GRANT AWARDS

**Amy D’Agata**, MS, RN, received a $6,210 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Support Grant award from the Little Giraffe Foundation for **CONTINUING TO EXPLORE OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FKBPS5 AND EARLY LIFE STRESS IN THE NICU**. The project will examine genetic variation in relationship to stress experience for effects on neurobehavioral outcomes in 93 preterm infants. This study extends the work begun in a pilot study currently underway. Exploratory data analysis will be used to obtain initial insights into the effects of FKBPS5 genotype, NICU stress experience, and their interaction on infant neurobehavioral development at 35 weeks post-menstrual age.

**Cynthia French**, CRNA, received a $4,600 award from the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Foundation for **EFFECT OF LABOR EPIDURAL ANALGESIA WITH HYDROMORPHONE ON BREASTFEEDING AND NEONATAL NEUROBEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES**. The primary purpose of her study is to assess breastfeeding and neonatal neurobehavior in neonates whose mothers have received a continuous epidural infusion of bupivacaine (local anesthetic) and hydromorphone (narcotic) for labor pain in comparison with neonates whose mothers have not received epidural analgesia. A secondary purpose of the study is to determine whether there is a relationship between the duration of continuous epidural infusion and breastfeeding or neurobehavioral outcomes.

**Dr. Michelle Judge** received a $3,563 Connecticut Sea Grant Development award from the University of Connecticut Sea Grant Program for her proposal **NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF OBSTETRIC PRACTITIONERS’ ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGE, AND PRESCRIBING PRACTICES REGARDING OMEGA-3 FATTY ACID INTAKE**. The purpose of her study is to examine the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of obstetric physicians who give nutrition and nutritional supplement advice to their patients regarding fish and fish-oil intake. Advice by obstetric practitioners to their patients can make a profound impact on behaviors surrounding long-chain omega-3 fatty acids consumption critical to fetal development and health outcomes. Understanding of knowledge, attitudes and prescribing patterns of obstetric practitioners is a first step in understanding where education and support are needed.

**Dr. Renee Manworren** was awarded a $914,350 contract from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA-NIH). Her proposal will establish the University of Connecticut Center for the Advancement of Managing Pain (CAMP) as an NIH Center of Excellence in Pain Education (CoEPE). SON co-investigators include Dr. Kyle Baumbauer, Dr. Xiaomei Cong, Dr. Deborah McDonald, Dr. Thomas Van Hoof and Dr. Erin Young. CoEPEs serve as hubs for the development, evaluation, integration, promotion and distribution of pain management curriculum resources for medical and other health professional schools. The funding will be used to accelerate and extend the dissemination of UConn’s curricular resources to improve fundamental education of healthcare professionals in interdisciplinary pain management. The contract agreement will commit UConn CAMP to ensure that all UConn health care professional students (Schools of Nursing, Medicine, Pharmacy, Dental Medicine, and College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources) receive at minimum an additional 3 hours of course work in an effort to improve care of patients with pain and to promote inter-professional pain management education.
Dr. Annette Maruca received a $59,458 award for CT SCREENING, BRIEF INTERVENTION, AND REFERRAL TO TREATMENT HEALTH PROFESSIONS TRAINING PROGRAM from the UCHC Department of Community Medicine and Health Care as pass through funding from a grant submitted with Dr. Bonnie McRee to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The purpose of the project is to develop and implement training programs to teach health professions students (physician assistants, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, social workers, counselors, and medical students and residents) the skills necessary to provide evidence-based screening, brief intervention and referral of patients who are at risk for a substance use disorder to appropriate treatment.

Dr. Deborah Dillon McDonald and Dr. Juliette Shellman received a $1,985 award for INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND DECREASED PAIN IN OLDER ADULTS: A PILOT TEST OF THE EFFECT OF THERAPEUTIC REMINISCENCE through the Scholarship Facilitation Funds from the Office of the Vice President for Research. The aim of the project is to determine the effect size for a NIH R01 application to test the effect of therapeutic reminiscence of past physical activity for increased physical activity and reduced pain in older adults with osteoarthritis pain.

Dr. Kelley Newlin Lew received a $2,000 award for NUTRITION AND EXERCISE PATTERNS IN NICARAGUAN ETHNIC MINORITY YOUTH through the Scholarship Facilitation Funds from the Office of the Vice President for Research. The primary purpose of the project is to examine lifestyle and psychosocial factors in ethnic minority Nicaraguan youth in order to translate evidence-based obesity interventions for youth with or at-risk for obesity to Nicaraguan schools with tailoring/adaptations to match the local context and cultural preferences.

Dorothy Vittner, MSN, RN, received a $4,997 grant award from American Nurses Foundation for BIO-BEHAVIORAL MECHANISMS DURING SKIN TO SKIN CONTACT WITH PRETERM INFANTS. The purpose of the study is to examine bio-behavioral mechanisms as well as parental stress and anxiety and whether the process of skin to skin contact alleviates the stress and anxiety associated with preterm birth. This proposal will also examine if skin to skin contact enhances infant behavioral competence and the synchronicity or responsiveness between mother-infant, father-infant interactions.

**GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Dr. Kyle Baumbauer submitted THE FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF SPINAL CORD INJURY ON CUTANEOUS NOCICEPTORS to NIH. The goal of the study is to target specific sensory neurons for both scientific study and for the eventual development of therapeutic interventions. Through a series of lab experiments the study team will electrophysiologically characterize neurons to determine how cells respond independent of stimulation or in response to mechanical, heat, and cold stimulation. Gene expression profiles will be created for all of the afferents examined, and analysis will be performed to capture any injury-induced alterations in gene expression and neuronal function. With this knowledge he will identify targets responsible for hypersensitivity, and guide development of novel therapeutic interventions for the treatment of SCI-induced pain. The request is for $133,691.

Dr. Michelle Judge submitted ROLE OF FISH OIL IN MODULATING INFLAMMATORY PATHWAYS AND ASSOCIATED POSTPARTUM SYMPTOMATOLOGY to the National Fisheries Institute. The proposed work builds on findings from a larger double-blind placebo controlled investigation evaluating the efficacy of fish oil supplementation during pregnancy in reducing symptoms of postpartum depression. The goal of this study is to evaluate inflammatory
proteins in blood samples collected from study participants at three time points. The project will evaluate if fish oil supplementation during pregnancy can reduce inflammation and postpartum depressive symptoms in the same cohort.

Dr. Angela Starkweather submitted a transfer application to NINR for her research grant PAIN SENSITIVITY IN LOW BACK PAIN to UConn. Dr. Starkweather’s team will investigate the role of enhanced pain sensitivity on the risk of persistent lower back pain through characterization of pain sensitivity and pain-sensitivity candidate gene profiling. Dr. Starkweather’s project will be supported through the work of Drs. Kyle Baumbauer, Divya Ramesh, and Erin E. Young. Total funds awarded for the one year project are $501,185.

PUBLICATIONS


Perfetto, L. (2015) Facilitating educational advancement of RNs to the baccalaureate: What are they telling us? Nursing Education Perspectives, 36(1), 34-41. doi: 10.5480/13-1161.1


PRESENTATIONS


Van Hoof, T. J. (2015, June). Reforming CME educational meetings: Insights from theory & evidence. Paper presented at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Hartford, CT.