now. Last month she marked the 10th year of operating MERCI, or Medical Equipment Recovery of Clean Inventory. Over the years, the program has captured and diverted more than 126 tons of what she calls "Gold Waste," clean medical supplies from the operating room suite and other areas of the hospital.

Put another way, that is more than one-quarter million pounds of discarded supplies that were put to good use in clinics, hospitals and missions around the world.

French, R.N., BSN, CNOR, actually began to work on the program in 1991, two years after arriving at the UVa Medical Center. Over the years as an OR nurse, she witnessed so many clean, useful medical items being discarded. She decided to take it upon herself to do something about it.

The opportunity presented itself in early 1991, when her manager was concerned about the expense of incinerating all the regulated medical waste that was generated by the hospital's 19 operating rooms. Because French was such a strong advocate of recycling, the manager turned her loose on the MERCI project.

To French, the project was much more than an environmental thing. "For me, it's the humanitarian aspect that is really important," she says.

She researched the issue of regulated medical waste, reading every article she could find and speaking with experts on the subject. The conclusion was that there was a lack of segregation at the point of generation, which causes everything to be considered by the staff as infectious. French has found that about 30 percent of a hospital's waste is clean and reusable.

After her research and audits, she led in-service sessions for the staff. She was then ready to begin.

Working out of the Free Clinic building on West Main Street, she began processing supplies in August 1992. Eventually, she was given the use of a room on the loading dock at the Primary Care Center. MERCI was finally given official status in April 1996, and she was granted one day a week to work on the project. The rest of her workweek is spent in the OR.

On Thursdays, she and volunteers can be found sorting all the collected materials into categories and packing them.

*continued on page 2*

### Got Link?

Departments that are not receiving copies of the Link, or perhaps are getting too many copies, can easily find a fix. Just send an e-mail to the Link office to request delivery or to make an adjustment in the number of copies currently being received. Update names and addresses, too. Be sure to include the name of the department, box number and the number of copies desired. Include the old name and box number, also, because a correction can't be made without them. Send e-mail to [ja8a@virginia.edu](mailto:ja8a@virginia.edu).

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

**MERCI****Helen French**

There is little space to store things, so items must be moved out quickly.

To disperse the captured medical supplies, French has had to spend countless hours of her own

time networking with people who could put the materials to good use. Supplies have gone as close by as the UVa research labs and the Free Clinic, and as far away as Bolivia, Egypt, Lithuania, Ukraine and Russia. Groups taking mission trips overseas come to MERCI with wish lists, which she helps to fill.

French has long been a tireless advocate for similar programs at other hospitals. Over the years, she has spoken at a number of conferences. She presented MERCI at the National Institutes of Health at the National Association of Physician for the Environment, where MERCI was cited as a best practice. This year she presented the program at an EPA conference at Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

On Aug. 5 she was invited to Washington to present the MERCI program to a special assistant of Tommy Thompson, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. She was asked to help with a humanitarian initiative as well as submit a proposal on how a MERCI-like template can be used at the federal level in VA hospitals

and perhaps at NIH and other federal research facilities.

French says the program not only saves money for the Medical Center, it spreads good will, while costing very little to operate. "Basically, it has cost one day's salary for one nurse each week," she says.

She also stresses that the program helps to educate students who are involved in the program and it could be an effective tool in emergency preparedness. But most of all, she says, it helps those in need.

A very spiritual and giving woman, she says her motivation for the program is the same that caused her to become a nurse. "I like to help people," she says.

She credits the staff of the hospital for the success the MERCI program has had. Without their patience and cooperation, the tons of items wouldn't have ended up in blue bags instead of red bags.

"I want to thank every person who has taken the time to stop by to contribute clean medical supplies," she says. "People want to make a difference, and the staff members of the operating room, central supply, storeroom and the various labs have all made a difference."

However, she says, without the support of upper management, the program could not have thrived. "I appreciate the support they have given to MERCI and to me. They, too, have made a difference." □

**American Smiles**

Epidemiology held a celebration in Cobb Hall on Sept. 11 for one of its employees who became a U.S. citizen on Aug. 9. Jehan Farah, who is from Cairo, Egypt, has worked as a medical technologist at UVa for two years. Farah, second from right, poses with her colleagues Lisa Durbin, M.T., left, Barbara Simonton, CLT, and Yvette Hammond, M.T., right. All are employees of the Epidemiology Lab.

**In Memoriam**

Paul Charles Rusincovitch, R.N., who worked as a pool nurse in Emergency Medicine at UVa, died Aug. 10 at his home in Staunton after a brief illness. He was 33.

His widow, the former Joyce Krupnick, is an R.N. in the Pediatric Emergency Department. They were wed at University Hospital on July 31.

He was born Nov. 18, 1969, in Scranton, Pa., son of Paul and Elsie Malos Rusincovitch, of Taylor, Pa. He attended East Stroudsburg University and went on to graduate from Williamsport Medical Center School of Paramedics in Williamsport, Pa.

He remained in Williamsport, where he was employed as a paramedic and attended Pennsylvania State University. He graduated with an associate degree in nursing. He then relocated to Virginia to work as a trauma nurse at the UVa Medical Center.

Rusincovitch was most recently employed as a firefighter paramedic for the City of Staunton Fire Department. He also was a volunteer for the Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad, and he was a member of the International Association of Fire Fighters, Staunton, Local 3468.

He was a member of St. George's Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in Taylor, Pa., and a member of the local volunteer fire department.

Nicole Kielar of Emergency Medicine and a volunteer with the Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad says she first met Paul Rusincovitch when he began volunteering with the rescue squad in the spring of 2001. "He was an enthusiastic and dedicated paramedic," she says. "Paul's dream of becoming a firefighter came true in late 2001, when he was hired as firefighter/paramedic with the City of Staunton. He loved not only the job, but his co-workers and peers. This was evident from the upbeat attitude and positive outlook he brought to work each day," she adds.

"Paul touched the lives of many people during his short time here — patients, co-workers, peers, family and friends. His spirit will live on in the work we all do as hospital care providers, firefighters and paramedics."

Besides his wife, he is survived by his brother Joe of Moosic, Pa., and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and nieces.

