



On Top of Their Game

Psychiatry residents triumph in Jeopardy-style competition

OUT-BUZZING AND OUT-SMARTING TEAMS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA AND WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY, A THREE-PERSON TEAM FROM UB'S PSYCHIATRY RESIDENCE PROGRAM WON THE FIRST JEOPARDY-INSPIRED "MINDGAMES" AT THE 2007 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHIATRY ASSOCIATION HELD IN SAN DIEGO IN MAY.



LEFT TO RIGHT: David Kaye, MD, Robin Warner, MD '04, Shakeel Raza, MD, and Cynthia Pristach, MD, '83

PHOTO BY K. C. KRANTZ

THIS IS NOT how medical residents usually spend their busy lives.

"It was very surreal," says Robin Warner, MD '04, a third-year psychiatric resident and the team's neurology specialist. "The only other female in the competition, from Penn, who I got to know, said, 'Is this one of the strangest things you've ever done?' and I said, 'Absolutely!'"

The team brought home a trophy nearly as big as the NHL's Stanley Cup.

"Mind Games" is the brainchild of Nancy Delanoche, associate director of the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Education for the American Psychiatric Association. She patterned it after similar competitions held at annual meetings of other medical associations, such as the American College of Physicians' "Medical Jeopardy" and the "Neurobowl" of the American Academy of Neurology.

Before hitting the "big time" the UB team had to survive the qualifying round, a computerized test of 150 questions that had to be completed in 60 minutes. The three top-scoring teams would receive \$5,000 to attend the meeting and participate in the final round.

Huddling around a computer in the chief resident's office, the team sweated through the questions. Shakeel Raza, MD, a fifth-year resident from Pakistan doing a fellowship in child and

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adolescent psychiatry, had studied up on topics in that specialty. Filling out the team was Vijay Amarendran, MD, a fourth-year psychiatric resident who is responsible for questions on psychopharmacology.

The team finished the qualifying round as time ran out. "We felt we could have done a lot better," says Warner. "We didn't know what to expect," adds Amarendran.

Raza got word that the team had made the finals from David Kaye, MD, his residency director, a UB professor of child psychiatry. He was snoozing through grand rounds when the phone rang. "I overslept," says Raza. "When I saw Dr. Kaye's number on my cell, I thought he was calling to confront me about my absence."

The team then knuckled down in earnest. Kaye and Cynthia Pristach, MD '83, program director in general psychiatry, served as tutors. The team held two practice sessions, competing against a team of senior residents, with Pristach peppering them with Jeopardy-style questions.

"The competition with their peers was a lot of fun and very helpful," says Pristach. "What was also useful for them was learning how to use the buzzer effectively, as well as working as a team to answer the questions. They were allowed 10 seconds for discussion after buzz-in, and it took them some practice to not just blurt out the answer."

Fast-forward to San Diego. A promotional film of the upcoming competition played in the hotel lobby to build excitement. As "Mind Games" got under way, a raucous cheering section of Buffalo partisans, made up of UB physicians, residents, former residents and alumni gathered to cheer on the UB team, decked out in UB blue and white. Even Susan McLeer, MD, the department's former chair, stopped by.

Glen O. Gabbard, MD, Brown Foundation Professor of Psychoanalysis at Baylor College of Medicine and director of Baylor's psychiatry clinic, stood in as emcee.

Things did not look good for UB as the competition progressed. Going in to the final round, the home team had only

800 points compared to the University of Pennsylvania's 3,000.

"The third round was when things turned around," recalls Amarendran. Luckily, History of Psychiatry came up as a category. One of the attending physicians recently had presented a lecture on the topic. When the final buzzer sounded, UB had triumphed.

"When we won, it took a few minutes to sink in," says Amarendran. "Then the celebration began. People were jumping up and down and cheering."

The faculty treated the team to dinner at an Italian restaurant. The trophy now sits in the resident library.

