Welcome to the 17th issue of the Neurotransmitter, the newsletter of the former Department of Neurology, but now the first issue for the Department of Neurology & Psychiatry. On June 1, 2007, I became Chairman of the Department of Neurology & Psychiatry allowing us to go “back to the future” when the Saint Louis University Department of Nervous System and Mental Diseases existed in the late 1800’s. One of the leaders of that Department was Dr. Charles Chaddock. Dr. Chaddock embodies what we now strive for in the formation of the DNP — collaborative patient care, education, and research in the distinct disciplines of psychiatry and neurology. Dr. Chaddock is known to all neurologists for his description of the extensor plantar response, but he also performed extensive work in criminal behavior and should be considered among the first forensic psychiatrists.

This first year of the Department has been an exciting one. In July we moved into a new building at 1438 South Grand Blvd. As any move, it was traumatic. Psychiatry left the Wohl building, their home for decades, and Neurology left the comfortable confines of Saint Louis University Hospital’s fifth floor. Faculty and staff were forced to learn a new rhythm and avoid being hit by the busy Grand Boulevard traffic. The new home has offered a perfect location to build our collaborative clinics and enhance resident education—both works in progress.

There are several new faces in the Department that came with me from Case Western Reserve University. Several investigators moved: Linda Kusner, PhD, Assistant Professor in Ophthalmology, Henry Soltys, PhD and Yuefang Zhou, PhD, both Assistant Professors in the Department of Neurology & Psychiatry. This core group forms the new Division of Translational Neuromuscular Disease Research. Dr. Eliahu Feen, a neurointensivist, also moved from Cleveland in August 2007 to enhance expert care for the most critically ill patients with neurological diseases.

We have been fortunate in recruitments during the year, as you will see in the next pages. It is an honor to the institution and St. Louis to have attracted some of the best and the brightest in the Nation to work here. Through these recruitments, we will extend our clinical care further out into the community, as well as expand our services.

Every department also experiences losses and we wish to acknowledge the great service Philip Lefèvre provided to the Department of Psychiatry for so many years. We wish him well in his retirement. We also wish Chuck Conway all the best in moving on to Washington University. We have lost dedicated staff members over the year. We are happy that we were able to nurture their development.

With the talents of our faculty, residents and staff, there is no question that our collective goal of making the Department of Neurology & Psychiatry the most exciting place for research and education in the US will be fulfilled and our model for collaborative care in patients with neurological and psychiatric disorders will be emulated throughout the country.

Henry J. Kaminski, MD
Chairman, Department of Neurology & Psychiatry
Saint Louis University
School of Medicine
Pratap R. Chand, MD, DM, FRCP, is a movement disorder specialist. He comes to Saint Louis University from the University of Louisville, KY, where he served as the chief resident in its department of neurology. Prior to that, Dr. Chand was a professor of neurology at the College of Medicine and University Hospital in Oman. He earned his Doctor of Medicine degree in Neurology from Bangalore University in India in 1982. In 1983, he joined the faculty of University Sains Malaysia and established a clinical neurology unit. Within four years, he was appointed chairman of the University’s Department of Internal Medicine. In 1990, he transferred to the College of Medicine and University Hospital in Oman and established its neurology unit. With a strong clinical interest in movement disorders, Dr. Chand also opened the hospital’s Movement Disorders Clinic and began a Thrombolysis Program for treatment of acute stroke. His chief interests are movement disorders and Botulinum Toxin therapy as well as deep brain stimulation for Parkinson’s disease and dystonia. A series of research projects into the neurological aspects of marine envenomation, including the effects of shellfish toxins, will soon result in published chapters within Clinical Toxic and Environmental Neurology.

Suma Pratap Chand, Ph.D., is a cognitive behavioral psychologist. Also coming to Saint Louis University from the University of Louisville, she most recently served as a clinical psychologist in the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences. Previously, she served as the chief clinical psychologist and a senior clinical psychologist in Oman. Similar positions also were held in Malaysia and India. Dr. Chand is a certified cognitive therapist of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy and earned her doctorate degree in 1999 at the University of Bombay, India. She holds master’s degrees in clinical psychology and psychology from both the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences and Andhra University in India.

Abhilash K. Desai, MD, is a board-certified psychiatrist who joins our Division of Geriatric Psychiatry after rotating thru a geriatric psychiatry fellowship here from 1998 to 1999 and serving as one of our clinical instructors. He currently is in private practice and serves as the medical director for the Alzheimer’s Center of Excellence in Appleton, WI. Prior to that, he was the medical director of the behavioral health unit at Grand View Hospital in Sellersville, PA as well as the medical director of the senior lifestyles unit at Missouri Delta Medical Center in Sikeston, Mo. Under his direction, the Alzheimer’s Center of Excellence received the Outstanding Organization Award from the Wisconsin Alzheimer’s Association in 2007. He also received an award for Outstanding Excellence in Geriatric Psychiatry from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services in 2003.