The funeral service was held at St. George's Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in Taylor, Pa., followed by interment in the church cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to Professional Firefighters Union, Local 3468, P.O. Box 2402, Staunton, VA 24402-2402.

**Pavilion Ball To Fund Fight Against Cancer**

How about spending an October evening Under the Tuscan Sky? That's the theme for the 17th annual Pavilion Ball, presented by the Charlottesville-Albemarle Unit of the American Cancer Society.

The black-tie event will be held on Saturday, Oct. 26, at the St. Anne's Convocation Center. The annual ball raises funds for the American Cancer Society, 60 percent of which stays in this community. The event is supported by UVa, ACAC and a number of local businesses.

As many as 400 people are expected to attend the Pavilion Ball, which will feature a silent raffle during the evening. Cocktails will be served from 6 to 7 p.m., followed by dinner, provided by Hot Cakes.

At 8:30, a group of honorees will be introduced, including the guest of honor, R. Lee Mastin, a prostate cancer survivor who was treated at UVa and now resides in Roanoke. From 9 p.m. to midnight, attendees will dance to the music of Fat Ammon's Band, which has been entertaining audiences along the East Coast for more than 20 years.

Admission will be \$125, but special recognitions and sponsorships are available. For more information, call 978-7423.

Pavilion Ball committee members from UVa include Helena Taylor, Becky Williams, both wives of physicians, and co-chair Liz Nottingham, manager of Physician Network Development.

The ACS has a long tradition of funding programs at UVa. Currently it supports the ACS IRG for Junior Investigators (\$270,000 per year); eight ACS cancer research grants (\$1.8 million per year); ACS student fellowships (\$4,500 per year); and education materials and patient support (about \$10,000 per year). □

## UVa Intensive Care Units Recognized for Excellence

The Society of Critical Care Medicine has cited the University of Virginia as one of only a few hospitals in the nation to achieve excellence in efforts to reduce medical errors.

The UVa medical, surgical and trauma intensive care units (ICUs) are recognized on the organization's web site for instituting highly efficient procedures that reduce the chance of error:

- The Medical ICU's Pulmonary Suite employs four advanced practice nurses to serve as continual outcomes managers of the four-bed unit, where chronically ill patients are weaned from long-term mechanical ventilation. Guidelines for the new system were developed by a multidisciplinary team of clinicians selected from five adult critical care units at UVa. Analysis of results over an 18-month period showed a statistically significant decrease in how long ventilators were used for each patient, an estimated cost savings of \$4 million, and improved care of patients by the assigned outcomes managers compared to the former rotating-staff system.

- The Trauma ICU was cited for excellence in achieving lower mortality rates because of its centralized management by one specialist who ensures uniformity of care and adherence to evidence-based care guidelines.



Robert Sawyer, M.D.

- The Surgical ICU successfully reduced the incidence of infection using a dual drug rotation regimen of antibiotics for patients with infections or

pneumonia, instead of a single drug rotation regimen. A 30-month study found the dual drug rotation regimen to be superior, with infection rate reduced by 24 percent and death rate after infection reduced by 70 percent. The study results were published last year in the journal *Critical Care Management*.

"I believe that UVa's approaches to reducing infectious morbidity and mortality in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit would be broadly applicable in many hospitals," says the study's senior author, Robert G. Sawyer, M.D., associate professor in the Department of Surgery at UVa. "We hope the society's recognition of the improved systems in our intensive care units will facilitate their use as possible models by other hospitals."

The Society of Critical Care Medicine web site is [www.sccm.org/](http://www.sccm.org/). □

## Denim Day Effort Could Top \$10,000

The 7th annual Lee National Denim Day will take place on Friday, Oct. 4, and once again UVa employees will participate in the world's largest single-day fund-raising event.

Each year, companies and organizations nationwide are encouraged to allow their employees and members to wear denim in exchange for a \$5 donation to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. The annual event brings Americans together to raise awareness and funds for the fight against breast cancer.

In the last six years, Lee National Denim Day has raised more than \$30 million. The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation receives 100 percent of the donations to fund research, education, screening and treatment programs.

The national spokesperson for this year's event is Melina Kanakaredes, from the NBC television series "Providence." The goal for Oct. 4 is \$7.5 million.

Although UVa employees have taken part in Denim Day over the past few years, last year was the first time UVa officially participated in Lee National Denim Day. Employees in nearly 100 departments and areas helped to raise \$9,679. Allison Vonn-Love, who is coordinating the UVa effort again, hopes donations will surpass \$10,000 this year.

"There was a huge amount of enthusiasm for this fund-raiser last year," says Vonn-Love, who works in the Cancer Center. "Every day, I got phone calls from people across the university who had heard that the Medical Center was participating, and wanted to participate, too. It was an incredible effort and I think we can do it again and raise even more."

She adds that enthusiastic volunteers are needed again this year for the fund-raising day. Contact Vonn-Love at 243-6182 or [all3k@virginia.edu](mailto:all3k@virginia.edu).

Donations should be only by money order or check, made out to the Susan G. Komen Foundation with "Denim Day" written in the memo portion of the check. Cash cannot be accepted.

More information about the national event can be found at [www.denimday.com](http://www.denimday.com).

## Candidates Announced for PNSO Elections in October

The Nominating Committee for the Professional Nursing Staff Organization (PNSO) has announced the candidates for the fall elections for president-elect and the two open positions on the nominating committee.

The candidates for the Nominating Committee are Linda Doyle, clinician IV, NICU; Wendy Tippett, R.N. coordinator, Radiology; Karen Thomas, clinician III, Perioperative Region; Paula Schenk, clinician III, Perioperative Region; and Lee Demko, Heart Center.

The candidates for president-elect are Beth Dierdorf, clinician IV, Digestive Health Center, and Cindy Westley, clinician IV, Medicine Services. The candidates will be formally introduced at the Fall Nursing Assembly on Thursday, Sept. 26. The Nursing Assembly will be held 3-5 p.m. in Dining Conference Rooms 1-3.

Information about the candidates will be distributed by fliers and posters throughout the Health System. Also, information tables will be set up in the cafeteria the week of Oct. 14. The campaign will begin Oct. 1 and continue through Oct. 15. The ballot and a biosketch of each candidate will be mailed to home addresses, and voting will be from Oct. 15 to Oct. 31. All registered nurses at UVa are members of the PNSO and therefore eligible to vote. Announcement of the winners will be on Nov. 1.

