A doctor entering information into a computer during a patient visit is now ubiquitous. Although documentation, billing and compliance are the primary uses of electronic health records (EHR), the idea of utilizing EHR software such as Epic for clinical research is just catching on. This innovation is gradually building momentum thanks to the efforts of George Chiang, MD, associate professor of surgery and chief of pediatric urology at UC San Diego, and his collaborators. He practices and conducts research at Rady Children’s Hospital-San Diego (RCHSD) with a focus on clinical research informatics. RCHSD began using Epic in 2008, and Chiang is on a national steering board for Epic and pediatric urology.

He is the principal investigator on two intramural grants from RCHSD to take advantage of the EHR for “secondary use” purposes. As part of a multi-institutional cohort, he currently uses structured data narratives in the Epic EHR for outcomes analysis of pediatric health conditions. “This method harmonizes your clinical workflow with your research interests, taking advantage of the calculated power of automatic data capture to allow for multi-institutional research that’s cost effective,” said Chiang. He is also developing clinical trial alerts for pediatric specialties within the Epic EHR to assist with identification and recruitment of eligible patients throughout the RCHSD health information network. This network includes the largest pediatric group practice in San Diego, which provides care to approximately 30 percent of all children in the region and is one of the largest networks in the country.

The key is getting consensus from other physicians. According to Chiang, “Clinical research informatics is considered a subspecialty of medicine but, in reality, 20 percent is technology and 80 percent is politics.” Whether it be encouraging consensus among physicians on how to document a portion of their notes according to a template or creating “pop-ups” during patient encounters for clinical trials that don’t cause provider annoyance, his role has been to generate enthusiasm for these efforts as a process of integrating research into the everyday appointment with a patient.

Applied Research

He has developed a partnership with Ruth Bush, PhD, at the University of San Diego to study autism in children and also collaborates with researchers at the University of Virginia and the University of Colorado at Denver to study prenatal hydronephrosis (the enlargement of one or both kidneys before birth and the most common abnormality found on ultrasounds during pregnancy) and vesico-ureteral reflux (VUR). He also collaborates with identification and recruitment of eligible patients throughout the RCHSD health information network. This network includes the largest pediatric group practice in San Diego, which provides care to approximately 30 percent of all children in the region and is one of the largest networks in the country.

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Prostate Cancer Diagnosis Improves with MRI Technology

Oncologists at UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center are the first in San Diego to meld magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology with a traditional ultrasound prostate exam to create a three-dimensional map of the prostate that allows physicians to view growths that were previously undetectable.

"An ultrasound machine provides an imperfect view of the prostate, resulting in an underdiagnosis of cancer," said J. Kellogg Parsons, MD, MHS, associate professor in the Department of Urology. Along with Christopher J. Kane, MD, and Karim Kader, MD, PhD, also with the Department of Urology, they are collaborating with David Karow, MD, PhD, in the Department of Radiology to pioneer the new technology at Moores Cancer Center.

For patients, the only added step to the prostate examination is the addition of MRI imaging, which occurs in a separate visit in advance of the biopsy exam. Working with Karow, Parsons uses sophisticated new tools and software – DynaCAD for prostate with the UroNav fusion biopsy system – to combine the MRI with real-time, ultrasound-guided biopsy images in the clinic, resulting in what he calls a 3-D road map of the prostate.

"With an ultrasound exam, we are typically unable to see the most suspicious areas of the prostate, so we end up sampling different parts of the prostate that statistically speaking are more likely to have cancer,” said Parsons. “The MRI is a game changer. It allows us to target the biopsy needles exactly where we think the cancer is located. It’s more precise.”

Armondo Lopez, a patient at Moores Cancer Center, had been given a clean bill of health using the traditional ultrasound biopsy method, but when his prostate-specific antigen (PSA) levels, a protein that is often elevated in men with prostate cancer, started to rise he began to worry. Parsons recommended an MRI-guided prostate biopsy. The new technology led to the diagnosis of an aggressive prostate cancer located in an area normally not visible using the ultrasound machine alone. The tumor was still in its early stage and treatable.

