

IU GERIATRICS e-news June 2008

A newsletter from [IU Geriatrics](#) and the [IU Center for Aging Research](#)

Torke Named Hartford Geriatrics Scholar

Alexia M. Torke, MD, MS, has been named a [2008 Hartford Geriatrics Health Outcomes Research Scholar](#). One of four recipients, Dr. Torke was selected for the two-year award by a committee comprised of nationally prominent academic physicians. Funding begins in July when she receives a \$200,000 grant to conduct "A Prospective, Observational Study of Surrogate Decision Making for Hospitalized Older Adults."

Sponsored by The John A. Hartford Foundation, in collaboration with the American Geriatrics Society Foundation for Health in Aging, the program supports physician-scientists committed to improving the health care of older adults during the critical transition from junior faculty to independent researcher.

Dr. Torke's research focuses on ethical aspects of medical decision making for older adults, including surrogate decision making for patients with dementia and other forms of cognitive impairment. Her long term goal is to improve the process and outcomes of decision making for older adults who cannot make their own medical decisions. Read about Dr. Torke's project in the research [abstract](#).



Pictured at left are Dr. Torke and her mentors, **Drs. Greg Sachs** and **Chris Callahan**.

IN-PEACE Tests Outpatient Palliative Care in Primary Care

Principal Investigator **Greg A. Sachs, MD**, has been awarded research funding for "[Indiana Palliative Excellence in Alzheimer Care Efforts \(IN-PEACE\)](#)" from the National Palliative Care Research Center. The two-year project will evaluate the feasibility of incorporating an outpatient palliative care program for patients with dementia into the primary care setting.

In an earlier PEACE project, Dr. Sachs and colleagues from the University of Chicago demonstrated that they could achieve excellent management of patient symptoms, family satisfaction with care, and high rates of hospice referral, but the physicians providing primary care for the patients with dementia were a group of academic geriatricians interested in palliative care—not a readily replicable group in most communities.

IN-PEACE will make the first steps toward merging the dementia palliative care approaches from PEACE to improve care for community-based individuals with dementia and shape the programmatic development and policy across multiple settings.

"I'm looking forward to merging the dementia palliative care approaches from PEACE with the opportunity to influence an entire care system in Indiana," notes Dr. Sachs.

"Sadly, the case took place almost 30 years ago, but the scenario is still far too common."

Dr. Greg A. Sachs

[Read](#) how a personal experience motivated Dr. Sachs to study palliative care and dementia.

Counsell Begins Packer Fellowship

Steve Counsell, MD, director of IU Geriatrics, begins a six-month [Packer Policy Fellowship](#) at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia in July 2008. Dr. Counsell was awarded the fellowship by The Commonwealth of Australia Department of Health and Ageing and [The Commonwealth Fund](#). The



program was established in 2002 and is designed to enable up to two outstanding US policy researchers or practitioners to conduct original research, gain an understanding of Australian health policy issues and work with leading Australian health policy experts on issues relevant to the United States and to Australia. Dr. Counsell's mentor is [Len Gray, MB, BS, FRACP, PhD, Director of the UQ Academic Unit in Geriatric Medicine](#). He will supervise the research, provide technical expertise and guidance, and facilitate access to data, colleagues, and organizations.

Dr. Counsell's project, Innovative Models for Providing and Coordinating Care for Older Adults, involves health policy development and models of healthcare for older adults in Australia. In addition to undertaking original policy research, Dr. Counsell will participate in seminars and policy briefings, which include meetings with senior officials at the commonwealth and State levels, Ministerial officers, service providers, academics, and other stakeholders in the public and private sectors. At the end of the tenure, he will produce a report and present project findings to senior government officials and policy experts at a final reporting seminar.



Dr. Sudanagunta Completes Geriatric Medicine Fellowship

IU Geriatrics hosted a June luncheon to celebrate with **Dr. Vijaya Sudanagunta** as she completed the [Geriatric Medicine Fellowship Program](#).

Dr. Sudanagunta is board certified in family medicine and practiced primary care with the St. Joseph's Medical Group in Stockton, California, prior to joining the fellowship program. She looks forward to using her fellowship training to address older adults' special needs and to promote health in the later years of people's lives.

Dr. Sudanagunta is pictured receiving an IU School of Medicine certificate stating she "faithfully and honorably discharged the duties of the position" from the Geriatric Medicine Fellowship Director **Glenda Westmoreland, MD, MPH**.

IUCAR Trio Noted as AGS New Investigator Award Winners

Readers may recall that in the May e-news we noted IU-CAR Affiliated Scientist **Kevin Terrell, DO, MS**, was the second IU Center for Aging Research winner of the American Geriatrics Society New Investigator Award.

Mea culpa from the e-news! He is the third, following IU-CAR Scientists **Michael Weiner, MD, MPH**, in 2004 and **Malaz Boustani, MD, MPH**, in 2005.

PUBLICATIONS

Boustani M, Campbell N, **Munger S**, Maidment I, Fox C. [Impact of anticholinergics on the aging brain: a review and practical application](#). Aging Health. 2008 June;4(3):311-20.

Miller DK, Wolinsky FD, Andresen EM, Malmstrom TK, Miller JP. [Adverse Outcomes and Correlates of Change in the Short Physical Performance Battery Over 36 Months in the African American Health Project](#). J Gerontol A Biol Sci Med Sci. 2008 May;63(5):487-94.

Shega JW, Hougham GW, Stocking CB, Cox-Hayley D, **Sachs GA**. [Patients Dying with Dementia: Experience at the End of Life and Impact of Hospice Care](#). J Pain Symptom Manage. 2008 May;35(5):499-507.

Russell KM, Maraj MS, Wilson LR, Shedd-Steele R, **Champion VL**. [Barriers to recruiting urban African American women into research studies in community settings](#). Appl Nurs Res. 2008 May;21(2):90-7.

PRESENTATIONS

Kevin Terrell, DO, MS, presented a paper, "Computer-assisted Decision Support to Improve the Safety of Prescribing to Older Emergency Department Patients," at the 2008 [Society for Academic Emergency Medicine Annual Meeting](#) on May 29th in Washington, DC. The SAEM is dedicated to the improvement of care of the acutely ill and injured patient by improving research and education.

Malaz Boustani, MD, MPH, presented "Brain Fitness" on May 15, 2008 as part of the ongoing IN Place series sponsored by the University of Indianapolis Center for Aging & Community. The series is dedicated to addressing issues related to aging in place.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Ella Bowman, MD, PhD, was awarded a competitive scholarship and participated in the Mini-fellowship in Palliative Care Curriculum Development at Duke University June 9-13, 2008. The fellowship was an activity for Dr. Bowman's [Geriatrics Academic Career Award](#) and was funded by the Donald W. Reynolds [Consortium for Faculty Development to Advance Geriatric Education](#). Visit the consortium website to learn about additional fellowships opportunities for geriatrics and non-geriatrics faculty.

Michael Sha, MD, FACP, is the Governor of the Indiana Chapter of the American College of Physicians and assumed the new duties in May.

Arif Nazir, MD, is one of fifteen faculty members who are graduates of the 2007-08 Leadership in Academic Medicine Program (LAMP), a monthly series of workshops for new faculty at IUSM designed to facilitate academic success.

Chris Callahan, MD, reviewed proposals as a member of the NIH Health Services Organization and Delivery Study Section June 5-6, 2008 in Bethesda, Maryland.