The Nominating Committee will be hosting a breakfast for the candidates on Oct. 11, 7:30-9 a.m. in the Dining Conference Rooms. All nursing staff are encouraged to attend, as this will be an opportunity to meet the candidates.

The PNSO is comprised of three committees, Clinical Practice, Govern-

ance and Professional Development, which direct the bulk of work for the Nursing Cabinet. As need requires, special initiatives, such as the Magnet Recognition and Patient Care Assistant Initiative, are appointed and directed by the cabinet.

Monthly, the Clinical Practice, Governance and Professional Development committees meet to discuss and problem-solve specific issues that arise within nursing. The Governance Committee has reviewed current bylaws of the PNSO and is recommending amendments to be voted on during this election cycle.

Members of the PNSO will be able to learn about the PNSO and the committees' current work by attending the Fall Nursing Assembly on Sept. 26.

On Nov. 1, the second Nursing Congress will be held. Elected delegates

from the frontline caregivers will convene to share and receive information about nursing concerns and to identify and establish priorities for the 2003 Nursing Cabinet. The Nursing Congress is an annual event to provide frontline nurses with direct input into the workings of the PNSO.

For more information about PNSO's Nursing Cabinet and committees, logon to <http://hsc.virginia.edu/nurses>. Contact Nominating Committee members for information about campaign events: Terry Lucas, chair, [tl9d@virginia.edu](mailto:tl9d@virginia.edu); Sharon Bragg, [slb4w@virginia.edu](mailto:slb4w@virginia.edu); Terri Moore, Heart Center, [tlr2e@virginia.edu](mailto:tlr2e@virginia.edu); Anne Diamond, Diabetes Community Network, [amd9z@virginia.edu](mailto:amd9z@virginia.edu); or Brigid Wonderly, DHC, [baw3g@virginia.edu](mailto:baw3g@virginia.edu). □

## PEOPLE



Donna Bryant

**Donna Bryant**, administrative assistant with the Heart Center, is the Medical Center Employee of the Month for August. She has worked in the Nuclear Cardiology and the Stress Lab procedure areas for more than three years. "Donna's strong interpersonal skills, superior technical excellence and critical problem-solving talents help to motivate others and improve the department, service center and UVa," says a colleague. "Donna has many strengths, but the area she is most gifted is in her ability to relate to others and provide support," says another. "Donna maintains a positive attitude with a sense of humor despite the enormously heavy workload, with many same-day add-on studies and multiple competing priorities. The entire department can rely on Donna to remain calm, patient and a pleasure to work with." Adds another, "Donna is a strong patient advocate and has been the catalyst for many positive changes in the noninvasive labs operation to support patients."

**Fabio Cominelli**, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Digestive Health Center of Excellence, has announced that his re-

search team on inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), has been selected along with a group of other major centers to participate in a National Interlaboratory Consortium funded by the Eli and Edyth L. Broad Foundation to study Crohn's disease.

**Suzanne Faulk**, marketing administrator for the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, left UVa on Sept. 3 to move to Atlanta. **Lissa Nakhwa** is now the contact person for marketing and media issues related to Otolaryngology.

**Klaus Ley**, M.D., professor of biomedical engineering and director of the Cardiovascular Research Center, received an award in April from the National Heart, Lung, Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health for his research on "Monocyte adhesion to atheroma in gene-targeted mice." The award will cover total costs of \$888,000 over a four-year period.

**Yuqing Huo**, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of research in the Department of Biomedical Engineering, received the Young Investigator Award from the Cardiovascular Section of the American Physiological Society for an abstract submitted to the 2002 Experimental Biology meeting in New Orleans. He and Klaus Ley, M.D., were the authors of article, "Interactions of leukocytes with atherosclerotic lesions in mice in the presence of activated platelets."

## Bike to Work Day Slated for Oct. 4

UVa is joining with the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County to promote Bike to Work Day on Friday, Oct. 4.

The purpose of the day is to encourage commuters to choose bicycling as an alternative mode of transportation, and to promote JAUNT and CTS bus ridership.

The Health System will set up a tent outside Jordan Hall on Jefferson Park Avenue on the morning of Oct. 4 to serve breakfast for employees using alternative transportation, such as bicycling, commuting by bus or using a combination. From 7:30 to 10:30 a.m., bagels, bananas, apples, juice and coffee will be served.

A similar breakfast during the same time period will be served by the city at the end of the Downtown Mall near City Hall.

Anyone who brings a bike aboard that day will be able to ride CTS or JAUNT for free. A representative from a local bike shop will be present at the tent area to answer questions about bicycles.

Bike to Work Day takes place on the same day as Lee National Denim Day, making it a perfect fit for wearing jeans (see story on page 3) and bike riding.

## Medical Center Hour Schedules Stimulating Programs for Fall

The Medical Center Hour continues this week with the annual Cancer Center Lecture. Produced by Humanities in Medicine of the UVa School of Medicine, the free sessions are open to the public and held on Wednesdays from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the Jordan Conference Center Auditorium, unless otherwise noted.

**Sept. 25** – "Communicating About Cancer Prevention With the Underserved: Physical and Spiritual Barriers," with Groesbeck P. Parham, M.D., professor of OB/GYN and Avon Scholar for Cancer Control at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Comprehensive Cancer Center; and Ross Isaacs, M.D., of Internal Medicine (Nephrology) and the Center for Improving Minority Health, UVa. This Spirituality and Medicine, and Cancer Center Lecture is co-presented by the Cancer Center.

**Oct. 2** – "Dax's Story: A Severely Burned Man's Thirty-Year Odyssey," with Dax Cowart, J.D., of Corpus Christi, Texas, and James F. Childress, Ph.D., Institute for Practical Ethics and Religious Studies at UVa. Co-presented by the Institute for Practical Ethics, Center for Biomedical Ethics, and Department of Plastic and Maxillofacial

Surgery. The session will be held in McLeod Hall Auditorium.

**Oct. 9** – "To Have and to Hit? Understanding and Preventing Domestic Violence," with Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN, Nursing and Public Health, Johns Hopkins University. Co-presented by The Women's Place.