Raman K. Malhotra, MD is our new sleep specialist for the recently opened SLU Care Sleep Disorders Center. A former resident of St. Louis and a graduate of the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine, Dr. Malhotra returns to the state from Michigan, where he has served as the director of the Sleep Disorders Clinic in the University of Michigan’s Department of Neurology for the past two and a half years. Dr. Malhotra is board-certified in neurology and by the American Board of Sleep Medicine. His research interests include restless leg syndrome and the diagnosis and management of sleep disorders, including in athletes.

Nirav A. Vora, MD, is a board-certified neurointerventionalist. Dr. Vora comes to SLU from the Interventional Neuroradiology and Endovascular Neurosurgery section of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. He previously specialized in vascular neurology with the University’s Stroke Institute. Dr. Vora completed a residency in neurology at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in 2005. In 2007 he was awarded the Egas Moniz Fellowship for Interventional Neurology by the American Society of Neuroimaging. He also holds a certification in MRI/CT from the same organization.

Isaac J. Fabisoff, MD, joined our Department in late 2007 and is at the John Cochran Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Previously he worked at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in North Chicago.
Psychiatry Program Spotlight

Forensic Psychiatry — The Department’s new Forensic Psychiatry division already has a full workload. Under the direction of Alan Felthous, MD, the division, which was established in January 2007, is under contract with the St. Louis County Jail to provide psychiatric services to inmates. Up to 400 prisoners are involved in psychiatric treatment at any given time. “Forensic psychiatrists are drawn to understanding the link between mind and behavior,” says Dr. Felthous. “I was drawn to Saint Louis University because I was excited about the opportunity to establish a new division and help it grow. The goal is to become a major referral center for forensic issues.” Correctional psychiatry services are the first step. Dr. Felthous hopes to add faculty and expand services so that the division is considered the premier source for evaluation and treatment of individuals involved in both criminal and civil cases. For now, all psychiatry residents attend a seminar at Saint Louis University School of Law focusing on legal issues and mental health. They also rotate through the forensic psychiatry division and participate in rounds at the County Jail to better understand the complex cases that are handled. “Many people with serious mental illnesses end up in jail,” says Dr. Felthous. “These include schizophrenia, delusion, paranoia, and bipolar disorder. We also treat a lot of people needing crisis intervention who are feeling desperate, vulnerable, or are contemplating suicide.” Dr. Felthous is widely recognized in his field of expertise and has served as co-editor and then senior editor of Behavioral Sciences and the Law since 1997. He is the immediate past president of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law and is a founding member (and current Secretary) of the Association of Directors of Forensic Psychiatry Fellowships. He also will be Vice President of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. Dr. Felthous says the next step in his division is to recruit qualified faculty to assist with the correctional psychiatry program as well as to offer pre-trial evaluation services. Joining Dr. Felthous in Forensic Psychiatry is Hilary Klein, MD, who provides weekly psychiatric care to youth at the St. Louis County Juvenile Detention Center. The youth are age 17 and under who are alleged to have committed an offense and are in secure custody. They remain in detention until the Court hears their case or other placement is made. Forensic psychiatrist Jennifer Brockman, MD, will join the division in July. Dr. Felthous plans to establish a forensic psychiatry fellowship program, which would be the first of its kind in St. Louis. Another first — Dr. Felthous’ new book, which he serves as co-editor, titled International Handbook on Psychopathic Disorders and the Law, the first comprehensive volume that brings together esteemed authors from North America, Europe, and Asia on forensic psychiatry issues such as diagnosis, treatment, law, and policies. “Contributing authors are from medicine, psychology, sociology and the legal profession,” Dr. Felthous says. An excellent reference for those interested in learning more about forensic psychiatry!

