

UI Hematology/Oncology

Connections

News from the University of Iowa Hematology/Oncology Fellowship Program

Winter 2016

Second-Year Fellow Patel Meets with Grassley



With hobbies that include running, cycling, and traveling, Ravi Patel, MD, is always on the move. It's a trait that has served him well both personally and professionally.

Born and raised in Monroe, Wisconsin, a small town on the Wisconsin-Illinois border, Patel decided to pursue a career in medicine for many reasons—not the least of which was the influence of his father, who was also a physician. “He served as a pivotal role model,” Patel explained.

After graduating from high school, Patel attended the University of Notre Dame with interests in finance, biology, and theology. Eventually, those diverse interests gave way to medicine, so Patel returned to his home state for medical school at the University of Wisconsin. After that, the University of Iowa called. “Having a love for small college towns and the Midwest, I was brought to Iowa for an internal medicine residency, and I’ve stayed to do my fellowship,” he said.

During Patel’s time at the UI, he’s focused in on his academic interests—patient experience, health outcomes, and quality improvement—and his specific oncologic pursuits in lymphoma and gastrointestinal malignancies. He’s also taken an interest in health policy advocacy.

Recently, Patel had the chance to meet with U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley as part of the American Society of Hematology’s Advocacy Leadership Institute. “The group included 25 research and clinical hematologists ranging from PhD graduate students to full professors,” Patel said. “It was not only my first experience with health advocacy, but it also gave me the chance to meet a group of brilliant professionals and outstanding individuals in our field.”

Discussions with Grassley and other leaders (including the staff of U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst) focused on raising the caps for National Institutes of Health funding as well as advocating the passage of an oral drug parity bill. “The meeting was personally very productive, as I was better able to understand the inner workings of health policy in our country,” Patel said. “The leaders I spoke with were very receptive and eager to hear from their constituents.”



Faculty Spotlight: Laurie Lyckholm



The Hematology, Oncology, and Blood & Marrow Transplantation Fellowship Training Program is pleased to welcome its new associate program director—Laurie Lyckholm, MD, a professor in the Division of Hematology/Oncology and a faculty member in the Program in Bioethics and Humanities. "My goal in this position is to support Dr. (Daniel) Berg in his

development of many new and exciting educational initiatives," Lyckholm said.

After receiving a medical degree from Creighton University, Lyckholm completed hematology/oncology fellowship training at UI Hospitals and Clinics (where she also joined the faculty for three years), followed by a fellowship at the University of Chicago MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics. She then spent 19 years at Virginia Commonwealth University before returning to the UI in January 2015.

Lyckholm's interests are vast and varied:

- Her research and clinical activities are geared toward improving cancer and palliative care for vulnerable citizens, including indigent patients and inmates of correctional facilities.
- She joins her supportive care and hematology/oncology backgrounds with her passion for education by managing patients and teaching house staff on the inpatient hematology/oncology unit, where she is medical director.
- She has studied and written about topics ranging from cancer care of the underserved to existential issues in dying patients to symptom management in patients receiving chemotherapy.

"I love my work because my patients inspire me with their courage and optimism," she said. "I think there is no situation in which you cannot provide hope, be it for a cure or for a pain-free day spent with loved ones."

Lyckholm lives with her husband, Mike Edmond, MD, MPH, MPA, an infectious diseases specialist and the chief quality and safety officer at UI Hospitals and Clinics. She enjoys volunteering at the Iowa City Free Medical Clinic, cooking, writing, and being outdoors. She's also trying to learn to play the cello.

Faculty Spotlight: Paloma Giangrande



A career in medicine and research—where much of the work centers on hypothesizing about and diagnosing things unseen—seems perfectly suited for Paloma Giangrande, PhD. "I remember many nights when I was a little girl, looking up at the starlit sky, admiring the vastness of the cosmos," she said. "The unknown has always

fascinated me."

Her formative years were marked by more travel than many people see in a lifetime. Born in Saudi Arabia, Giangrande moved with her family to Senegal, Dakar, when she was just a year old. Two years later, they moved to Bangkok, Thailand, for four years; then Caracas, Venezuela, for two years; and then Kandy, Sri Lanka, for a year. From age 10 to 17, Giangrande lived in Rome, Italy.

At age 18, Giangrande came to the United States for college (BA, Wheaton College and PhD, Duke University). She has lived in the U.S. ever since and became a citizen in 2013.

Giangrande's research involves developing synthetic targeted RNA reagents (aptamers) to proteins involved in disease—receptors expressed on the surface of target-cells or soluble proteins secreted in blood, for example—with SELEX (Systematic Evolution of Ligands by Exponential Enrichment). The goal is to:

- Intervene therapeutically
- Deliver therapeutic molecules (siRNAs, anti-miRs, drugs/toxins) into specific cell types
- Provide better diagnostics
- Acquire mechanistic insights into a disease state

"Our mission is to streamline the standard of care and implement therapies with improved efficacy and safety profiles," she explained. "Ultimately, our dream is to develop treatments that cure patients of their diseases without causing unnecessary side effects."

SAVE THE DATE! JUNE 4, 2016

Join us for Iowa Night at the ASCO (American Society of Clinical Oncology) Annual Meeting. You and a guest are invited to a reception hosted by the UI Division of Hematology, Oncology, and Blood & Marrow Transplantation. Complimentary hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served.

When: 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, June 4
Where: Joliet Room, Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois

