Team Tackle: Combatting Cancer Together

Mary “Cookie” Wimmer celebrated her 74th birthday with a couple of unconventional practices: burning her radiation mask, after completing radiation two days prior, and releasing six balloons to represent the six weeks of radiation treatments she underwent. “I woke up on my birthday and remembered that just a few months ago, I didn’t think I was going to make it to see this day,” Cookie says.

On April 1, 2016 Cookie found herself in a grim place: a doctor’s office receiving a dire diagnosis. Cookie recalls hearing the diagnosis of a sinonasal undifferentiated carcinoma (SNUC), a rare cancer of the nasal cavity, on April Fool’s Day, “I remember thinking, and hoping, that it was all a joke.”

Cookie was in Florida when she noticed gradually worsening nasal obstruction. She was seen by a physician who found a mass on a CT scan. It was then he suggested she return to Michigan for a biopsy. “You think that these things won’t happen to you,” Cookie says, “but I just had a gut feeling.”

Upon returning to Michigan, Cookie was seen by local ear, nose and throat (ENT) physician and U-M alum, Daniel Rontal, M.D., who performed the biopsy. The preliminary report already had an unfavorable diagnosis: Cookie had a rare tumor of the paranasal sinuses that’s characterized by aggressive growth and poor prognosis. Mary asked if she should consider seeking a second opinion at a tertiary medical center, and Dr. Rontal said he knew someone at the University of Michigan Health System who could treat her. He called Erin L. McKean, M.D., MBA, chief of the Division of Rhinology and Skull Base Surgery in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

“Not 15 minutes after leaving Dr. Rontal’s office, my phone rang. It was the University of Michigan, and they were asking how soon I could get there,” recalled Cookie. “In that moment I felt a sense of divine intervention.” Cookie recalls arriving at the U-M otolaryngology clinic that very day, where they had been expecting her arrival and took her back to be seen by Dr. McKean. The early detection, diagnosis and referral to a specialist by her ENT are what expedited her treatment. “For Cookie, her cancer was diagnosed very quickly by Dr. Rontal, and she was able to be seen quickly in the skull base clinic,” Dr. McKean says.

“Once I was seated, I was told by one of the nurses that this is where I was supposed to be and that I’ll be taken good care of,” Cookie recalls. “I remember Dr. McKean examining me and saying, ‘I can do this. We can treat this.’” In that moment, Cookie reiterates her belief in divine intervention and her gratitude for every member of her care team for being seen and treated expeditiously.

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FROM THE CHAIR

It’s hard to believe that one year ago, on July 1 to be exact, I officially assumed my role as the interim chair of the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. This past year has been a time of growth, discovery, challenges and accomplishments. I am humbled and honored to have the opportunity to lead such a vibrant group of faculty and staff, and remain appreciative of the support and encouragement I’ve received from my colleagues, staff, patients and alumni this past year.

As I am sure many of you are aware, Dr. Carol Bradford, who served as our department’s chair from January 2009 to July 2016, assumed the newly-created role of executive vice dean for academic affairs for the University of Michigan Medical School. Carol set an incredibly high standard for patient care, education, research, leadership and mentorship during her tenure as chair. On a personal note, in addition to being a colleague and close friend, I count Carol as one of my most important mentors. I know I am not unique in that area and I have frequently wondered how she finds enough time for herself when she commits so much time to others. I believe in my opinion, our most lasting and fulfilling achievements will be earned by helping others.

In this issue you will learn a little more about each of these exceptional faculty members, their innovative research, compassion in patient care and dedication to educating future leaders in the field of otolaryngology. I remain proud to lead this department, and as we head into a new fiscal and academic year, I look forward to what’s in store, and for the opportunity to work with all of you to make it happen.

Respectfully,

Mark E. P. Prince, M.D., FRCS (C)
Professor and Interim Chair, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
Assistant Dean for Graduate Medical Education

In October, we had the honor of hosting over 100 alumni at the biannual Michigan Work Society Meeting, which was once again held at the iconic Jack Roth Stadium Club at the Big House. If you were unable to join us, you can view images from the event here: http://bit.ly/2017HNResearch. We are also excited to announce dates for the 2018 Michigan Work Society Meeting! I hope that all of you mark your calendars for October 4-6, 2018 and plan to reconvene at the Big House for our academic meeting, gala dinner and, of course, Michigan football!

