

PharmTox Weekly Buzz

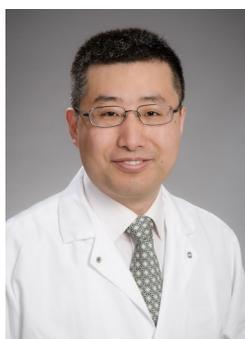
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Week of June 28—July 2, 2021

Welcome Dr. Fouda and Dr. Zhang



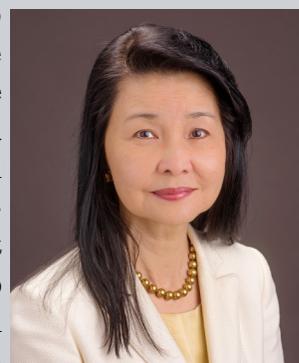
Please give a warm welcome to assistant professors Abdelrahman (Abdel) Fouda and Huilang Zhang, who officially joined the department on July 1st. Dr. Fouda joins us from the Medical College of Georgia, Augusta University, where his postdoctoral training focused on the retinal circulation, mechanisms of retinal protection, and the study of arginase to ameliorate retinal neurodegeneration. He has published more than 30 original manuscripts, was awarded an American Heart Association postdoctoral fellowship, and is the recipient of a highly competitive K99/R00 Award from the National Eye Institute of the NIH. He is also a licensed pharmacist.



Dr. Zhang joins us from the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology at the University of Washington - Seattle. He is the principal investigator of an American Heart Association (AHA) Career Development Award. He has 30 publications primarily related to ischemia-reperfusion injury in the heart, and the role of reactive oxygen species, mitochondrial dysfunction, and lipid overload in cardiac injury. He brings unique techniques to the department including imaging of mitochondria *in vivo*. Dr. Zhang also is interested in stem cell therapies for the aging heart. He serves as a reviewer of AHA grants and a long list of journals. Welcome Dr. Fouda and Dr. Zhang!

Dr. Chang Leads Phase One Clinical Trial

Professor Hui-Ming Chang will be leading a NIH-funded phase one clinical trial as the first step in a long-term plan to evaluate the efficacy of a new medication to protect the heart during chemotherapy. The “Phoenix Trial” will be conducted at the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute’s Phase 1 Cancer Clinical Trial Unit. The trial will evaluate the drug, dexrazoxane (DEX), which has been on the market since 2007. DEX prevents heart disease caused by doxorubicin, a commonly used chemotherapeutic agent. Until now, DEX was not used routinely because it was suspected to undermine cancer treatment. However, Dr. Chang believes she has found a way to administer DEX without hampering doxorubicin’s cancer fighting ability. Rather than giving it to the patient at the same time as DOX, Dr. Chang believes it can be given in advance of treatment, and still completely protect the heart without interfering with doxorubicin’s efficacy as an anti-cancer agent. During her phase one trial, she hopes to learn the most effective dose and timing for administering DEX prior to doxorubicin. The trial will recruit 30 healthy women ages 18 to 65 for the study. If successful, the study will move on to Phoenix Trial phase 2 involving breast cancer patients and later evaluate the efficacy of DEX to prevent doxorubicin-related heart disease in patients with other types of cancer, for example, sarcoma and pediatric leukemia.



Mike West Announces Retirement



Research associate Mike West (seated in center) announced his retirement effective July 31st. Mike began his career at UAMS in 1982 and has worked in the laboratories of Drs. Michael Owens and Brooks Gentry for the past 13.5 years. “I have been blessed to pursue research in different areas over the course of my career, from peanut allergens, cancer, and therapies for substance use disorder, in 8 different buildings (Ed.2, Shorey, Barton, BioMed1, ACRI, Cancer Institute, BioVentures, and the VA),” stated Mike. “I have enjoyed almost every minute and I look forward to retirement to spend more time with family, travel, and fish with my grandson. Warp Speed Ahead. LLAP (live long and prosper).”