An early diagnosis typically improves a patient’s prognosis. In the U.S., prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in men, with more than 29,000 estimated deaths expected this year. The average age at the time of diagnosis is about 66.

Lopez is thankful he will be able to celebrate his 58th wedding anniversary with his wife. "Life is going on as normal," he said. “This is the wave of the future. I see this new technology as the way to save thousands of lives. I commend Dr. Parsons for taking the lead in San Diego in this area.”

"The MRI-guided prostate biopsy will enhance the patient experience by reducing the number of false-positive biopsies and resulting in earlier diagnosis when cancer is present,” said Parsons. “This is a great resource, which many people have come to us seeking,” said Kader. The UC San Diego Department of Urology is also hosting a hands-on course in MRI-guided prostate biopsy in March 2015 in conjunction with our annual Urology Postgraduate Course.

Reference

I welcome you to the seventh newsletter since I’ve been at UC San Diego. It has been a busy year as I have acted as the interim chair of the Department of Surgery for the past year and a half. I’ve therefore leaned heavily on Vice Chair of Urology Michael Albo, MD, and our other faculty to lead the Department of Urology, and I’m very grateful for their service.

Our achievements have again been recognized nationally by a jump in the U.S. News & World Report rankings – UC San Diego Urology is ranked No. 16 for 2014-15, up from No.22 last year, and our highest ranking yet. We have now been ranked in the top 50 nationally five times in the past seven years. This year the assessment changed and safety, quality and outcomes were more highly scored than “reputation.” This helped us rise in the rankings as our mortality, safety and quality are exemplary.

Expansion of Residency Program

As part of our growth, and anticipating the opening of the new Jacobs Medical Center, the Urology Residency Program applied for and was approved for an expansion from two residents per year to three residents per year. The new resident complement begins in July 2015. We also will change the format from two years of general surgery followed by four years of urology to one year followed by four years, respectively. This shorter format is more common nationally and is favored by most urology residents and applicants. We will be vigilant to maintain quality of training. We received approval from ACGME for continued accreditation without any citations. The Review Committee commended the program for its substantial compliance with the Institutional Requirements for Graduate Medical Education due in large part to the outstanding performance of our leadership, faculty and residents.

Jill Buckley, MD, was recently appointed the new Urology Residency Program director. She is passionate about resident education and will be a wonderful steward of our program as we continue our trajectory of excellence. In addition, George Chiang, MD, is the new assistant program director. Thank you to Charles Lakin, MD, who served as assistant director for seven years and will continue as site director at the UC San Diego Medical Center in Hillcrest. Karim Kader, MD, PhD, continues as the director of our Clinical Competence Committee.

We were honored to host Gopal H. Badlani, MD, secretary of the AUA and professor of urology and vice chair of clinical affairs at Wake Forest Baptist Health, as our visiting professor in September to give the Robert J. Prentiss Lecture. Roger Sur, MD, directed the 2nd Annual Hands-On Endourology Surgery for Residents course at the Center for the Future of Surgery, an outstanding surgical and didactic experience for residents. In addition, our 7th Annual Postgraduate Course, held at the Hyatt Regency Mission Bay and directed by Dr. Kader garnered the highest number of educational grants and exhibitors to date. A session on the Economics of Healthcare was very popular and will be part of the 2015 course, to be held at the Estancia Hotel in La Jolla (see page 6 for more information).

Partnering with the Community

We are exploring affiliation agreements with a number of our community physicians to help translate best practices and optimal quality care to both of our patient populations. In collaboration with Genesis Healthcare Partners, a Large Urology Practice Group, we have launched a project to improve prostate cancer management. We have established appropriate criteria and follow-up of men with very low risk prostate cancer who are candidates for active surveillance, or careful monitoring. We hope this project will minimize the overtreatment of men with prostate cancer while ensuring timely treatment for those men in need.

