

# PharmTox Fights COVID-19

## Week of April 12-16, 2021

### Welcome Dr. Andrew Morris



We would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Andrew Morris, who will be joining our department in October. Dr. Morris is the Ashwin Annand Endowed Professor of Cardiovascular Research in the Department of Medicine at the University of Kentucky, where he directs an institutional mass spectrometry facility that provides support for biomedical and environmental diseases research. Dr. Morris also is a Research Investigator at the Lexington Veterans Affairs Medical Center. He received his PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Birmingham, England, completed postdoctoral training in pharmacology at the University of North Carolina (UNC) and held faculty positions at Stony Brook University and UNC prior to joining the faculty at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Morris' research focuses on the role of lipid signaling in human diseases. Areas of interest include phospholipases, integral membrane lipid phosphatases and bioactive lysophospholipid mediators with an emphasis on mechanisms linking genetic factors, diet-induced obesity and exposure to environmental pollutants to cardiovascular and metabolic disease risk. He also is active in developing and applying mass spectrometry-based methods for structural analysis and quantitation of lipids (lipidomics) and investigations of lipid biomarkers of disease. Dr. Morris is an associate editor of the ASPET journal "Molecular Pharmacology" and has authored more than 220 peer-reviewed research articles with a total of ~24,000 citations.

### Accepted Review by Basnakian Team

A review article co-authored by professor Alexei Basnakian and research associate Christopher Moore has been accepted to the Journal of Cellular and Molecular Medicine. The review titled "Apoptotic DNase network: mutual induction and cooperation among apoptotic endonucleases" critically analyzes 34 papers published in recent years on apoptotic DNases. The evidence presented in the review suggests for the first time that apoptotic DNases operate in a network in which members induce each other through the DNA breaks produced by their enzymatic actions. The authors propose that DNA breaks from other sources such as oxidative DNA damage, or actions of DNA repair endonucleases and DNA topoisomerases also may trigger a cooperative DNase feedback loop leading to elevated DNA fragmentation and subsequent cell death. This mutual induction of DNases has serious implications for studies focused on activation or inhibition of DNA fragmentation as a strategy for therapeutic intervention aimed at modulation of cell death.



### UAMS Celebrates Earth Day on April 22

In honor of Earth Day, UAMS will host a drive-up recycling event from 7:00-9:30 a.m. outside of the Doc Java entrance between Ward Tower and ED II on Campus Drive, which will include document shredding, glass, electronics, small appliances, general paper, plastic and aluminum recycling. The UAMS Fitness Center also will hold a pop-up class from 4:30-5:15 at the new Outdoor Fitness Court located between Fourth and Cedar streets. Pre-registration is required. For more information, contact [fitnesscenter@uams.edu](mailto:fitnesscenter@uams.edu).