"Now it's back to regular life," sighs Amarendran. **BP**

The Class of 2011, at a Glance

THIS YEAR'S WHITE COAT CEREMONY was held on August 10, 2007, at Slee Hall on UB's North Campus. During the ceremony, Charles Severin, MD '97, PhD, interim associate dean for medical education, shared the following statistics about the class.

NUMBER OF APPLICANTS: 3,826

CLASS SIZE: 135 (12 MD/PhD candidates)

FEMALE/MALE RATIO: 73/62

AVERAGE MCAT SCORE: 30.28

SCIENCE/NON-SCIENCE MAJORS: 94/41

DEGREES: PHD/MASTERS: 2/18

AVERAGE AGE: 23

OLDEST/YOUNGEST: 35/21

WHERE THEY CALL HOME: Western New York (38), extended Western New York (21), Upstate New York (12), Downstate New York (41), out-of-state (23)

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE INSTITUTIONS (TOP FIVE): UB (18), Cornell University (9), Canisius College (5), University of Rochester (10), Binghamton University (4)

For more on the White Coat Ceremony, turn to page 46, which features photographs of donors coating students for whom they have provided scholarships.

—S. A. Unger



Genetics and Genomics Symposium

Focus on UB 2020 strategic strength

MORE THAN 100 SCIENTISTS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY GATHERED IN BUFFALO ON SEPTEMBER 7 FOR A SYMPOSIUM ON “GENETICS AND GENOMICS IN DEVELOPMENT AND DISEASE” ORGANIZED BY THE UB 2020 STRATEGIC STRENGTH IN MOLECULAR RECOGNITION IN BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND BIOINFORMATICS. SPEAKERS AND POSTER PRESENTATIONS EXAMINED THE MOLECULAR EVENTS AND PATHWAYS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND WHOSE MIS-REGULATION FREQUENTLY RESULTS IN HUMAN DISEASE.

The symposium took place on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and was hosted by UB’s New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences and the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

“Molecular Recognition in Biological Systems and Bioinformatics” is one of eight areas of strategic strength identified by UB 2020, the university’s research agenda for the next 13 years. It is the first of the UB 2020 strengths to host a thematic symposium of this sort.

Kenneth Blumenthal, PhD, professor and chair of the UB Department of Biochemistry and a member of the coordinating committee for the strategic strength, explains that certain genes must be either “turned on or turned off” (expressed or silenced) in order for an organ system to develop and function properly. When this does not happen, developmental disorders and diseases occur.

“Because we are now able to look at genes being turned on and off throughout an organism, it is possible to identify groups of co-regulated genes that form developmental pathways,” says Blumenthal, adding that these same tools

can be used to identify errors in pathways that give rise to cancer, cardiovascular disease and other human pathologies.

The symposium was the first of a series of thematic mini-symposia to be hosted by members of the group representing the strategic strength. The second, to be held in March 2008, will focus on recombinant expression of proteins for research and therapeutics. A third symposium next summer will focus on chemical biology.

A goal of the symposia is to identify potential cross-disciplinary interactions and collaborations among UB faculty members.

For more information on the “Molecular Recognition in Biological Systems and Bioinformatics” strategic strength, visit the UB 2020 web site at <http://www.buffalo.edu/ub2020/overview/> and click on “Building on Our Academic Strengths.” **BP**

—SUE WUETCHER AND S. A. UNGER

SPEAKERS AT THE SYMPOSIUM INCLUDED:

Thomas Doetschman
University of Arizona

Anil Menon
University of Cincinnati

Richard Maas
Harvard University

Kenneth Gross and Andrei Gudkov
Roswell Park Cancer Institute

UB SPEAKERS INCLUDED:

Richard Gronostajski and Marc Halfon
UB Department of Biochemistry

Matthew Disney
UB Department of Chemistry

Denise Ferkey
UB Department of Biology

Left to right are Thomas Doetschman, Kenneth Blumenthal and Anil Menon discussing cardiac development during the poster session.