New Outpatient Pavilion

The new UC San Diego Jacobs Medical Center, the largest hospital project in Southern California, is on track to open in 2016. Adjacent to the new hospital, we will also be building a large Outpatient Pavilion also slated to open in 2016. The majority of the first floor of the new Outpatient Pavilion will be home to the new Urology Institute and provide state-of-the-art outpatient and clinical space for urological services. The new pavilion is going to be spectacular and facilitate wonderful patient-centered care.

We are deeply grateful to the community partners and philanthropists who support our mission to provide the highest quality compassionate care, research and training to improve the quality of life and surgical outcomes for the local and global community. The achievements noted here would not be possible without you. Thank you for your continued interest and confidence in us.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Kane, MD
Professor and Interim Chair of Surgery
Chair of Urology
C. Lowell and JoEllen Parsons Endowed Chair in Urology
Alumni Update

The department congratulates our 2014 graduates, and we wish them all the best in the next phase of their careers. Seth A. Cohen, MD, stayed in the UC family, joining the UCLA Department of Urology as a female urology, reconstructive surgery and urodynamics fellow. David Sisul, MD, practices urology at Mercy Regional Medical Center in Durango, Colo. Seth D. Cohen, MD, practices at Advanced Urological Care, an academic-affiliated private practice in New York City. Michael A. Liss, MD, is an assistant professor at UT Health Science Center in San Antonio, Texas. David Wenzler, MD, joined St. John/Providence Health System in Southfield, Mich., as faculty for their osteopathic residency program.

Pediatric Urology Research continued from page 1

with Tony Yaksh, PhD, director of anesthesiology research at UC San Diego, with the long-term goal to determine the utility of stem cells for repair of the neurogenic bladder.

Spina Bifida Outreach

Chiang is also dedicated to improving the quality of life of children with spinal cord abnormalities. He received a grant from the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute to study obesity in the adolescent spina bifida population with the goal of determining an early intervention program to prevent obesity in this highly at-risk population. As the former medical director and primary urologist for the Spinal Defects Clinic at RCHSD, he has become deeply involved with the patient community, including development of a weekend support group for teenagers to enhance coping and socialization skills. Chiang is a member of the Spina Bifida of San Diego advisory board and helps produce outreach events that bring together patients and caretakers.

Most recently, he was appointed director of the Pediatric Urology Fellowship Program at RCHSD and assistant director of the UC San Diego Urology Residency Program. He is fluent in Spanish and enjoys cycling, home brewing and traveling with his wife, Helen, who is a general surgeon.

Future of Informatics

If constructed correctly with discreet variables for data entry across all specialties, the types and numbers of collaborations using informatics are immense. As an example, Chiang notes that the current movement towards genetic analysis can provide the genotype of a patient, whereas using the EHR as a way to classify a patient’s comprehensive phenotype can complement this push for genetic sequencing. Large-scale phenotyping, also known as phenomics, can represent the next challenge after the Human Genome Project. Working in synergy, both genomics and phenomics can lead to rapid advances in biology and treatment. “We are at a crossroads of research and healthcare reform,” said Christopher J. Kane, MD, chair of the Department of Urology. “Informatics as a subunit of outcomes research helps translate aggregate information into improved healthcare. Leveraging our current technology could lead to huge improvements in healthcare.”

More Information

health.ucsd.edu/urology, select Areas of Expertise, then select Pediatric Urology.

Recent Publications


Residency and Fellowship Match Results

Kelly Bree, MD from George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Science, Daniel Han, MD, from Loma Linda University and Richmond Owusu, MD, from Duke University, are our new residents. Daniel Miller, MD, MPH, from the University of Michigan, is our 2014-15 UC San Diego-Kaiser Endourology Fellow. Our 2015-17 Society of Urologic Oncology Fellow will be Zachary A. Hamilton, MD, from the University of Kansas.

Honors and Awards

A number of faculty were promoted over the past two academic cycles. Congratulations to: Madhu Alagiri, MD, professor; Ithaar Derweesh, MD, professor; Nicholas Holmes, MD, professor; Kyoko Sakamoto, MD, professor; and Sarah Marietti Shepherd, MD, assistant professor.

Michael Albo, MD, was elected to membership in the Society of Urodynamics, Female Pelvic Medicine and Urogenital Reconstruction to represent the interests of the SUFU membership at Executive Committee meetings and is a San Diego Magazine Physician of Exceptional Excellence (“Top Doctor”) for the ninth consecutive year.

Christopher Kane, MD, was elected as a member of the American Association of Genitourinary Surgeons; “GU Surgeons” is the most prestigious organization of academic urology. He is a San Diego County Medical Society “Top Doctor” for the sixth consecutive year and has also been elected as a member of the Western Urologic Forum. In addition, Kane was appointed to continued on page 7
Grant Highlights

Christopher Kane, MD, is a co-investigator with David Vera, PhD, of the Department of Radiology on a two-year, $1.7 million grant from the Department of Defense, entitled “Translation of receptor-binding PET/CT imaging agent for fluorescence imaging of prostate sentinel lymph nodes during robot-ic-assisted surgery.”

George Chiang, MD, is the principal investigator (PI) on a grant from the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute to study obesity in the Latino adolescent spina bifida population with the goal of determining an early intervention program. He also received a $100,000 grant from the Rady Children’s Hospital-San Diego Academic Enrichment Fund to leverage RCHSD’s use of electronic health record research technologies.

T. Mike Hsieh, MD, received a 2014 Kaiser Teaching Award from the UC San Diego Academy of Clinician Scholars to study fertility and fatherhood after cancer, addressing the reproductive concerns of adult cancer survivors.

Christina Jamieson, PhD, is co-investigator on a grant from the Prostate Cancer Foundation Australia to study prostate cancer bone metastasis in collaboration with Prof. Croucher of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research in Sydney. She is the PI on a contract with AMBRX, Inc. to test AMBRX reagents in models for bone metastatic prostate cancer, and is the UC San Diego site PI on a Small Business Innovation Research grant from the NIH to study the therapeutic potential and targeted homing of ECSOD-MSCs in animal model of mucositis in collaboration with Dr. Miller of TargaZyme.

J. Kellogg Parsons, MD, is the protocol PI of a $1.4 million grant from the National Cancer Institute for a phase 2 randomized, placebo-controlled trial of PROSTVAC® – a prostate cancer vaccine – in patients with clinically localized prostate cancer undergoing active surveillance to determine the immunologic response and the clinical indicators of disease progression.

Prentiss Visiting Professor Gopal H. Badlani, MD

Gopal H. Badlani, MD, secretary of the American Urological Association (AUA) and professor of urology and vice chair of clinical affairs at Wake Forest Baptist Health, gave the Robert J. Prentiss Lecture as part of our Visiting Professor Grand Rounds in September. The Prentiss Lecture Series, funded by the San Diego Urological Society, was reinstituted in 2013. Badlani’s visit included presentations by our Department of Urology and Naval Medical Center residents and a tour of the Center for the Future of Surgery (CFS) at the UC San Diego School of Medicine.

His lecture, “Mesh Controversy,” was very timely as the management of surgical mesh is a source of serious regulatory and medical legal concerns. Badlani reviewed all available evidence and gave the audience his practical and defensible strategy for the use of mesh and the management of mesh complications.

He was recently appointed to the Advisory Council of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Badlani helped establish the scientific basis for use of grafts in a minimally invasive approach to repair pelvic organ prolapse using a mesh sling and has also led research on minimally invasive treatments for benign prostate obstruction. As secretary of the AUA, Badlani was instrumental in planning the 2013 annual meeting in San Diego, during which UC San Diego hosted a well-attended robotic partial nephrectomy course at CFS. Dr. Kane also performed a live surgery broadcast from the UC San Diego Medical Center to the San Diego Convention Center. This was the first annual meeting where the AUA used educational facilities at a local academic medical center for its educational offerings.

