



David Amberg, PhD

**Biochemistry**

Chair: Richard Cross, PhD

- **David Amberg, PhD**, associate professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, has been awarded a four-year, \$1.45 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to systematically analyze and identify complex genetic interactions in cells. In this study, Dr. Amberg will use the cytoskeletal system of yeast to model the genetic interactions of complex systems. Amberg and his research team reported on their breakthrough in identifying binary gene interactions in the January 15 issue of *Genes and Development*. Amberg and his colleagues have developed a large-scale reverse genetic screen to identify complex haploinsufficient genetic interactions.

**Medicine**

Chair: David B. Duggan, MD '79

- **Taylor Loftus, MD**, professor of internal medicine, was elected president of the Clerkship Directors of Internal Medicine, an organization representing teachers of internal medicine to medical students nationwide.

**Obstetrics and Gynecology**

Chair: Shawk Badawy, MD, HS '73

- **Vincent Pillari, MD**, was recently named chairman of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at New York Methodist Hospital. Dr. Pillari joins the hospital after serving as residency program director and chairman of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at St. Vincent Catholic Medical Center of New York, Staten Island Division.

**Pathology**

Chair: Gregory Threatte, MD '73

- **Christine E. Fuller, MD '95**, has been named associate professor and director of neuropathology. Dr. Fuller is board certified in anatomic and clinical pathology and in neuropathology. She will provide professional pathology services in the areas of neuropathology, including muscle and nerve biopsies, molecular pathology, and surgical pathology. Her research interests are primarily focused on the molecular pathology of neurological tumors.



Leslie J. Kohman, MD, HS '85



Taylor Loftus, MD

**Pediatrics**

Chair: Thomas R. Welch, MD

- **Ran Anbar, MD**, division chief and director of pediatric pulmonary medicine, received two awards from the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis: the Joseph Hilgard Award for scientific excellence in writing on pediatric/adolescent uses of hypnosis and the Award of Merit for his work as co-chair of the Education Committee and recognition for his significant contributions to the field of hypnosis as applied to the treatment of pediatric functional gastrointestinal disorders.

**Psychiatry**

Chair: Mantosh Dewan, MD, HS '79

- **Surendra Kumar Johri, MD, HS '02**, has joined the staff at Community Health and Behavioral Services of Upstate Cerebral Palsy. Dr. Johri specializes in general psychiatry and child/adolescent psychiatry and will be working at the Upstate Cerebral Palsy Rome and Utica clinics.

**Radiation Oncology**

Chair: Chung T. Chung, MD, HS '74

- **Meri Atanas, MD, HS '91**, was appointed chief of radiation oncology for the Lipson Cancer Center by Rochester General Hospital. This is her second professional appointment at Rochester General. From 1988-89, she served as an emergency room physician and in 1999, she was appointed a clinical instructor in radiation oncology at the URMC, and was appointed associate professor in 2005.

**Surgery**

Chair: Paul R. G. Cunningham, MD

- **Dilip Kittur, MD**, professor of surgery and chief of the General Surgery Section, was invited to chair an NIH peer review committee to review grants on kidney and pancreas transplants.
- **Leslie J. Kohman, MD, HS '85**, was named assistant dean for Faculty Development in 2006 and named a SUNY Distinguished Service Professor in 2005.

**Urology**

- **Leslie J. Kohman, MD, HS '85**, was named interim chair, replacing Gabriel Haas, MD.

Spine Specialist Returns to Upstate



Richard Tallarico, MD '00

**R**ichard Tallarico, MD '00, has joined the Spine Division of University Hospital's Department of Orthopedic Surgery as an assistant professor.

A specialist in complex spinal disorders, Dr. Tallarico's surgical range includes anterior, posterior, and minimally invasive procedures.

Tallarico recently completed a fellowship in spine surgery at Brown University School of Medicine. He says his return to Upstate—where he earned his medical degree and completed his residency—is an endorsement of his Upstate mentors: David Murray, MD,

Hansen Yuan, HS '74, and Bruce Fredrickson, MD '72, whom he describes as “forefathers in the evolution of spine surgery” and world-renowned surgeons who are passionate about research, yet caring and approachable.”

While an Upstate medical student, Tallarico earned the David G. Murray Outstanding Student Award.

“From day one, everyone slotted me as an orthopod,” he says. “I loved anatomy and fixing things and working with my hands. I liked the variety and complexity of orthopedic surgery.”

He especially liked the challenge of spine surgery—its intricacy as well as its potential for continuous refinement, especially in terms of motion preservation and minimally invasive techniques.

“Spine surgery is an art,” says Tallarico, “but even more of an art is the decision mak-

ing—deciding first if the patient meets the stringent indications for surgery, then matching the right surgery to the right patient.”

Tallarico cites a variety of influences on his clinical skills. “Some are inborn, but most are acquired during residency and fellowship training,” he says. “Ultimately it's about watching your mentors—how they interact and arrive at diagnoses.”

Tallarico treats spine disorders from the base of the skull to the sacrum, including those related to neurological issues, such as nerve root or spinal cord compression; mechanical issues, such as degenerative discs; and spine restabilization related to trauma, tumor, or infection. He has done research in the areas of spondylosis and spine issues in athletes.

At Upstate, Tallarico's research focus will be on spinal motion preservation.

—Denise Owen Harrigan

University Hospital Offers Liver Resection

**A**s of August, University Hospital became the only hospital between Albany and Rochester to offer liver resection to treat liver cancer. The surgery is available through the Hepatobiliary Program, a joint program of the hospital's Departments of Surgery, Radiology and Oncology and the Division of Gastroenterology in the Department of Medicine.

Liver resection is the surgical removal of a portion of the liver that has one or more cancerous tumors, and of its surrounding tissue. The treatment is most appropriate for patients who have primary liver cancer or cancer that has metastasized to the liver.

According to Dilip Kittur, MD, recent advances in surgical and interventional radiology techniques, as well as in

imaging techniques, have made liver resection a viable option to treat liver cancer.

“Liver resection dates back to the 1700s,” says Dr. Kittur, founder and director of the Hepatobiliary Surgery Program, chief of general surgery and director of transplantation at University Hospital. “However it was not determined to be a truly effective option to treat liver cancer until the development of recent innovations in techniques.”

To determine a patient's suitability for the surgery preoperatively, Kittur uses three-dimensional CT scans or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to view how much of the liver can be removed safely, the extent of cancer and whether there is enough of the non-tumor portion of the

liver, free of cirrhosis, to sustain the patient's life.

“The liver has the remarkable capacity to reproduce itself in just a matter of weeks,” says Kittur, who gained considerable experience in liver surgery, including resection and transplantation, as a faculty member at Johns Hopkins University prior to joining SUNY Upstate and most recently through continuing medical education at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.



Dilip Kittur, MD