

THE TRIBUNE

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2020

Lending an Ear TIN Talk Sparks Research Interest and 'Listening Sessions'

At two seminars in December, clinical researchers at UAMS and Arkansas Children's Research Institute (ACRI) learned about intriguing new possibilities for their research.

Hosted by TRI, the seminars featured Dixie Thompson, representing the national Trial Innovation Network (TIN), which aims to help researchers at Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) Program institutions like UAMS.

The network can help researchers strengthen their clinical studies by finding collaborators at other CTSA sites; Thompson encouraged



Atul Kothari, M.D., meeting with TRI Associate Director John Arthur, M.D., was the first UAMS researcher to vet his study idea with TRI for possible multisite collaboration in the Trial Innovation Network.

(Continued on page 2)



Dear Colleagues,

As a member of the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) consortium, TRI has access to an array of innovative research tools and services. One that we are highlighting is the Trial Innovation Network, a collaborative initiative within the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS)

CTSA program.

As a researcher, you may have a great clinical trial idea, but you may be doubtful about meeting the participant accrual requirements with our local patient pool alone. Others may already be conducting a clinical trial with similar concerns about meeting recruitment goals.

If you fall into either category, we hope you will contact us. As you will read in this issue, the TIN offers a promising way to leverage the 60-plus CTSA institutions, and TRI can help facilitate. You can get the ball rolling on your study

by scheduling a Listening Session led by me and Dr. John Arthur, TRI associate director. We will help you determine if the TIN is a good fit for your study. It's easy – just contact Amy Jo Jenkins, AJJenkins@uams.edu, to have your session scheduled.

For those on the Arkansas Children's Hospital campus, Dr. Stacie Jones and Janet Stormont are providing this facilitation service for TRI. Please contact JonesStacieM@uams.edu or StormontJS@archchildrens.org if you would like to explore this exciting collaborative opportunity.

Sincerely,

Laura James, M.D.
Director, TRI
Associate Vice Chancellor for Clinical
and Translational Research, UAMS

Lending an Ear

(Continued from page 1)

the 70-plus attendees to submit proposals to TRI, a liaison for the TIN.

The Trial Innovation Network provides investigators with access to the entire CTSA consortium, about 60 institutions and 500 affiliated hospitals around the country.

CONTACT TRI

Clinical researchers with a good study proposal or early-stage project are encouraged to contact TRI to determine if it could benefit from a multisite collaboration. TRI Director Laura James, M.D., and Associate Director John Arthur, M.D., Ph.D., are holding Listening Sessions with researchers who may be interested but are not sure if they have a good candidate study. Researchers who have questions or would like to schedule a session are urged to contact TRI Executive Director Amy Jo Jenkins, AJJenkins@uams.edu.

NETWORK ADDRESSES CHALLENGES

Atul Kothari, M.D., a UAMS infectious diseases specialist and researcher, found Thompson's presentation informative and relevant for UAMS researchers. "If you don't have a multisite collaboration for your clinical research project or if you have started a project and find out that you're not recruiting enough patients in your own site, then that is a potential opportunity to link up with other sites."

The Trial Innovation Network is successfully addressing the challenge of clinical trial design, particularly related to enrollment, said TRI Associate Director John Arthur, M.D., Ph.D.

"They have the ability to find centers that can participate in your trial," said Arthur, who is conducting multisite research on chronic kidney disease. "For instance, if you're interested in a fairly rare disease and you need multiple centers to be able to enroll the patients that you need, the Trial Innovation Network will share that with all of the individual CTSA's and find out from their investigators how many patients they might have at each center."

"It's a really nice way to be able to utilize the CTSA system as a whole for clinical trials," he added.

As part of the network, TRI also fields inquiries through the network from CTSA investigators seeking collaborators at UAMS.

ACRI PARTNERS WITH TRI



Stacie Jones, M.D., a TRI facilitator for the Trial Innovation Network at Arkansas Children's Research Institute (ACRI), said the network has drawn a lot of interest from child health researchers, including faculty who are new to clinical research.

"The TIN provides an opportunity for clinic groups to expand their impact through engagement in multicenter trials,"



said Jones, professor and chief of Allergy and Immunology at UAMS and Arkansas Children's Hospital. "This has broad applicability across many medical subspecialties in child health. The TIN has already provided research groups like pediatric orthopaedics, critical care and infectious disease opportunities to participate with other centers."

Jones and Janet Stormont, clinical trials administrator at ACRI, are the TRI contacts for faculty on the ACH campus interested in collaborations with other CTSA's. ACH-based faculty interested in possibly using the network are encouraged to contact either Jones, JonesStacieM@uams.edu, or Stormont, StormontJS@archildrens.org.