Geriatric Psychiatry — Another of our esteemed faculty, George T. Grossbeg, MD, director of geriatric psychiatry, is the co-author of a consumer book titled The Essential Herb-Drug-Vitamin Interaction Guide. The book was written after Dr. Grossbeg and fellows within our psychiatry division found that patients often didn’t tell their physicians about over-the-counter or herbal supplements they were taking. “Patients don’t volunteer this type of information because they don’t think it is relevant and we, as physicians, didn’t used to ask about them,” says Dr. Grossbeg. “The reality is that the list of over-the-counter medications is often huge and many play a critical role in adverse drug interactions.” Dr. Grossbeg says people over the age of 65 comprise 15 percent of the overall population but consume more than 40 percent of all over-the-counter medications. When he published a journal article on the subject several years ago, he received requests to write a consumer-oriented book. From describing herbs that weaken or magnify the effects of prescription drugs or vitamins that can alter test results, the book is written as a primer for adults and families. Dr. Grossbeg, who began the geriatric psychiatry division in 1979, has seen his field grow tremendously throughout the years. “When we first established the field, we had to fight for recognition as a true psychiatric specialty,” he says. It took several years before the National Institutes of Health funded geriatric psychiatry fellowships — SLU was among the first — and the first board-certifications in the field didn’t occur until 1990. Along the way, Dr. Grossbeg and his team were recognized for groundbreaking efforts in geriatric psychiatry. “We pioneered a national model for geriatric psychiatry services within nursing homes,” he says. “In 1980 we realized there were a number of older adults with mental health issues living in nursing homes. We purchased a large van and a group of us — me, a nurse clinician/social worker, and students or residents studying medicine, social work and pharmacy — would go every Friday to a local nursing home to evaluate and take care of patients.” Now, nursing home clinical rotations are the standard nationwide for psychiatry residents and fellows. SLU also was among the first to establish a dedicated geriatric unit for psychiatry patients. The unit garnered national attention for its innovative use of both indoor and outdoor space for patients to safely wander. First located on the first floor of the old Wohl Building, a newer unit opened five years ago in the West Pavilion. With 16 beds, the unit is sub-divided into two sections to accommodate patients who are noisier (including those with Alzheimer’s, delerium and agitated behavior) and those who are quieter (e.g. suffering from depression). As the population continues to age rapidly, Dr. Grossbeg says two major areas have risen within geropsychiatry: cognitive disorders, such as Alzheimer’s disease, and late-life mood disorders ranging from depression to schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. “These diseases often change a patient’s behavior as they get older,” says Dr. Grossbeg. “Couple that with co-morbidities usually associated with aging, and there must be a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to treating elderly patients needing psychiatric treatment.” With long-recognized expertise in the field, SLU now is participating in multiple clinical trials related to geriatric psychiatry. “When I first started the division, I had three goals,” he says. “Provide premier clinical care and service to patients and their families, foster education, and conduct research. We’ve done that consistently over the past 30 years. Now, with the combining of the departments of neurology and psychiatry into one department again, I have even more people with whom I can mentor and collaborate.”
Adult Psychiatry/VA Medical Center — Residents, fellows, and medical students at Saint Louis University all rotate through inpatient and outpatient mental health units at the VA Medical Center. Through these rotations, some of them are exposed to Psych ER, Consultation & Liaison Services, Substance Abuse and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder patients. The VA’s mental health department currently has 18 physicians who staff two St. Louis locations (Jefferson Barracks and John Cochran). Serving as Chief of Psychiatry at the VA is SLU’s C. J. Jos, MD. One of the best outpatient PTSD programs is located at JC. Robert Andersen, MD and Juan Corvalan, MD manage most of the PTSD patients. James Cannon, MD specifically manages PTSD patients who are Iraq and Afghanistan combat veterans. A 28-bed substance abuse residential program also is located at the JB and is headed by Ibe Ibe, MD. The St. Louis VA’s methadone/buprenorphine program is located at JC and headed by Ashok Mallya, MD. Research with opiate addiction patients will get under way with the addition of another physician to the department. The Consultation and Liaison Service at JC is managed by Bernie Feinberg, MD and Eve Lipschitz, MD. Psych ER is under the direction of Manikant Desai, MD. The psychiatric team for adult patients consists of Drs. Patrick Oruwari, Ibe Ibe, Karen Cowan, Yolla Jules, Ratnasri Mogallapu, Michel Cherazard and Antonina Geismeno. The Gero-psych team is headed by Pratibha Gurusiddaiya, MD, Teresita Syalvarado, MD and Gautam Rohatgi, MD. A full time internist, Lata Eapen, MD compliments the JB teams. The VA also has a Domiciliary Program and outpatient programs for homeless veterans and will soon open a Recovery center close to the JC location. Dr. Jos says future plans are to extend patient care through community-based mental health clinics and tele-psychiatry.

Neurology Program Spotlight

Sleep Disorders Center — In a multi-disciplinary effort to help patients with sleep concerns, a new SLU Sleep Disorders Center is now open. Serving as co-directors of the Center are Ghazala Hayat, MD, a board-certified neurologist who specializes in muscle problems (including restless leg syndrome, which can disrupt sleep), and Joseph Espiritu, MD, a board certified sleep medicine expert and an assistant professor in SLU’s division of pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine. The Center includes a five-bed evaluation unit and offers state-of-the-art technology and the expertise of medical professionals from a variety of disciplines, including neurology, pulmonary medicine, otolaryngology. Certified nurse technologists and respiratory therapists also round out the program. Ramon K. Malhotra, MD, joins the team this year as a certified sleep specialist in the neurology and psychiatry department. Other neurologists in the Sleep Center are Wegdan Andrews, MD, and Jayant Acharya, MD. Dr. Hayat says the advantages of opening a Sleep Disorders Center are numerous. “Previously patients might have to see several specialists in different locations for sleep concerns,” she says. “Now we can offer a comprehensive sleep evaluation in one location.” The evaluation includes obtaining a sleep history, identifying medical concerns and current social habits, compiling a list of current medications, and a physical exam. Depending upon results, a sleep study also may be recommended. “We’re also in the process of applying for a sleep fellowship program,” says Dr. Hayat.