In May, the division of head and neck oncology returned to the Big House to host its inaugural research symposium. We welcomed head and neck cancer specialists from around the state to review the latest advances in personalized medicine for head and neck cancer, and enjoyed a tour of the locker room and field at the conclusion of the conference. It was an excellent opportunity to engage with fellow clinicians, researchers and other medical professionals to improve multi-specialty collaboration in the treatment of head and neck cancer.

We continue to be a department that champions of global and community outreach and development. In March, I returned to Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) in Kumasi, Ghana, with my colleague Dr. Jeff Moyer. The following week, Dr. Greg Basura, Bruce Edwards and Bianca Waller, RN visited KATH to continue our collaborative effort with their physicians and trainees. In addition to teaching in the clinic, operating room and temporal bone lab, the team lead by Dr. Basura focused on beginning a project designed to collect objective data about the rates of hearing loss in children in Kumasi, with the goal to improve future hearing screening and therapeutic options. (See page 13 for more details on our trip.)

Each time I re-visit Ghana, I’m reminded of how fortunate we are to help other healthcare providers. As employees of a large, reputable health system, we are all in service to our local and global community.

In this issue of News and Notes, our Rhinology and Skull Base division takes center stage. The division was officially formed in February 2016 and provides leadership to our local and global community.

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"Team Tackle” cont’d

Ten days after receiving her diagnosis, Cookie underwent an expanded endonasal approach for resection of the SNUC. In the past, an operation to resect such a tumor would include an open craniotomy and adjuvant chemotherapy and radiation. “Given the early stage of her cancer, I recommended a minimally invasive endoscopic endonasal approach with transnasal craniotomy and clearance of margins. We were able to get negative surgical margins, allowing her to avoid chemotherapy and get radiation treatment… an outsider wouldn’t be able to tell she had ‘brain surgery’ and cancer treatment,” Dr. McKean says.

In spite of a challenging treatment plan, Cookie is thankful for the expertise that was readily available to her at the University of Michigan and advises patients in similar circumstances to seek a second opinion when faced with a frightening diagnosis. “Find the people with the necessary expertise,” says Cookie. While at her check-up, Cookie shared her plans of celebrating her birthday belatedly with dinner and an ice cream cake once she regains more options. (See page 13 for more details on our trip.)

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Mark E. P. Prince, M.D., FRCS (C)
Professor and Interim Chair, Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
Assistant Dean for Graduate Medical Education
Chronic Sinusitis Rarer Than Most Providers and Patients Believe

by Haley Otman

A recent Michigan study showed nonspecialists are drastically overdiagnosing chronic sinusitis, leading to incorrect, and possibly unnecessary, treatment.

Melissa Pynnonen, M.D., senior author and associate professor of otolaryngology, notes that the general population may also misunderstand the condition. While 15 percent of the population self-reports chronic sinusitis, only an estimated 2 to 3 percent of doctors’ visits are for the disease, investigations into the condition’s prevalence have found. Data from the University of Michigan suggest it is actually even more rare.

Pynnonen discusses the recent U-M work and explains why education is key to reducing overdiagnosis below.

What did your research find?

Pynnonen: We looked at 114 people newly diagnosed with chronic sinusitis. More than 99 percent of those patients did not actually have it when their diagnosis came from the emergency department or their primary care physician. Primary care and emergency physicians were less likely to follow the criteria that ear, nose and throat doctors use to make a correct diagnosis.

What are the symptoms of chronic sinusitis?

Pynnonen: We look for four specific things:

- Thick yellow or green nasal drainage
- Facial fullness or pressure
- Inability to breathe through the nose
- Decreased sense of smell and taste

Beyond the list of symptoms, it’s important to note that patients typically have more than one, and a diagnosis requires at least two symptoms that last more than three months. There’s also likely going to be evidence of inflammation on an exam, endoscopy or CT scan.

If 99 percent of the patients don’t have chronic sinusitis, what could they have instead?

