THE BUZZ

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Pharmacology & Toxicology

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"New Talent in the Mu Lab!"

The Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology is delighted to announce the addition of Aparajita "Reeti" Das to our research community. Reeti joined the Mu Lab this month as a Research Technician. She will play a vital role in advancing the laboratory's investigations into the complex intersections of kidney function, immune mechanisms, and hypertension.

Reeti comes to UAMS with an impressive academic and technical foundation, having earned her Master's degree in biology from the University of Arkansas. During her graduate tenure, she distinguished herself through multidisciplinary research in cnidarian neuromuscular evolution and microbiology. Her work successfully bridged the gap between molecular biology and evolutionary theory, utilizing sophisticated microscopy and image analysis to map cellular organization and signaling pathways. This diverse experience has equipped her with a robust toolkit in both traditional "wet-lab" procedures and modern data-driven analysis.

Beyond her research accomplishments, Reeti brings a wealth of hands-on expertise in essential molecular and cellular biology techniques, ranging from PCR and DNA/RNA extraction to complex experimental troubleshooting. Her background is also marked by a strong commitment to education; as a graduate teaching assistant, she spent years mentoring undergraduate students in biology and microbiology labs, helping them master laboratory protocols and refine their technical skills.

In her new role in the Mu Lab, Reeti is eager to pivot her expertise toward clinically relevant disease mechanisms. She will be instrumental in supporting projects that explore how biological discoveries at the cellular level can lead to a better understanding of hypertension. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Reeti as she integrates into the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology and begins her impactful work here.

"New Trials Underway!"

The Department is proud to highlight a significant translational research milestone as Professor Shuk-Mei Ho and Associate Professor Yuet-Kin (Ricky) Leung move their groundbreaking work from the bench to the bedside. Following their discovery that G-1—a ligand targeting the G protein-coupled estrogen receptor (GPER1), successfully suppressed tumors in preclinical mouse models, the team is now launching a Phase I clinical trial.

This initiative is a true collaborative effort, bringing together the expertise of Dr. Ho and Dr. Leung with Dr. Shi-Ming Tu from the Division of Hematology/Oncology and his fellow, Dr. Yusra Medik. Together, they will evaluate the safety and preliminary efficacy of GPER1-targeted therapy in patients battling castration-resistant prostate cancer, with a specific focus on whether this approach offers distinct advantages over standard androgen-deprivation therapy.

In addition to the clinical evaluation, Dr. Leung's laboratory will play a critical role in the trial by collecting and analyzing patient blood samples. This effort aims to identify novel circulating biomarkers that could revolutionize how clinicians monitor disease progression in the future. Sponsored by Dr. Michael Birrer, Director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, the study has officially received IRB protocol approval. We look forward to the trial's commencement later this year and the potential impact this research may have on the future of prostate cancer care.