ALS Center — Under the direction of Dr. Ghazala Hayat, SLU’s ALS Center earned certification several years ago and has been in operation for almost a decade. The goal of the center is to provide multi-disciplinary care for patients diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, a progressive neurodegenerative disease. Although there is no cure for ALS, the Center focuses on quality of life issues and includes neurologists, psychiatrists, therapists (OT, Speech), dietitians, social workers, and spiritual care providers as well as assists with referrals for home health and hospice care. With an estimated 10 percent of all ALS patients living longer than 10 years, the ALS Center offers a bimonthly clinic for patients to express concerns and go over treatment options. Currently up to 50 patients attend the clinics. Three neurophysiology fellows and two residents participate in rounds and research. The Center is regularly involved in clinical research projects through the NE ALS, ALS Research Group, and Western ALS research consortiums.

Comprehensive Epilepsy Program — The Department’s Comprehensive Epilepsy Program is now designated a Level 4 Epilepsy Center, the top distinction granted by the National Association of Epilepsy Centers. Fewer than 100 centers across the country are designated as Level 4 Centers, which means that a program offers the most extensive and complex forms of diagnosis, monitoring and treatment for epilepsy. “The Level 4 designation means that we are a regional and national referral facility,” says Kittie Kaiboriboon, MD, Comprehensive Epilepsy Program Director. “We believe this distinction validates the quality of our clinical services and the hard work and expertise of our physicians and staff members.” Previously called the Greater Midwest Epilepsy Center, SLU’s Comprehensive Epilepsy Program has served patients diagnosed with epilepsy since the 1980s. The program recently completed the expansion of an epilepsy monitoring unit. The unit allows physicians to use video EEG for long-term monitoring of patients. Such monitoring aids in classifying the type and location of seizures as well as in planning for epilepsy surgery. “With video EEG, we can monitor a patient for three to five days as their seizure medication is reduced every day,” says Dr. Kaiboriboon. “We can see how, when, and where seizures occur. Data is reviewed daily by a team of technologists and physicians.” Dr. Kaiboriboon estimates up to 150 patients will be monitored in the unit annually. The department also has five new ambulatory video-EEG units. Also available for diagnostic and pre-surgical planning use are MRIs and a collaborative partnership with the independent St. Louis Regional MEG Center. Established in July 2006, the SLU physicians utilize sophisticated brain images captured at the St. Louis Regional MEG Center to evaluate brain functionality and help plan for epilepsy surgeries.
magnetoencephalography center became fully operational last year and is located on the campus of St. Louis University. It is the only MEG site in Missouri and offers sophisticated brain mapping to pinpoint seizure locations. Jayant Acharya, MD, DM, associate professor of neurology, is using the MEG for a study of “interictal phase synchronization in patients with neocortical epilepsy.” Dr. Acharya notes that the MEG enables physicians to localize epileptic spikes prior to surgery and highlight the functional brain areas. Dr. Acharya and colleague Francis Mithen, MD, also have submitted a proposal to develop a video-EEG monitoring unit at the John Cochran VA Medical Center. If approved, this would be the critical first step in developing a comprehensive epilepsy center at the regional VAMC. “Currently there are no video-EEG units in the VA Epilepsy Unit,” says Dr. Acharya. “Veterans are usually sent to SLU Hospital for evaluation, at a substantial expense. Given the rapidly increasing influx of veterans with brain injuries as a result of current war activities, referrals are likely to increase substantially in the future.” To enhance the services provided to young epileptic patients, Alpa Vashist, MD, joined our faculty as a child neurologist at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center in July 2007. Board-certified in pediatrics and neurology, Dr. Vashist completed advanced training as a fellow in clinical neurophysiology with an emphasis in epilepsy at Downstate Medical Center at the State University of New York. She also completed residency and fellowship training in pediatrics and pediatric neurology at the same institution.