**Oct. 16** – "Bioethicist at Work: Clinical Case and Comments," with Albert R. Jonsen, Ph.D., professor emeritus, University of Washington, Seattle; and R. Scott Jones, M.D., Department of Surgery at UVa. Co-presented by the Institute for Practical Ethics and Center for Biomedical Ethics.

**Oct. 23** – "On the Edge of Life – Deciding for Extremely Premature Newborns," with John Robertson, J.D., Law School, University of Texas, Austin; and Robert Boyle, M.D., Pediatrics (Neonatology) at UVa. Co-presented by the Institute for Practical Ethics, Bioethics Program of the College of Arts and Sciences, Center for Biomedical Ethics, and Compassionate Care for Children.

**Oct. 30** – "Osteopathic Medicine," with Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, D.O., executive vice president and dean, Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. □



## Plastic Surgeons Honored

**Milton Edgerton**, M.D., and **Julia MacRae**, M.D., hold the silver bowls they were awarded during the 45th annual scientific meeting of the Southeastern Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons at Hilton Head Island, S.C., in June. Dr. Edgerton, a reconstructive and hand surgeon and professor emeritus at UVa, won the society's lifetime achievement award. Dr. MacRae, a UVa resident in Plastic Surgery, was presented the Glancy Award for outstanding resident research. The annual award, which has not been back to UVa in 14 years, will remain here until the next presentation. MacRae's research was "Human Adipocyte Viability Testing," which involved testing different treatments on fat cells to see if they enhanced or harmed cell viability. She also developed a new assay for fat viability.

## NEWS CAPSULES

## Four-Miler Has Record Turnout

The 20th annual Charlottesville Women's Four-Miler on Aug. 31 raised more than \$25,000 for exercise and nutrition programs at the UVa Cancer Center's Breast Resource Center.

The race on Garth Road had a record 1,450 entrants, and 1,235 women crossed the finish line. This year, the weather was neither hot nor rainy. Sponsored by the Charlottesville Track Club and local businesses, the event is Virginia's biggest race devoted to helping women with breast cancer. Last year's event raised more than \$19,000.

Cancer survivor Debbie Ryan, coach for the UVa women's basketball team, was the honorary starter. A special feature of the run was the "Motivation Mile," where 162 large posters were mounted on fences with the names of women who have lost their lives or have beaten cancer. "It was a powerful experience for the runners," says David Cattell-Gordon of the Cancer Center. "It gave them that extra kick. Lots of tears were shed at the race, too."

The race was won by Nicola Ratcliff in a time of 24:17. She edged out Susan Molloy by just three seconds.

**The 2002 General Clinical Research Center Research Symposium** will be Tuesday, Oct. 15, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Jordan Conference Center rooms 2A-C.

Invited guests will include Janet Wittes, Ph.D., Statistics Collaborative Inc., "Safety Monitoring in Clinical Studies: The Role of Statistics"; Jean-Pierre Després, Ph.D., Laval Hospital Research Center, "The Metabolic Syndrome and Its Impact on the Risk of Cardiovascular Disease: Importance of Visceral Obesity"; Edward Horton, M.D., Harvard University School of Medicine, "Vascular Reactivity and Endothelial Dysfunction in Type 2 Diabetes and Prediabetes." UVa speakers will include Drs. Eugene Barrett, Carol Manning, Milagros Huerta, Sandra Shultz, Richard

Stevenson, Craig Slingluff and Paul Suratt. For information, call 924-2685 or go online at [gcr.c.med.virginia.edu](http://gcr.c.med.virginia.edu).

**The annual CMC Memorial Service will be held Saturday, Sept. 28,** at 2 p.m. at the Kluge Children's Rehabilitation Center on Ivy Road. Staff and faculty are invited to attend. For more information call Susan Card at 924-9538.

**The School of Nursing's first open house of the academic year** will be 8:30 a.m.-noon Friday, Oct. 4, at McLeod Hall. Students can receive information on the application process, program of study and financial aid materials for all levels of study. To attend, RSVP with the academic level of interest. Call toll free, (888) 283-8703, or e-mail [nursosa@virginia.edu](mailto:nursosa@virginia.edu). The next open house will be Nov. 21.

**On Wednesday, Sept. 25, the United Way Thomas Jefferson Area will sponsor** the Laurence E. Richardson Day of Caring, a community service event that matches employee volunteers with registered service organizations. Area employees will meet at Albemarle Square Shopping Center at 7 a.m. to attend a breakfast rally and then head out to project sites throughout Central Virginia. Nearly 200 UVa employees will offer their services in more than 35 projects ranging from landscaping, painting and deck repair to hosting senior center parties and reading to school children. For UVa, the event marks the beginning of the annual Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign.

**The annual Beirne B. Carter Lecture in Immunology will be 4-5 p.m. Monday, Oct. 7,** in the Jordan Hall Conference Center Auditorium. "Converting Graded Signals to Discrete Development Outcomes" will be presented by Gerald R. Crabtree, M.D., professor of pathology and developmental biology at Stanford University School of Medicine. A reception in the lobby will follow the lecture, which is sponsored by the UVa School of Medicine Office of Continuing Medical Education. For information call 924-8497.



## Echinacea Cold Remedy Study Seeks Answers About Its Effectiveness

Millions of Americans are using the popular herbal supplement echinacea for its purported ability to stimulate the immune system to fight colds, flu and other ailments.

Yet the alleged cold remedy is not yet scientifically proven to be effective in clinical research trials. To find out if echinacea really fights colds, University of Virginia Health System investigators have received \$2.2 million in funding from the National Institutes of Health to conduct a three-year clinical trial.

"Part of the problem surrounding the study of echinacea is that all of the products containing it are different," says principal investigator Dr. Ronald B. Turner, professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Pediatrics, at UVa. "No one has identified an active factor yet."

Numerous variables could influence what in echinacea works and how, Turner says. The part of the plant used, the growing conditions and season, how it is processed and which of the plant's three species — each of which has a different chemical composition — are in a product could all possibly affect its medicinal value.