See the schedule of upcoming Visiting Professor Grand Rounds at urology.ucsd.edu/cme.

Recent Publications

Urology faculty, fellows and residents have more than 80 publications this year. A few key articles are noted below.

Cancer, Bladder


Cancer, Kidney


Cancer, Prostate


Incontinence


continued on page 6
Recent Publications
continued from page 5

Interstitial Cystitis

Men’s Health

Pediatric Urology

Reconstruction

Stones & Endourology

Masterson JH, Woo JR, Chang DC, Chi T, L’Esperance JO, Stoller ML, Sur RL. Dyslipidemia is associated with an increased risk of nephrolithiasis. Urothiasis 2014 Sep 6 [Epub ahead of print].

Translational Science

Eighth Annual UC San Diego Urology Postgraduate Course
We are delighted to present a world-class group of visiting faculty for the 8th annual UC San Diego Urology Postgraduate Course, Evidence-Based Urology Update, taking place March 20-21, 2015, at the Estancia Hotel in La Jolla, Calif. The main topics of the course are: live surgery, benign prostatic hyperplasia, stone disease, reconstruction, men’s health, female urology, economics of health care, kidney cancer and prostate cancer. We are also hosting a one-day hands-on workshop on MRI-guided prostate biopsy on March 19 at the Center for the Future of Surgery at UC San Diego.

COURSE DIRECTORS
A. Karim Kader, MD, PhD
Associate Professor of Surgery
UC San Diego Health System

Roger L. Sur, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery
UC San Diego Health System

VISITING FACULTY
Edward Cohen, MD
Chief Executive Officer/Chairman
Genesis Healthcare Partners

Captain Donald Crain, MD
Naval Medical Center San Diego

Michelle E. Koski, MD
Kaiser Permanente San Marcos

Amy E. Krambeck, MD
Associate Professor
Mayo Clinic - Rochester, MN

Victor W. Nitti, MD
Professor and Vice Chair of Urology
Director of Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstrucative Surgery
NYU Langone

Peter A. Pinto, MD
Head, Prostate Cancer Section
Urologic Oncology Branch
NIH/National Cancer Institute

Eugene Y. Rhee, MD, MBA
Chief, Department of Urologic Surgery
The Southern California Permanente Medical Group

Geoffrey A. Sonn, MD
Assistant Professor of Urology and Radiology
Stanford School of Medicine

UC SAN DIEGO FACULTY
Michael E. Albo, MD
Jill C. Buckley, MD
Ithaar H. Derweesh, MD
T. Mike Hsieh, MD
Christopher J. Kane, MD
David S. Karow, MD, PhD
Brendan Kremer, MHA
Frederick E. Millard, MD
Daniel Miller, MD, MPH
J. Kellogg Parsons, MD, MHS

For more information and to register online, visit: cme.ucsd.edu/urology
Stephen B. Weissman

Stephen B. Weissman takes risks as an owner and breeder of thoroughbred racehorses, but he knew coming to UC San Diego Health System for care was a sure thing. A native New Yorker, he now resides in Dana Point, Calif. Based on a recommendation from his father, he first sought routine urologic care in 1997 from Joseph Schmidt, MD, now professor emeritus and longstanding chief of urology at UC San Diego. Schmidt and Weissman are also both alumni of Johns Hopkins University, where Weissman majored in English. He went on to earn a law degree and become a member of the bar of the state of New York before joining his father, Milton L. Weissman, in the insurance brokerage business. And ever since his undergraduate days, he has pursued his passion for thoroughbred horse racing.

Weissman was referred to Christopher J. Kane, MD, in 2008, and continued routine care with him until a regular checkup led to a diagnosis of kidney cancer and a subsequent six-hour surgery by Ithaar Derweesh, MD. Weissman has high praise for all the caregivers at UC San Diego, noting that with Derweesh he was “in the hands of a genius.”

Honors and Awards

continued from page 4

the Executive Committee, UC San Diego Health Sciences.

Congratulations to Nicholas Holmes, MD, MBA, who was appointed as acting surgeon-in-chief at Rady Children’s Hospital-San Diego in November 2013. In this role he collaborates with the surgical divisions of the UC San Diego School of Medicine and Rady Specialists Medical Foundation.

Christina Jamieson, PhD, is director of the inaugural Leo and Anne Albert Symposium on “Current Therapy and Future Directions in Bone Metastatic Prostate Cancer: from Palliation to Cure,” scheduled for February 2015 and funded by a grant from the Leo and Anne Albert Charitable Trust.

J. Kellogg Parsons, MD, MHS, won the Best Reviewer of the Year Award from the Journal of Urology, and is a San Diego County Medical Society “Top Doctor” for the fifth consecutive year.

Roger Sur, MD, was appointed to the Endourological Society Training Site Committee.

A generous donor since 2008, in 2011 Weissman established the Stephen B. Weissman Urologic Cancer Research Fund to support Derweesh’s groundbreaking work to improve treatments for patients battling urologic cancer, especially kidney cancer. When Derweesh was promoted to professor of surgery in July 2014, Weissman gave another significant gift to establish the Stephen B. Weissman Nursing Station at Thornton Hospital. “Mr. Weissman’s generosity has had an overarching impact, not only contributing to surgical innovation and to the understanding of the impact of surgery on kidney functional outcomes, but also in providing our residents and fellows with enhanced opportunities to conduct independent scientific investigation. With Mr. Weissman’s support we have helped inspire a new generation who will become innovators and leaders in our field,” said Derweesh.

He enjoys spending time with his daughters and granddaughters, and has a box at the Del Mar Racetrack. When asked why he donates, Weissman replied, “First, to give to anybody is good. I give to UCSD, one of the premiere hospitals, because of their brilliance, kindness and insatiable quest for new discoveries. I’m grateful for every day because of their enormous talents.” We are all very grateful to Stephen Weissman for his altruism and his passion.
Urology Faculty

Christopher J. Kane, MD, FACS
Professor and Chair

Michael E. Albo, MD, FACS
Professor and Vice Chair

Jill C. Buckley, MD, FACS
Associate Professor

Ithaar H. Derweesh, MD
Professor

T. Mike Hsieh, MD
Assistant Professor

Christina Jamieson, PhD
Associate Professor

A. Karim Kader, MD, PhD, FRCSC
Assistant Professor

Charles M. Lakin, MD
Associate Professor

C. Lowell Parsons, MD, FACS
Professor Emeritus

J. Kellogg Parsons, MD, MHS, FACS
Associate Professor

Kyoko Sakamoto, MD
Professor

Joseph D. Schmidt, MD, FACS
Professor Emeritus

Roger L. Sur, MD
Associate Professor

Pediatric Urology Faculty

Madhu Alagiri, MD
Professor

George Chiang, MD
Associate Professor

Nicholas M. Holmes, MD, MBA
Professor

George W. Kaplan, MD, FACS
Professor

Sarah Marietti Shepherd, MD
Assistant Professor

Hak J. Lee, MD
Society of Urologic Oncology

Daniel Miller, MD, MPH
UCSD-Kaiser Endourology Fellow

Residents

Kelly Bree, MD
Elena Godebu, MD
Daniel Han, MD
Marc Holden, MD
Michelle McDonald, MD
Hossein Mirheydar, MD, Chief
Unwanaobong Nseyo, MD
Richard Owusu, MD
Nishant Patel, MD
Omer Raheem, MD
Stephen Unterberg, MD
Jason Woo, MD, Chief

Fellows

Gina Cambareri, MD
Pediatric Urology

Zachary A. Hamilton, MD
Society of Urologic Oncology