The TRI-supported effort also establishes even stronger links between UAMS and ACRI, Jones said.

"We're building more bridges between our campuses, and the Trial Innovation Network - with the infrastructure of TRI - is a great opportunity for us to work together to find new clinical trials and facilitate collaboration for our researchers," Jones said.

FIRST PITCH

Kothari's newfound knowledge of the TIN prompted him to pitch his own clinical trial idea to the network, pending its vetting by Arthur. It is the first UAMS clinical study to be considered for the TIN.

He said Thompson's visit also revealed for him how vital the network is for researchers at small- to medium-sized research centers like UAMS. "Investigators at those institutions may have great research ideas, but they would not be able to finish the trial at their own site, alone," he said. "So the Trial Innovation Network is providing a good opportunity for researchers at these smaller- to mid-level universities to find collaborators."

Classes Begin for Community Research Leadership Program

TRI recently kicked off its Community Partners Educated as Arkansas Research Leaders (CPEARL) class. The inaugural class includes 12 devoted community leaders.

They are, back row: Meredith Flowers (Leaping Beyond), Demetrius Kelly (Better Community Development, Inc.), Willie Wade (Difference Makers of Hot Springs); front row: Manny Sepulveda (Arkansas Hispanic Health Coalition), Kaneshia Barnes-Adams (AR Prostate Cancer Foundation), Jessica Suitor-Burnham (Our House), Esther Dixon (Difference Makers of Hot Springs), Holly Taylor (Better Community Development, Inc.)

*Not pictured: Our House team members: Maureen Martin, Ruthie Hokans, Claire Barton; AR Prostate Cancer Foundation team member Cara Clements.



The 6-week CPEARL program targets leaders and emerging leaders within community-based organizations (CBOs) located in Arkansas. The program is designed to enhance research partnership and program development competencies within CBOs. The CBOs will receive up to \$2,500 in seed funding to implement a real-world project. Academic, practice, and community experts will provide interactive didactic learning sessions during the 6-week intensive. Each team will also have a UAMS researcher assigned to mentor them throughout the year and the opportunity for one-on-one community consultations.

Research on the Horizon: New TRI Study of the Month

- **UAMS Principal Investigator:** Sanjeeva Onteddu, M.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Neurology, College of Medicine; Stroke Director, UAMS.
- **Summary:** A multicenter trial testing whether apixaban is superior to aspirin in the prevention of recurrent stroke in patients with ischemic stroke and cardiopathy.
- **Significance:** The study will provide a better understanding of cardiopathy in the role of strokes and whether the relative efficacy of apixaban over aspirin increases with the severity of cardiopathy.
- **TRI Services:** Medicare coverage analysis, study budget development, IRB submission and regulatory startup, training for study staff/investigators, oversight of enrollment startup, and research nurse coordinator services.
- **Sponsor:** Columbia University (via NIH StrokeNet)



TRI's Mtonya Hunter-Lewis, MBA, assists Sanjeeva Onteddu, M.D., with his study.

Mentors, New and Veteran, Find Value in TRI Workshop



Beatrice Boateng, Ph.D., (center) TRI director of evaluation, led the evidence-based training. She was joined by (l-r), Kevin Sexton, M.D., Mick Tilford, Ph.D., Reza Hakkak, Ph.D., and Erick Messias, M.D., Ph.D.

Erin Mannen, Ph.D., has been a faculty member for just two years, and yet she is mentoring medical students, residents, postdoctoral fellows, a PhD student and a summer engineering intern.

"I'm mentoring a lot of different folks," she said. "And as a new faculty, I feel like I need a lot of mentoring for myself."

That led Mannen to join more than 30 UAMS faculty members from all five colleges for the TRI-sponsored Mentoring Matters training workshop in January.

It was time well spent, she said.

"The takeaway for me was that mentoring is a lot about just building relationships, and even though I'm a young faculty, I still have a lot to offer as a mentor to these different folks at different levels in their own schooling or career," she said.

Tom Chung, Ph.D., said the course would be helpful to any mentor, regardless of experience.

"It's a good way for mentors to review their own habits, so to speak," he said. "It's a good refreshment opportunity."



Erin Mannen, Ph.D., said the mentor training was time well spent.

The **TRIBUNE** is produced by the UAMS Translational Research Institute (TRI). It is supported by grant ULI TR003107 through the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH.

WEBSITE:
TRI.uams.edu

EMAIL:
TRI@uams.edu

TRI MAIN NUMBER:
(501) 614-2287

Editor
David Robinson
Designer
Leslie Norris
TRI Director
Laura James, M.D.