The study will use one crop of echinacea plants processed using three different extraction methods to produce three different concentrations of various echinacea constituents. The composition of these three products has been carefully characterized in the laboratory of a leading plant chemist at the University of Graz in Austria, a subcontractor for the study. These three products — which are identical except for their extraction methods — will be administered to study subjects.

"If you buy Product X off the shelf today and you go back six months later and buy the same brand, it may be com-

pletely different from the first thing you bought," Turner says. "Echinacea and other supplements present a huge problem with safety and standardization, as well as for research, because if you don't know what's actually in the product, studies on it can't be standardized, and therefore cannot get consistent results."

Turner and his research team plan to recruit approximately 450 subjects for the study. One group of subjects was enrolled in May, and the next group will be enrolled in October. The volunteers are infected with a cold virus. One group is given echinacea before being infected with the cold, and another group receives it after being infected. Some subjects in each group receive a look-alike placebo, or inactive medication, instead of the echinacea so they can be compared with the group receiving the herbal supplement.

"One of the things we want to find out is whether echinacea has an effect on viral replication or on the body's inflammatory response," Turner says. "It may involve a combination of several factors."

Echinacea, or purple coneflower, is a wildflower in the daisy family that is indigenous to the prairies of the American Midwest and Great Plains, but is now grown widely in gardens as an ornamental flower.

For hundreds of years, echinacea was used by American Indians for a wide range of medicinal purposes. White settlers adopted it as a folk remedy, and in the 20th century, it became popular in Europe, especially in Germany. Use of echinacea in the United States was revived in the 1980s and has seen a huge increase in popularity during the past decade as herbal supplement production and sales have soared. □

# CLASSES

Human Resources Center for Organizational Development

**TO REGISTER FOR THESE PROGRAMS, call the HRCOD registration hotline at 924-8501, or submit a registration form by fax at 9-244-7504 or by the web site [hsc.virginia.edu/hrcod](http://hsc.virginia.edu/hrcod). For information call 924-2502 or e-mail [hrcod@virginia.edu](mailto:hrcod@virginia.edu). Unless otherwise listed, all programs will be held on the 6th floor of the West Complex Multistory.**

### Health System Orientation

Every other Monday and Tuesday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., McKim Auditorium: Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 14-15, 28-29; Nov. 11-12, 25-26. Target audience: all newly hired Health System employees.

### Central Patient Care Services (PCS) Orientation

Held following each Health System Orientation. Target audience: all newly hired Patient Care Services staff.

### English as a Second Language

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-4:30 p.m. Target audience: employees who want to improve their English verbal and written skills.

### Adult Continuing Education (ACE)

Wednesdays, 1:30-5 p.m. Contact Jeri Campbell, 924-1199, to register. Target audience: Health System employees interested in improving skills in reading, writing, spelling, math and studying for the GED.

### Mission Possible: Preparing for JCAHO

Classes held in Primary Care Classrooms A-B, unless otherwise noted. Oct. 7, 7:30-8:30 a.m.; Oct. 8, 9-10 a.m., Fontaine conference room; Oct. 9, 5:30-6:30 p.m.; Oct. 10, 8-9 a.m., Dining Conference Rooms 1-3; Oct. 14, 2:30-3:30 p.m.; Oct. 15, 10-11 a.m., Dining Conference Rooms 1-3; Oct. 11, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Republic Plaza; Oct. 21, 3:30-4:30 p.m.; Oct. 23, 2:30-3:30 p.m., Republic Plaza; Oct. 24, 3:30-4:30 p.m.; Oct. 25, 2:30-3:30 p.m., Dining Conference Rooms 1-3; Oct. 28, 9-10 p.m.; Oct. 29, 2-3 p.m., Northridge; Oct. 30, 3:30-4:30 p.m.; Oct. 31, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Northridge; Nov. 1, 8:30-9:30 a.m. Target audience: all Health System employees.

### Discriminatory Harassment: Awareness and Prevention

Oct. 7, 8:30-10:30 a.m.; Oct. 9, 9-11 a.m.; Oct. 16, 2-4 p.m.; Oct. 17, 9-11 a.m.; Oct. 21, 1-3 p.m.; Oct. 24, 8-10 a.m.; Oct. 24, 1-3 p.m.; Oct. 28, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; Oct. 28, 3-5 p.m.; Oct. 30, 9-11 a.m.; Nov. 12, 2-4 p.m.; Nov. 13, 9-11 a.m.; Nov. 15, 8-10 a.m. All ses-

sions held in Primary Care Classrooms A-B. Target audience: managers and supervisors. Attendance at a Discriminatory Harassment session is mandatory for all who conduct or review performance appraisals. Anyone who has not attended one since October 2000 must register for one of these sessions.

### Kidney Talk: The Professional Edition

Oct. 7, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 7.8 VNA contact hours. Target audience: HCPs.

### Drop-In Assistance for NetLearning Web-Based Education

Oct. 8, 9-10 a.m.; Oct. 18, 11 a.m.-noon; Oct. 23, 3-4 p.m.; Oct. 31, 9-10 a.m.; Nov. 8, 11 a.m.-noon; Nov. 12, 9-10 a.m.; Nov. 20, 11 a.m.-noon; Nov. 26, 2-3 p.m.; Dec. 4, 8-9 a.m.; Dec. 10, 10-11 a.m. All sessions will be in the Health Sciences Library's Tolleson Room. Target audience: Health System staff.

### JCAHO Education Classes for Patient Care Managers: Education

Oct. 8, 1-3 p.m., Camp Heart Auditorium; Oct. 9, 9:30-11:30 a.m., McLeod Hall Auditorium; Oct. 10, 2:30-4:30 p.m., Camp Heart Auditorium. Target audience: PCMs.

### PDP: The Essentials, part 2 - Conflict Management and Coping with Change

Oct. 10, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Jordan Hall Conference Center 2A-C; Oct. 30, 1-4:30 p.m., 6th floor, West Complex Multistory. Target audience: Health System employees.

### General Compliance Retraining

Oct. 11, 9-10 a.m., Camp Heart Auditorium. Target audience: Health System employees (M.D., N.P. and CRNA retraining will be at a later date).

### Grants and Contracts Process (CRC Educational Series)

Oct. 11, 10-11:30 a.m., Jordan Hall Conference Center 2A-C. 1.8 VNA contact hours. Target audience: new clinical research coordinators.

### Critical Care Orientation

All sessions 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Oct. 14, rhythm interpretation; Oct. 22, hemodynamic monitoring, CHF, CAD, acute coronary syndrome; Oct. 28, neurology, endocrine, hematology/immunology; Nov. 11, respiratory; Aug. 19, GI, advance directives, organ procurement, pain management; Nov. 13, multisystem, renal. Target audience: nurses new to critical care.

### Acute Management of IV Therapy

Oct. 15, 8 a.m.-noon. Target audience: nursing staff providing care to patients with IVs or central lines.

### The Essentials of Supervision: Supervisor/Manager Orientation (Quality)

Oct. 16, 8 a.m.-noon. Target audience: newly hired supervisors/managers and those aspiring to these roles.

### Marketing and Communications and Eureka Communications (CRC Educational Series)

Oct. 16, 10 a.m.-noon, Jordan Hall Conference Center 2A-C. 2.4 VNA contact hours. Target audience: clinical research coordinators.

### CPI - Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training

All sessions 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Oct. 17, Newcomb Hall Commonwealth Room; Nov. 5, West Complex Multistory 6th floor; Nov. 14, Primary Care Classrooms A-B; Nov. 21, Newcomb Hall Commonwealth Room. Target audience: HCPs and Security. Emergency Department, Psychiatry and Security have registration priority.

### PDP: The Essentials - part 1 (Effective Communication, Feedback and Peer Review, Team Dynamics)

Oct. 18, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Jordan Hall Conference Center 2A-C. Target audience: all Health System employees.

### PeopleSoft Recruit Workforce Self-Service for Managers (Supervisory Development Program)

Oct. 21, 2:30-4:30 p.m., Nov. 18, 8:30-10:30 a.m., or Dec. 16, 2:30-4:30 p.m. Computing Training Room, Stacey Hall. Target audience: supervisors and managers identified by Human Resources.

### IND Submissions and Follow-Up (CRC Educational Series)

Oct. 22, 10-11:30 a.m., Jordan Hall Conference Center 2A-C. 1.8 VNA contact hours. Target audience: clinical research coordinators.

### Domestic Violence: What You Don't Know Might Hurt Them

Oct. 23, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Target: All staff and HCPs who work with women.

### VISTA Tips (Advanced)

Oct. 23, 10 a.m.-noon. Target audience: VISTA supervisors who have completed Introduction to VISTA or those experienced with the VISTA system.

### Cancer Center Education Series

Oct. 23, 5-6 p.m., Cancer Center conference room, "Incorporating Cancer Genetics Into Your Clinical Practice." 1.2 VNA contact hours. Target audience: all interested staff.

## HIPAA PRIVACY Q&A.

**Q.** What are some important rules for making up "good" passwords – ones that are hard for someone else to guess?

**A.** They should be at least six characters long; contain both numbers and letters; and never be a real word or a significant number string. This means passwords won't ever be words, and they won't be an obvious number string such as 123456 or a birth date. Never choose your user ID (logon, sign on) as your password. Even if it has both numbers and letters, it isn't secret and it's one of the first things a hacker will try.

**Q.** Is it okay to hide your password under your mouse pad or keyboard tray?

**A.** No. Passwords hidden this way can be easily found. This is not taking reasonable care to keep your password secret.

**Q.** Why is it important to logoff when you leave your PC, even if no one else is around?

**A.** Even at the end of the day, housecleaning crews and other staff may be in the area and use your access for which you will be held responsible.

**Q.** How should you dispose of confidential papers?

**A.** Either shred them before they leave your department or use a recycling process that ensures confidentiality is maintained until shredding.

**Q.** What should you do if you are in a public area and need to discuss a patient's care situation?

**A.** Move to a more private place and lower your voice so your conversation will not be overheard.

**These HIPAA questions and answers are provided by the UVa HIPAA Privacy Office. Contact Joanne Hayden, UVa Health System privacy officer, at 924-8389 for questions.**



UVa personnel who presented the first aid kit to SOCA coaches were, left to right, William G. Wilson, M.D., and Meg Keeley, M.D., both of Pediatrics-CMC; Allen Williamson, R.N., Emergency Medicine-Pediatric ED; Jim McGowan, Emergency Medicine patient care service administrator; and Mark Miller, M.D., Orthopedics-Sports Medicine.

## Emergency Medicine Supplies First Aid Kits to Area Teams

Soccer has become so popular in the last 10 years that more kids play it than any other sport. This year in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, close to 3,200 soccer players will compete.

Some injuries occur during the fall season. Although injury rates among soccer players are low when compared with other sports, a number of cuts, bruises and sprains do happen.

To get area soccer coaches and their teams ready for the season, the Department of Emergency Medicine, Children's Medical Center and Department of Orthopedics at UVa joined together to present the Soccer Organization of Charlottesville/Albemarle (SOCA) with much-needed first aid supplies.

The presentation was held Aug. 10 at the SOCA/ACAC South Fork Soccer Park clubhouse, which is on Polo Grounds Road, south of the Forest Lakes neighborhood off U.S. 29 North.

Normally, coaches with the SOCA organization are on their own in providing first aid supplies for their players. With this donation, coaches now have a ready supply.

A total of 300 first aid kits are being donated to area sports teams, says Mary Ann Himes of the Emergency Department. The first round last month included 150 kits to SOCA and 45 more to the Fluvanna Youth Soccer Association. The remainder of the kits will be given to the Piedmont YMCA, Boys and Girls Club of Charlottesville, Central Charlottesville Little League, Fluvanna Area Little League and the Piedmont Little League.

"This project was initiated by our department," Himes says. "Actually, the idea came from one of our nurses in the Pediatric ED." She says CMC and Sports Medicine readily supplied financial assistance for the project.

For more information contact Himes at 924-9955. □

## Employees Snap Up Football Tickets

Football tickets for the UVa-Akron football game, which was played over the weekend, went on sale at a special \$5 rate for Medical Center employees on Tuesday, Sept. 3.

Although plans were made to sell to employees throughout the week, all 1,000 tickets were gone by early afternoon of the first day.