MS Centers – The Multiple Sclerosis Center at the St. Louis VA is only the second such center within the VA system to be affiliated with the National MS Society. The affiliation also applies to the MS Center at Saint Louis University. Under the direction of Florian P. Thomas, MD, MA, PhD, the Centers use a comprehensive approach to treat MS patients and offer easy access to a variety of health care providers in one visit. The goal is to provide individualized interventions for medical and psychosocial issues. Through the Centers, Dr. Thomas and his colleagues are participating in several research projects, including a three-year study that is evaluating the efficacy of laquinimod, a novel oral agent for MS. So far, no oral drugs have received FDA approval for this condition. In other news, a grant awarded by the MS Foundation to Dr. Thomas and Amy Rauchway, DO, funds innovative art therapy and creative writing workshops for MS veterans learning to deal with disability, pain, and the worries of an uncertain prognosis.

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)/Dysfunction Service — Also under the direction of Dr. Thomas, the SCI Service at the VA Medical Center is extending its programs to include a focus on Metabolic Syndrome. This condition, which is common in SCI patients, is defined by the combination of elevated weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides and blood sugars. The new program will enable patients to obtain medical care as well as nutritional education and physical therapy. Spearheaded by Jamal Makhoul, MD, the goal of the Metabolic Syndrome program is to improve the health and quality of life of veterans with spinal cord injuries and to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and other complications of Metabolic Syndrome. In the Rehabilitation arena at the SCI Service, the SmartWheel technology has been implemented, which allows therapists to optimize the position of a wheel relative to the wheelchair. The SmartWheel is a computerized wheel mounted to a patient’s wheelchair to collect data on push mechanics. Using the data, therapists can match the best wheelchair to a specific patient’s needs, with the goal of preserving shoulder and arm joint function over many decades. Therapists also are able to better educate patients on optimal arm posture during propulsion.

Souers Stroke Institute — In early 2007, Saint Louis University Hospital, in collaboration with the Souers Stroke Institute, achieved Primary Stroke Center designation by JCAHO. The Hospital also is participating in the “Get with the Guidelines (GWTG)” for stroke by the American Heart Association. This program allows SLU Hospital to collect data in order to monitor compliance on several benchmarks of care for stroke patients, such as administration of t-PA, and use of antithrombotic therapy, among other criteria. Under the direction of Salvador Cruz-Flores, MD, the Hospital recently achieved the certificate for maintaining benchmarks of care at or above target for 3 months and is making an application for maintaining these benchmarks for a year. In addition, by participating in GWTG for heart failure and myocardial infarction, our Hospital is one of only a few to have the “triple crown” of GWTG. These achievements, along with the implementation of a streamlined system for communication with, and transfers from, community hospitals as well as frequent educational sessions with medical, nursing and paramedic staff from those communities has resulted in an estimated 30% increase in acute stroke admissions. New in the near future will be a joint collaboration with Saint Louis University Hospital to establish the Mid-America Stroke Network. The first program of its kind in the region, the Network will be a collaborative system of hospitals that share knowledge, educational opportunities and technologies to provide high level stroke care to patients without access to a JCAHO-designated Stroke Center in their communities. The goal is to provide expert support in the clinical evaluation of acute stroke patients and increase the administration of tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) — a powerful clot buster injected intravenously — within 180 minutes of the onset of stroke symptoms. Telemedicine “robots” also will be used to aid in patient evalua-
tions. The robots, currently undergoing testing at SLU Hospital, are equipped with two-way video and audio conferencing capabilities. Controlled by SLU neurologists, the robots can enter a patient's room in a networked hospital and facilitate communication and consultations between medical personnel locally, the patient's family, and SLUH. Other collaborative efforts include Dr. Cruz' participation as a member of the Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force, a multidisciplinary group comprising paramedics, nurses, cardiologists, emergency medicine physicians and neurologists that was established by the Missouri Division of Health and Senior Services. The goal of this task force is to develop a standard system that would allow the prompt triage, transport, evaluation and treatment of patients with acute ST elevation myocardial infarction and stroke. Already, a legislative bill is making its way through state Senate committees to develop that standard system. Finally, 10 clinical trials are under way in the Souers Stroke Institute. Two are focused on stroke prevention, and eight are evaluating acute stroke treatment at different time windows. Physician team members also have been active in offering education on stroke care. Dr. Cruz, Paisith Piriyawat, MD and Eli Feen, MD have traveled to community hospitals and medical practices in several communities, including Poplar Bluff and Farmington in Missouri, and Effingham, Belleville and Carbondale in Illinois. Dr. Feen, who comes to our department from Case Western Reserve, joined our staff last year and has expertise in neurocritical care. Also joining the department in 2007 is vascular and interventional neurologist specialist Randall Edgell, MD, whose more recent efforts on education are leading to the course that he directs on “Acute Stroke and Cerebrovascular Interventions,” to be held in May 2008. In July, Nirav Vora, MD, who also has expertise in vascular and interventional neurology, will join our faculty. Both Dr. Vora and Dr. Edgell will provide a new and innovative approach to the management of critical and vascular neurological problems, thereby expanding the treatment options that are offered to our patients.

