



Message from the Chairman

Summer 2017

Dear Colleague,

This month we have two important advances to report: our comprehensive approach to Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease and our research into new pathways for pain management.

In our conversation with Nigel Bunnett, PhD, you'll learn about landmark research into endosomal pathways that may allow us to develop new, more effective, palliative drugs without the problematic side-

effects.

In this issue, we also comment on new findings that show a rise in colorectal cancer among younger Americans and will follow that up in our next issue with a report on early-stage colorectal cancer.

Craig R. Smith, MD, FACS
Chair, Department of Surgery

New Program for Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is now the most common cause of

chronic liver disease in the United States, affecting 25% of the population. Without intervention, it can lead to significant liver damage in a smaller group of those patients. The severity of NAFLD can range from fat storage in the liver to inflammation (called NASH or nonalcoholic steatohepatitis). When scar tissue builds up, the diagnosis is NASH-related cirrhosis.

“Fatty Liver has become a public health issue and affects people suffering from obesity, diabetes, and high cholesterol – but it isn’t limited to those high risk groups,” says Julia Wattacheril, MD, MPH, Director of the Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease program. To serve this growing patient population, NYP/Columbia has a dedicated clinic for the study and management of NAFLD.

Read more: <http://columbiasurgery.org/news/2017/06/07/new-program-nonalcoholic-fatty-liver-disease>

Rise in Colorectal Cancer in Younger Americans

A study published in the February 28th issue of *The Journal of the National Cancer Institute* (<https://doi.org/10.1093/jnci/djw322>) shows that, the incidence of colorectal cancer (CRC) in the U.S. is declining rapidly overall but, curiously increasing among young adults.

“This study reveals that the demographics of colon cancer are changing,” says Benjamin Lebwohl, MD, MS, Director of Clinical Research of The Celiac Disease Center at Columbia “We are seeing fewer new cases of colon cancer in individuals over age 50, due in large part to screening colonoscopy. But we are seeing more cases in young adults, i.e. people in their 20’s and 30’s, than in previous decades.”

Read more: <http://columbiasurgery.org/news/2017/06/07/rise-colorectal-cancer-younger-americans>

Dr. Nigel Bunnett receives AGA Research Mentor Award

The American Gastroenterological Association Institute recently honored Nigel Bunnett, PhD, an internationally known expert on the mechanisms of pain, itch and neurogenic inflammation at NYP/Columbia. On May 7, during Digestive Disease Week in Chicago, Dr. Bunnett received the 2017 Cellular & Molecular

New Pathways for Pain Relief

Dr. Bunnett's experiments on the spinal nerves of animals have produced important insights into how pain receptors work and why so many of our palliative drugs are ineffective. Current medications target receptors at the surface of nerve cells that transmit pain. Yet Dr. Bunnett has found a way to break into the cell, rather than simply knocking at its door. By targeting receptors in these intracellular compartments, called endosomes, Dr. Bunnett suggests that we can create more potent, and longer lasting, pain control.

Read more about his landmark paper in *Science Translational Medicine* (<http://stm.sciencemag.org/>) and long-term implications for clinical practice.

Read more: <http://columbiasurgery.org/news/2017/05/31/new-pathways-pain-relief>

In appreciation: Margaret Dodge White

We mourn the passing of Margaret White Dodge, a dear friend, volunteer, and supporter of Columbia and NewYork-Presbyterian. Mrs. Dodge was a member of the Executive Committee of the NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Auxiliary Committee, which she served for over four decades, and helped establish the Richard L. White Memorial Fund for Cancer Research in the Department of Surgery in honor of her late husband, a graduate of P&S '58 and Columbia faculty member. The White Memorial Fund helps support cancer research in the Department, specifically on Melanoma. Learn more about Mrs. Dodge and how to make a gift in her memory to the White Memorial Fund in this obituary: <http://matherhodge.com/tribute/details/1016/Margaret-Dodge/obituary.html>

Research Papers and Presentations

For a full list of our recent papers and presentations, please see our Quarterly Research Report: <http://columbiasurgery.org/healthcare-professionals/quarterly-reports>

Webinars

Our vast library of videos and webinars is available 24/7 for your convenience.

Cardiovascular Webinars for physicians are available here:

<http://columbiasurgery.org/education-training/cardiovascular-webinars>



Patient Referral

To refer elective patients, call 212.305.7013 or 212.304.7810.
Email, info@columbiasurgery.org.

Urgent and emergency transfers: 1.800.NYP.STAT.

Physician Referral

Form: https://secure.cumc.columbia.edu/surgery/form/physician_referrals.html