Each game ticket purchased was accompanied by an orange UVa Health System T-shirt and a coupon for a free soft drink and hot dog at the game. Most employees who bought tickets bought blocks of four tickets, which were the maximum allowed.

The Medical Center was able to acquire another 300 tickets, which went on sale the afternoon of Sept. 6. But they sold out in 20 minutes, with people still standing in line. □

## COUNCIL CONNECTIONS

**Q:** Is it true that University of Virginia employees will not have dental coverage at the start of the new year on Jan. 1, 2003?

**A:** This is a false rumor. UVa employees will have dental coverage after the end of the year. However, Southern Health will no longer be the dental claims administrator. Representatives for the UVa Health Plan are currently selecting a new vendor through the state's mandatory procurement process. A new dental insurance vendor is expected to be selected by the end of September. All the information about the new dental vendor will be provided in the Open Enrollment information that will be mailed to home addresses at the end of October.

Except for the dental claims, Southern Health will continue to administer the UVa Health Plan next year.

**Q:** I understand that there will be a new UVa Health Plan ombudsman to help employees fully utilize their health care benefits. Who will the new ombudsman be?

**A:** UVa Human Resources is currently interviewing for a new ombudsman to replace Ann S. Goodson, R.N., who left the position on Aug. 29. An announcement will be made when the new ombudsman for the UVa Health Plan has been named selected.

Employees should be aware that the UVa Health Plan ombudsman's responsibilities are to:

- Explain the UVa Health Plan policies and benefit coverage;
- Provide answers to questions regarding the UVa Health Plan;
- Listen to complaints and concerns regarding the UVa Health Plan;
- Make UVa Health Plan information available to UVa employees;
- Provide information concerning complaint and appeal procedures and advise employees which review level is appropriate;
- Investigate payment problems for claims submitted to the UVa Health Plan that employees have been unable to resolve themselves;
- Refer issues to other university offices or committees as appropriate;
- Promote healthy living.

All encounters with the UVa Health Plan ombudsman are treated with confidentiality. No action is taken by the ombudsman without the employee's permission. Information retained by the ombudsman is kept secure. However, with the verbal or written permission of the employee, the ombudsman may carry such information forward.

Until a replacement for Ms. Goodson is found, issues can be forwarded to Daisy Shull, dls6t@virginia.edu. Once the ombudsman position is filled, the news will be announced on the University of Virginia Human Resources web site, [www.hrs.virginia.edu](http://www.hrs.virginia.edu). Employees also can check the Medical Center Employee Council minutes for updates by clicking on [www.med.virginia.edu/medcntr/committees/mcec/minutes.html](http://www.med.virginia.edu/medcntr/committees/mcec/minutes.html).

### Special Note:

Whenever Medical Center (Agency 209) employees move, they must be sure to contact both UVa Human Resources and Medical Center Human Resources and provide their current home address. Anyone who has moved this year and has not notified both departments should do so. (Health System employees under Agency 207 only need to contact UVa Human Resources.)

To update your address information with UVa Human Resources, e-mail Amy Grubb at [ag3a@virginia.edu](mailto:ag3a@virginia.edu) with your name, Social Security number and new address. You can also complete a form that is available online at [uvaforms.virginia.edu/hremprec/addychg.pdf](http://uvaforms.virginia.edu/hremprec/addychg.pdf).

To update your address information with the Medical Center's Human Resources department, fax address changes to 982-1683 or contact George Mayo at 982-4122 or [gwm3c@virginia.edu](mailto:gwm3c@virginia.edu).

**Council Connections is sponsored by the Medical Center Employee Council. Send questions for this column to [employeecouncil@virginia.edu](mailto:employeecouncil@virginia.edu) or Employee Council, c/o Health System Administration, P.O. Box 800788, Charlottesville, VA 22908-0788. Check out our web site at [www.med.virginia.edu/mcec/](http://www.med.virginia.edu/mcec/).**



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Next Issue of Link: October 7

Deadlines for announcements: Oct. 1 for Oct. 21 issue; Oct. 15 for the Nov. 4 Link. The Oct. 7 issue is closed. Send submissions to Box 800224, fax to 924-2969, or e-mail to ja8a@virginia.edu ("Auffill, John" on global list).

### Study Seeks Patients With Laryngopharyngeal Reflux

Patients, ages 18-70, with a diagnosis of laryngopharyngeal reflux (LPR) are needed for a six-month study to increase understanding of this condition by developing a questionnaire relating to how LPR affects quality of life. During the six months, Prilosec 20 mg twice a day will be provided and there will be five outpatient visits. Compensation will be provided. Contact Karen Davenport at 924-8574. (HIC 10040)

### Menopausal Women Needed To Test Investigational Medicine

UVa Midlife Health is seeking menopausal women for testing a new investigational medicine that may improve menopausal symptoms and prevent osteoporosis. Women must have had no period for one year, have a uterus, and not on hormones. Contact Catherine Zuver, R.N., at 243-4726. (HIC 9906)

### Study Needs Patients With Early Parkinson's Disease

Patients who have had a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease for less than five years and who are not on any medication for it can take part in a medication study that will last a minimum of 24 months. Participants will be given randomly either the study medication or placebo and must undergo two beta-CIT SPECT imaging studies. Once on study medication, study-related visits will be required every 2-3 months. Routine cancer-screening tests must be completed within 12 months prior to study enrollment. Contact Elke E. Rost-Ruffner, R.N., BSN, at 243-5422 or erl@virginia.edu. (HIC 10000)

### Volunteers With Asthma Sought for Research Study

UVa Radiology Research seeks nonsmokers, ages 18-35, diagnosed with asthma for a research study investigating a new technology to image the lung, helium magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). Participants will receive an MRI of the lung using an investigational new drug called hyperpolarized helium, a physical exam, a lung-function test and lab tests. All tests will be at no cost to participants. The study can be completed in one day. Financial compensation will be provided. Contact Doris Harding at 924-9603 or dah6y@virginia.edu. (HIC 8559)