Child Neurology — A new Autism clinic initiated by Child Neurology Director David Walsh, MD, opened in October 2007. The clinic is held two to three times a month and already has generated a great deal of interest and referrals from primary care physicians. The timing was good, says Dr. Walsh, because “In October 2007, the American Academy of Pediatrics published a position paper recommending that all children be screened for autism, twice before their second birthday. This was in response to research suggesting that autism might affect as many as one in 150 children.” Because of this recommendation, many children are sent for further evaluation and comprehensive testing. “Our clinic is an attempt to deal with this increased patient volume as the Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center Knights of Columbus Developmental Center is in the process of reorganization,” Dr. Walsh says.

An increasing number of referrals also is being seen in the new pediatric Headache Clinic at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center. The clinic is directed by Alma Bicknese, MD. As a member of the American Headache Society, Dr. Bicknese has a specialty interest in pediatric treatments for headaches.

Joining our Child Neurology team in July 2007 was Alpha Vashist, MD, who is now assisting Dr. Kitti Kaiboriboon in the Epilepsy Monitoring Unit at SLU Hospital. Dr. Vashist has a special interest in epilepsy and neurophysiology. Glen Fenton, MD, who is entering his 12th year as Director for Clinical Neurology Clerkship, is now serving as Chairman of the National Board of Medical Examiners Neurology Task Force. He has been a member of the task force for the past 11 years and also serves as Chair of the American Academy of Neurology’s Work Group to create maintenance of certification examinations. Dr. Walsh is now President-Elect of the Professional Advisory Board for the local affiliate of the Epilepsy Foundation of America.

Tom Geller, MD, who has served as the Director of the Child Neurology Residency Program since 2000, is excited to report that there will be an expansion of the residency program beginning in July 2008. There will be three residents in the program at PGY 3, 4, and 5 levels. In addition to his responsibilities for overseeing our residents, Dr. Geller also is involved in several research projects. An active member of the Children’s Oncology Group (COG), Dr. Geller is a member of the Group’s Neuroscience Subcommittee and the Protocol Development Committee for primitive neuro-epithelial tumors in infants. We’re also rooting for Dr. Geller as he participates in the swimming events at the Senior Olympics to be held in Creve Coeur May 23 & 25!
Translation Neuromuscular Disease Research

The Division’s goal is to advance understanding of the pathogenesis of neuromuscular disease with a focus on therapeutic development. The division is most advanced in developing treatment modalities for myasthenia gravis. In December, Yuefang Zhou’s work in collaboration with colleagues at Case Western Reserve University and Alexion Corporation appeared in the Journal of Immunology. The study demonstrated the efficacy of an antibody against the C5 component of complement in prevention and reversal of weakness produced by experimentally induced myasthenia gravis. Henry Soltry and Linda Kusner are collaborating in understanding the role of complement inhibitors in protection against myasthenia gravis and are working in collaboration with Varleigh Limited, a corporation in Jersey, to develop novel complement inhibitors. They also are working together to try to understand whether there is potential for complement in additional for the treatment of muscular dystrophy. Dr. Kusner also is evaluating the role of fibroblasts in supporting skeletal muscle, again with the thought that perhaps understanding trophic influences of fibroblasts could lead to therapeutic enhancement of impaired muscle function. The Division’s work could not be performed successfully without the assistance of Dan Liu and Jessica Montresor-Lopez. It is the DNP’s plan to develop the Division further with the generous support of Saint Louis University as well as ongoing support from the National Institutes of Health, which totaled more than $1 million in the last year.

Psychosocial Processes Group Research

John Chibnall, PhD, and Raymond Tait, PhD, have spent most of the past few months working on several studies. A grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality involves evaluation of long-term outcomes of occupational low back injuries, especially focusing on disparities in outcomes associated with socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity. Data collection is complete for the investigation, with analyses and manuscripts to follow. A second study supported by the National Institute of Mental Health examines factors that influence decision making at Institutional Review Boards. Data collection for that project is about to begin. Theodore Malmstrom, PhD, is working on interdisciplinary grants from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA). The NIA grant (African American Health) continues the longitudinal follow-up, years 8-10, of a population-based cohort of African Americans with the focus on investigating the timing, precursors, and consequences of disability and frailty in this population. Data collection is on-going (currently in year 8) for the study as are analyses and manuscripts based on data collected to date. The HRSA grant (Gateway Geriatric Education Center; SLU Geriatric Medicine) supports education and development activities and services for healthcare providers involved in the care of elderly patients. Dr. Malmstrom is working on the project evaluation plan, including producing assessment measures for primary, secondary, and tertiary outcomes. Aside from work on active grants, Drs. Chibnall, Malmstrom, and Tait are currently working with Tom Geller, MD, on a study to examine the effects of pain on function and quality of life in pediatric neurofibromatosis patients. Dr. Chibnall continues to pursue research in assessment—including personality, clinical skills, mental status, and grief — in medical students, police officers, and patient populations (cancer, dementia). SLU collaborators include Robert Blaskiewicz, MD, of OB/GYN & Women’s Health and Rebecca Dougherty, LCSW, of the Cancer Center. Dr. Malmstrom is currently working with Nina Tumosa, PhD, John Morley, MD, and colleagues at SLU on studies to evaluate the reliability and validity of a brief screening instrument (Saint Louis University Mental Status Exam) for detecting dementia.

SLU Involved in Alzheimer’s Disease Vaccine Study

The division of geriatric psychiatry is beginning a new study this spring that could lead to the development of the first Alzheimer’s disease vaccine. The three-year, $1.5 million study is being conducted at multiple centers, with Saint Louis University the only center designated in this region of the country. The study aims to study the efficacy and effectiveness of bapineuzumab. George T. Grossberg, MD, professor and director of geriatric psychiatry, says the first step will be to identify patients with mild or early Alzheimer’s disease and then give them an infusion of antibodies. It is hoped that these antibodies will halt or slow the progression of plaque build-up in the brain.

Alzheimer’s disease currently affects an estimated five million people in the United States, and some experts believe that the number will triple as the overall population ages. Many researchers theorize that toxic plaque build-up causes brain cells to die. Bapineuzumab is being evaluated to see if it removes or reduces the amount of beta amyloid in the brain. Beta amyloid is a protein that leads to the formation of toxic plaque build-up in Alzheimer’s patients. More than 50 sites in both the US and Canada will be involved in the study, which is funded jointly by Elan Corporation and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals.
Highlights of Clinical Research in the Department of Neurology & Psychiatry

In FY07, the DNP had a total of $1,893,804 in total research dollars (Psychiatry $1,061,804, Neurology $832,000). The Chair added slightly more than $1 million dollars in National Institutes of Health-funding when his research team came here from Case Western Reserve University. The Multiple Sclerosis Foundation and the Department of Veterans Affairs also support work of the DNP faculty. The DNP also has a robust Clinical Research Unit that has approximately 35 ongoing trials, including these highlighted trials:

**Hypothermia for Acute Stroke:** This study will determine if Activase given within the 3-6 hour window after stroke is effective, and if inducing hypothermia is effective in reducing the effects of stroke from 0-6 hours after stroke. Activase already is approved for use during the three-hour window after stroke onset. Principal Investigator is Salvador Cruz, MD. Funded by NIH.

**Phase III Randomized Multicenter Clinical Trial of High-Dose Human Albumin Therapy for Neuroprotection in Acute Ischemic Stroke:** The purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness of high-dose, intravenous human serum albumin in the event of acute ischemic stroke over and above best standard practice. Principal Investigator is Salvador Cruz, MD. Funded by NIH.

**Ancrod in Stroke Program-II (ASP-II):** A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study of Ancrod (Viprinex”). The primary objective is to determine whether Ancrod, begun intravenously within 6 hours after stroke onset confers statistically significant benefit in reducing the incidence of disability at 90 days. Principal Investigator is Salvador Cruz, MD. Funded by Neurobiological Technologies, Inc.

**Multi-Center, Double-Blind, Randomized Study Comparing the Combined Use of Interferon Beta-1a and Glatiramer Acetate to either Agent Alone in Patients with Relapsing Remitting Multiple Sclerosis (CombiRx-Phase III)** Research will evaluate whether the combination of interferon beta-1a, injected once a week, and glatiramer acetate, injected daily, is effective for relapsing-remitting form of MS. The trial explores the efficacy of a novel oral agent for MS. Principle Investigator is Florian P. Thomas, MD. Co-funded by NIH (NINDS) and Biogen.

**E2080-A001-301: A Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Parallel-Group Study of Rufinamide Given as Adjunctive Therapy in Patients with Refractory Partial Seizures:** The study is to assist researchers in finding out if an investigational drug called “E2080” or “Rufinamide” can help people with partial seizures who have been treated with at least two different antiepileptic drugs (given concurrently or sequentially) for at least two years. Principal Investigator is Kittti Kaiboriboon, MD. Funded by Eisai.

**Valproate Neuro Protection Study:** Research will evaluate if the use of Valproate in patients with moderate to severe Alzheimer’s Disease can impact the disorganized thoughts and unusual behavior experienced as the disease progresses. Participants must be diagnosed with Dementia of the Alzheimer’s Type. Principle Investigator is George T. Grossberg, MD. Funded by NIH.

**Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) in Slowing the Progression of Alzheimer’s Disease:** This trial uses fish oil (DHA) each day versus placebo for the treatment of Alzheimer’s Disease. The overall purpose of the study is to either halt or slow the progression of Alzheimer’s. Principle Investigator is George T. Grossberg, MD. Funded by NIH.

