The summer months are busy for the Training Core, and this summer is no exception. The Center accepted nine new trainees into its program this year: Two post-doctoral fellows, one pre-doctoral fellow, and six undergraduate interns.

**Fellows**

*Lauren Block, MD:* A General Internal Medicine Fellow, Lauren received her bachelor’s degree from Yale University and her medical degree from Harvard University. She completed both her Internal Medicine residency and her Masters of Public Health at Johns Hopkins.

*Tanvir Hussain, MD:* Tanvir received his bachelor’s degree from Rice University and his medical degree from Baylor University. He completed his Internal Medicine residency at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston. Tanvir has a Masters of Science in Health & Society: Social Epidemiology from University College London (UCL) & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

*Jennifer Halbert, BA:* Jennifer is a graduate of the University of Virginia who majored in International Relations. She is currently an MSPH student at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health where she is focusing on Health Education and Health Communication.

**Summer Undergraduate Interns**

*Grace Tsai:* Grace is a Johns Hopkins student from Kentucky who is entering her junior year with a major in Public Health. Grace’s mentor was Dr. Hanan Aboumatar.

*Emma Rybczynski:* A Baltimore City resident, Emma is a nursing student at Duquesne University who is entering her senior year. Dr. Tam Nguyen from the School of Nursing mentored Emma.

*Katie Wehner:* A Vanderbilt graduate with a degree in Medicine, Health & Society, Katie is entering a master’s program in nursing at the University of Delaware. Her mentor was Dr. Tam Nguyen.

*Karyawan Potti:* A rising senior at the University of Maryland – College Park, Karyawan is a Physiology and Neurobiology/Pre-Med major from Gaithersburg. Dr. Kimberly Gudzune was her mentor.

*Britton Preroff:* Britton, a rising senior at Vanderbilt University who is majoring in Medicine, Health & Society, is from Towson. Her mentor was Dr. Deidra Crews.

*Kasey Vernon:* A rising senior at North Carolina A & T, Kasey is a Biology major who is from Beltsville. Her mentor was Dr. Edgar “Pete” Miller.
Seattle Meeting

During the week of June 10th, twelve representatives from the Hopkins Center to Eliminate Cardiovascular Health Disparities attended the annual CPHHD meeting in Seattle, Washington. A total of 150 faculty and staff from the 10 NIH funded Centers attended the meeting. The meeting was hosted by the Centers at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the University of Washington.

Carolyn Clancy, MD, Director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, provided the keynote address for the meeting. Dr. Clancy’s presentation focused on generating reductions in health disparities through research in action.

Dr. Cooper participated on a panel in which Center Principal Investigators discussed barriers, accomplishments and lessons learned that each of the 10 Centers have experienced in recent years. Although there were some common issues identified by the Centers, each Center described how they approached these issues uniquely. The discussion provided an opportunity for those gathered to learn from their peers’ experience and bring information back to their own institutions.

Along with sessions focused on scientific challenges, ethical issues, and institutional infrastructure that impact disparities research, the group had an opportunity to hear from community representatives from the Seattle Centers about their experiences working in partnership with the academic institutions to reduce health disparities in their state. The community discussion proved to be an extremely engaging session for all those attending.

Finally, the poster session offered those gathered a wonderful opportunity to learn about the research endeavors at the other CPHHD Centers across the country. The Hopkins Center was well represented during this session with four of our members (Jessica Ameling, MPH; Romsai “Tony” Boonyasai, MD; Patti Ephraim, MPH; Tanjala Purnell, PhD) presenting posters on their work.

What is a Data and Safety Monitoring Board?

*Kathryn “Kit” Carson, ScM*

A Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) is an independent group of experts that gives advice to the study investigators. A DSMB is usually made up of a statistician, at least one expert in the disease or patient population being studied and may include an expert in clinical trials or a patient advocate. The DSMB may be asked to meet before a study begins to help the study team design the study or to approve the study protocol. It meets regularly during the study to check on the progress. The DSMB looks at whether the study is enrolling enough patients and the number of patients that are dropping out of the study. It also looks at the amount and quality of data collected. The DSMB monitors patient safety, such as side effects and outcomes. The DSMB then writes a report stating if it thinks the study should continue, any concerns it has, and suggestions for making the study better.

Our DSMB meets for about three hours twice a year and reviews all three studies in the Center. It is made up of five members including one from the Community Advisory Board (CAB). We are currently seeking a CAB member to serve on the DSMB. Please contact Richard Matens at rmatens@jhmi.edu if you are interested.
Project Updates

Project ReDChiP: The Care Management Intervention rolled out officially at East Baltimore Medical Center (EBMC) on July 16th. Two Registered Dietitians (Miss Emily Brown and Miss Whitney Franz) join 3 PharmDs (Drs. Patricia Ross, Jessica Wellman, and Leena Deshpande) to comprise the Care Management Team. Physicians are encouraged to refer patients to the Care Management Team if a patient meets the following criteria:

- 18 years of age or older
- Blood pressure is ≥140/≥90 mmHg at last clinic visit
- Patient is eligible if either the systolic or diastolic reading is greater than the indicated cut point.
- Patients with a BP ≥160/≥100 mmHg are referred to the PharmD
- Patients with a BP between ≥140/≥90 and <160/<100 mmHg are referred to the R.D.

Eligible patients will receive 3 monthly sessions totaling 2 hours with the Care Management Team at no cost to the patient. In February 2013, the Care Management Intervention will begin at the next two participating JHCP sites: Canton Crossing and Greater Dundalk.

Provider Education Intervention:

- A roll-out of the Provider Hypertension Dashboard at Wyman Park began to be gradually phased in on May 31st, 2012.
- The Provider Hypertension Dashboard will expand to cover Greenspring Station beginning in December, 2012. We anticipate the finalization and implementation of the Communication Skills component at Wyman Park by the fall of 2013.

Five Plus Nuts and Beans: “Five Plus” or “Nuts and Beans” (the common names used by participants to describe our program) is up and running. We are screening, randomizing and following-up our participants. The first wave of participants completed their 8-week intervention, and the second wave of 10 participants began July 10th.

We are working in partnership with Ms. Laura Fox, who administers the Baltimore City Health Department’s Virtual Supermarket program, called “Baltimore”. Each of our DASH Plus participants are welcomed by the staff and presented with an insulated shopping bag. Ms. Fox greets participants on their last grocery pick-up and encourages them to continue with the program after the follow-up is over. In addition, we have been working closely with Mr. Rob Santoni, owner of Santoni’s Supermarket. Mr. Santoni and his staff have been more than open to work with us and we are grateful for their support on this project. All in all, the start to our study has proceeded well. We appreciate the collaborations and efforts of EBMC, the Virtual Supermarket, Santoni’s Supermarket, our study staff, and, most importantly, our participants.

When asked of our participants “What made you respond to the Five Plus Nuts and Beans Study invitation?” the response that is most commonly given is “I want to be healthier and control my blood pressure. I want to see how I can do that by changing my diet.” We hope that the results of our program will provide evidence that improving awareness and knowledge of healthy choices in conjunction with purchasing and delivering of foods, will improve blood pressure.

Center Announcements

♥ The Center is proud to announce that its Director, Lisa Cooper, MD, MPH, has been installed as the James F. Fries Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University. Please join us in celebrating this well-deserved recognition for Dr. Cooper.

♥ ACT Study PI, Ebony Boulware, MD, MPH, and Welch Center Associate Faculty member, nephrologist Deidra Crews, MD, ScM, received the "President's Research Recognition Award of the Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute" for their work focusing on the social determinants of chronic renal disease.

♥ The Center’s Training Core Director, Sherita Hill Golden, MD, MHS delivered a major scientific statement on Health and Health Disparities in Endocrine Disorders on Monday, June 25th, at the Endocrine Society’s 94th annual meeting in Houston, TX. The statement outlines the research findings on population differences, both biological and socioeconomic, in each of the most widespread endocrine diseases, and then presents a conceptual framework which recognizes population-level determinants of health outcomes as distinct from, yet intertwined with, individual level determinants.

♥ Sara Bleich, PhD, Assistant Professor at JHSPH and one of our Center’s Faculty Fellows, received recognition as having submitted the Article of the Year from the Obesity Society for her paper, Impact of Physician BMI on Obesity Care and Beliefs. Drs. Wendy Bennett and Kimberly Gudzune were co-authors on the paper while Dr. Lisa Cooper was senior author on the study.

ACT Study: The Achieving Blood Pressure Control Together (ACT) Study is in the final stages of developing intervention materials. We are planning to begin a pilot study of the ACT study in September 2012. The pilot study will be an opportunity to test feasibility of the study procedures. For the pilot study, we will enroll 12 African-American patients with uncontrolled hypertension who receive their primary care at EBMC. We are currently working to finalize the study manual of procedures and the databases that will be used to track screening, recruitment, and outcomes. It is anticipated that the pilot study will be completed by October 30, 2012. Our timeline is to begin the randomized controlled trial of the intervention in December 2012.
Center Core Faculty & Staff:

Lisa A. Cooper, MD, MPH — Center Director; PI, Project ReDChiP
Jill Marsteller, PhD — Co-PI, Project ReDChiP
L. Ebony Boulware, MD, MPH — PI, ACT Study
Edgar “Pete” Miller, MD, PhD — PI, Five Plus Nuts & Beans Study
Sherita Hill Golden, MD, MHS — Training Director
Richard W. Matens, MDiv — Administrative Director
Kathryn “Kit” Carson, ScM — Shared Resources Director
Gary Noronha, MD — Director of Research, JHCP
Joy Mays — Research Program Coordinator

Center Research Timeline

Legend:
- Development
- Pilot
- Implementation

Clinical Sites:

CC = Canton Crossing
EBMC = East Baltimore Medical Center
GD = Greater Dundalk
GSS = Green Spring Station
WM = White Marsh
WP = Wyman Park

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Creating healthy hearts for all Baltimore residents.

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