### Medication To Treat Parkinson's Disease Studied

A clinical trial is being held for patients with Parkinson's disease who are taking at least four doses of Levodopa/Carbidopa and are experiencing "on-off" motor fluctuations. Participants will be given randomly either the study medication or placebo. Patients must fill out 24-hour diaries and make six visits to the clinic. The trial will last approximately three months. Contact Elke E. Rost-Ruffner, R.N., BSN, at 243-5422 or erl@virginia.edu. (HIC 10041)

### Catch a Summer Cold? Call UVa About Study

UVa's Department of Otolaryngology is testing an investigational nasal spray for the treatment of common colds. People with a new cold may be eligible to participate. Five study visits are required. Compensation for completion of the study will be up to \$375. Call 924-8530. (HIC 9973)

### Study Needs Subjects With Diabetic Eye Disease

A UVa research study is examining the effect of high blood sugar on the risk of developing diabetic eye disease. Subjects are needed who have type I or II diabetes with varying degrees of eye disease. For information call the Clinical Trials Office, 924-9969. (HIC 7763)

### Healthy Women, 60 and Older, Wanted for Study

Healthy women, ages 60 and older and not taking estrogen replacement, are wanted for a one-year study on growth hormone at UVa. Participants must take an oral medication that stimulates growth hormone production. There will be several hospital visits, some overnight. Medical exams will be provided. Compensation will be \$500 at completion of study. Call Mary Clancy at 243-5736. (HIC 7444)

### Study Looking for Healthy Men, Ages 60 and Over

Healthy men, ages 60 and over, are wanted for an eight-week study at the UVa Health System to evaluate if an increase in insulin sensitivity can increase growth hormone production. Daily medication and two overnight admissions required. Compensation at completion of study will be \$300. Contact Dr. Nass at 982-0868 or rnm9a@virginia.edu. (HIC 9253)

### Overweight Women Sought for Growth Hormone Release Study

Overweight females, ages 18-40 and not taking oral contraceptives, are needed for a study to learn about the effects of exercise on growth hormone release. Study includes a physical exam, blood work and body composition assessment. Compensation for completing study will be \$500. Bicycle exercise sessions, three two-overnight admissions at UVa's General Clinical Research Center, and blood draws are required. Contact Dee Dee Watson at 982-3180, dddw4n@virginia.edu, or Kirsten Frick at 982-4346, kf7f@virginia.edu. (HIC 8377).



NEWS & INFORMATION FOR THE  
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Nov. 6 – “The Princess and the Pea – New Training Paradigms in Surgery,” with Julie A. Freischlag, M.D., Surgery (Vascular), UCLA; and Hilary Sanfey, M.D., Surgery (Transplant) at UVa.

Co-presented by the Department of Surgery.

Nov. 13 – “In Our Own Backyard – Poverty, Disease and Cultural Difference in Central Virginia,” with Narinder S. Arora, M.D., of Charlottesville and founder of the free clinic at Mattaponi Indian Reservation in King William County, Va.

Co-presented by the Diversity Council of the School of Medicine.

Nov. 20 – “Devices and Desires – Contraception and Social Agendas for Women,” with Andrea Tone, Ph.D., School of History, Technology & Society, Georgia Tech in Atlanta; and Christine Peterson, M.D., OB/GYN and Student Health at UVa. Co-presented by the Division of Technology, Culture and Communication, School of Engineering and Applied Science.

For information about any of the programs, call 924-2094 or visit [www.med.virginia.edu/medicine/him/](http://www.med.virginia.edu/medicine/him/).

The UVa School of Medicine is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to sponsor continuing medical education for physicians. The School of Medicine designates this educational activity for one hour of category 1 credit towards the AMA Physician’s Recognition Award.

### Antidepressants Tied To Sexual Dysfunction

All but two of the newer antidepressant drugs cause significant sexual dysfunction (SD), according to results of a study conducted by Anita H. Clayton, M.D., professor and vice chair of the Department of Psychiatric Medicine at UVa and James Pradko, M.D., a primary care physician in New Baltimore, Mich.

The study, funded by GlaxoSmithKline, included 6,297 patients reporting data to their primary care physicians at 1,101 clinics across the United States. The responses were based on a questionnaire designed by Clayton at UVa. The data were published April 19 in *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.

"Other studies may have included a few hundred people, but no more than 1,500. Not only did the UVa study have nearly 6,300 participants, it is the first study to include all the new antidepressants manufactured in the United States since 1988," Clayton says.

"This may be the definitive study of SSRI SD effects, and our questionnaire may be very good for use as new drugs come out," she says.

The study found that patients taking either bupropion SR (Wellbutrin) or nefazodone (Serzone) had a statistically significantly lower prevalence of SD than patients taking fluoxetine (Prozac), paroxetine (Paxil), sertraline (Zoloft) or venlafaxine XR (Effexor). In addition, patients taking bupropion SR had a significantly lower prevalence of SD than patients taking citalopram (Celexa) or mirtazapine (Remeron). Patients taking another type of Wellbutrin, bupropion IR, also had a significantly lower prevalence of SD than patients who were taking paroxetine, sertraline or venlafaxine XR.

Patients taking fluoxetine had a lower prevalence of SD than patients taking paroxetine. No other differences among antidepressants in the prevalence of SD were statistically significant.

Wellbutrin and Serzone affect the brain in a different way from the other drugs in the study, Clayton says, because they have different receptor effects.

Study participants had to be at least 18 years old, have been sexually active at some time during the last 12 months, and be willing to discuss his or her sexual functioning with the physician. Seventy percent of people who were asked agreed to participate in the study — a much higher participation rate than expected, Clayton says. This rate suggests that the majority of patients are not hesitant to discuss sexual functioning with their physicians when directly questioned about it.

Physicians had estimated a 20 per-

cent prevalence rate of SD among patients taking antidepressants. However, the questionnaire revealed that 37 percent of patients were found to have a clear-cut SD condition. The proportional rate of antidepressant use in the study resembled antidepressant prescribing practices by primary care physicians in the United States, Clayton says.

Risk factors for SD included increasing age, higher daily antidepressant dose, being married, education level less than a college degree, employment status other than full time, having a comorbid illness associated with SD or taking an additional medication. Patients who did not have a history of sexual enjoyment, had low interest in sexual functioning or had a history of SD with previous antidepressant therapy were also at greater risk for SD. SD risk also was significant among those who smoked six to 20 cigarettes per day.