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The Clinical Research Unit of the Department of Neurology & Psychiatry

The Clinical Research Unit of the Department of Neurology & Psychiatry is coordinating numerous clinical studies, including those listed above. Administrative Director for our Clinical Research Unit team is Eve Holzemer, ANP. Study coordinators include: Jo Ann Filla-Taylor, RN; Christina Moresfield, RN; Sue Brown, RN; Susan Eller, RN; and Anne Fann, RN. Susan Torretta serves as the regulatory specialist.

For more information about current clinical trials, contact the Department at 314.977.4900.
Faculty News Notes

Major Presentations & Announcements

Jayant N. Acharya, MD, DM, was an invited lecturer on treatments for epileptic seizures at the Epilepsy Foundation of America-St. Louis Region meeting, April 2007. Dr. Acharya also was named to the American Epilepsy Society CME Review Committee last year.

Salvador Cruz, MD, traveled to Prague Czech Republic in March 2008 to attend the 2nd International Conference on Hypertension, Lipids, Diabetes & Stroke Prevention and present his study, “Angioplasty vs. Endarterectomy for Symptomatic Carotid Artery Stenosis: A Decision Analysis.”

Isaac J. Faibisoff, MD, joined our Department in late 2007 and is at the John Cochran Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Previously he worked at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in North Chicago.

Eliahu Feen, MD, was selected for Saint Louis University’s Distinguished Teacher Award for his humanistic patient care.


Henry J. Kaminski, MD was a visiting professor at the University of Maryland, Washington University in St. Louis, and the University of Kansas Medical Center. He also presented his research work at the Experimental Biology and Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology meetings. In addition, he was Director of the International Conference dedicated to Myasthenia Gravis and Related Disorders held in Chicago and sponsored by the New York Academy of Sciences.

Florian P. Thomas, MD, MA, PhD, gave two invited lectures at the May 2007 American Academy of Neurology meeting, entitled “Managing Autonomic Dysreflexia” and “Sexual Function in Spinal Cord Injury.”

The 2nd Annual Child Neurology Missouri Valley Colloquium was hosted by our department at Lake of the Ozarks February 8, 2008. A total of 12 invited speakers participated in this Colloquium, which also included two highly regarded keynote speakers. Among the SLU faculty presenting were: Anu Nayak, MD; Jeremy Timothy, MD; David Walsh, MD; Glen Fenton, MD; and Alma Bicknese, MD.

Major Publications


Hadler NM, Tait RC, Chibnall JT. Back pain in the work place. JAMA 2007;297:1594-1596.


Resident News

Residents in Neurology or Psychiatry who moved on to fellowship programs or faculty positions include:

R. Charles Callison MD
Vascular Neurology Fellow
University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics

Vitor Pacheco, M.D.
Clinical Neurophysiology Fellowship
Baylor University
Houston, TX

Arshad Bhatt, M.D.
Psychiatric Geriatric Fellowship
Saint Louis University School of Medicine

Joao H. Ramos, M.D.
Instructor, Saint Louis University
Department of Neurology & Psychiatry

Noteworthy:
Sombat Muengteweeponsa, MD, fellow with the Souers Stroke Institute, returned to his native Thailand to start a Stroke Service in the hospital at Thamasat University.

Sean Goretzke, MD, won the teaching award from residents and completed his fellowship in Child Neurology at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center last year. He is currently a faculty member at the US Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, VA, participating in the Pediatric Teaching Training Program.
The Staff of the Department of Neurology & Psychiatry

Thank You to our dedicated staff within the Department of Neurology & Psychiatry who have worked diligently over the past year to make the merger of the two departments a success.

For more information about the wide variety of programs and services offered by Saint Louis University’s Department of Neurology & Psychiatry, or to make a referral, please call:

**Autonomic Laboratory**
(314) 768-3216

**Myasthenia Gravis Clinic**
(314) 977-6082

**Child Neurology**
(314) 577-5338

**Neuro-ophthalmology**
(314) 256-3220

**Epilepsy Center**
(314) 977-6082

**Neurophysiology**
(314) 577-8044

**Forensic Psychiatry Consultation**
(314) 977-4825

**Neurorehabilitation**
(314) 768-5205

**General Neurology**
(314) 977-6082

**Sleep Center**
Ask for Neurology
Sleep Consultations: (314) 977-6082
To Order a Sleep Study: (314) 977-5337

**Geriatric Psychiatry**
(314) 977-4829

**Souers Stroke Center**
(314) 268-5555
or (866) 491-0858

**Geriatric Psychiatry Inpatient Unit**
(314) 577-8744

**Multiple Sclerosis Center**
(314) 977-6082