Pynnonen: Many patients incorrectly diagnosed actually have repeated viral infections — we’re talking the common cold. Even if a cold returns within the three-month window, that’s not the same as symptoms persisting for three months straight. Allergies, migraine/tension headaches or a deviated nasal septum could be other culprits.

Some patients may indeed have sinusitis, but it’s acute rather than chronic. That means the treatment should be less intense, perhaps not even requiring antibiotics. Chronic sinusitis, though, may need antibiotics, oral steroids and/or allergy treatment.

What should non-ENT healthcare providers know about this research?

Pynnonen: It’s important to consider other causes of recurrent or persistent nasal symptoms or facial pain, instead of jumping to a chronic sinusitis diagnosis. As I mention above, other conditions can cause similar symptoms. Nonspecialists may also call the symptoms chronic if they last longer than they would have expected, but otolaryngologists are more careful with a “chronic” diagnosis. It must be persistent over time, and in the case of chronic sinusitis, that’s three months straight.

You recently served as senior author on a new study — separate from the previously mentioned paper — to compare the U-M Health System to national chronic sinusitis data. What did this find?

Pynnonen: We found in our Laryngoscope Investigative Otolaryngology study a much lower rate of chronic sinusitis at U-M compared to national data, so that means we’re diagnosing it less frequently than other community institutions. But even though it’s found less frequently, we already know the majority of patients with a diagnosis don’t actually have it. We concluded in this new study that chronic sinusitis diagnosed outside of an academic institution or specialty clinic may not hold up to diagnostic scrutiny. This confirms my team’s belief that we need to further educate primary care and emergency medicine providers about the condition.

Learn more about the Michigan Medicine Sinus Center here:
http://bit.ly/UofMSinusCenter
This month marked the end of my third year here at the Kresge Hearing Research Institute (KHRI). The old adage that the days are long, but the years are short aptly describes my time here at this distinguished research institution. The multidisciplinary collaborative effort amongst researchers and physicians to build a bridge between the lab and clinic continually fuels our work.

Earlier this year, the KHRI research community mourned the loss of Josef M. Miller, Ph.D., KHRI director from 1984-1999. Josef was named the Lynn and Ruth Townsend Professor of Communication Disorders in 1996 and retired from active faculty status in 2013, becoming Emeritus Professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, but his lab remained active until his passing. I believe I speak for many when I say he touched many lives and his legacy for honesty, integrity, and friendship will be felt for years to come (see page 6 for obituary). We plan to host a research symposium in his honor within the year. More information will follow shortly.

We recently recruited two research faculty, Gideon Rothschild, Ph.D., and Joerg Waldhaus, Ph.D., who I am confident will advance our scientific knowledge of the development, function and pathology of hearing through their respective novel research in regenerative biology and neural circuit mechanisms underlying sensory processing.

Dr. Joerg Waldhaus did his doctoral research at Eberhard Karls University, Tübingen, Germany where he studied the Regenerative Biology of the murine inner ear. He is now completing his postdoctoral training at Stanford in the lab of Stefan Heller where he obtained expertise in analysis of gene expression at the single cell level, a technique he is using to understand the development of the cochlea. He has been very successful at each step of his career and is PI of a NIDCD early career research award (R21). Joerg plans to continue investigating the molecular organization of the cochlea, with the aim of defining the basis of tonotopy and inducing regeneration of the damage organ. I believe that his research program will flourish here and that he will be able to collaborate with many members of our department (including those studying cancer) and with a strong core of investigators using single cell transcriptomics at the University of Michigan. Joerg will be also affiliated with Center for Computational Medicine and Bioinformatics (CCMB).

Dr. Gideon Rothschild received his Ph.D. from Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where he studied how sounds are processed by the coordinated activity of local neural populations in the auditory cortex of mice using two-photon calcium imaging. As a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), he focused on how the coordinated activity of neuronal populations across the auditory cortex, hippocampus, and prefrontal cortex encode information during learning and how they reactivate during memory consolidation in sleep. Gideon has advanced scientific knowledge in his areas of research, and will use behavioral, physiological and imaging approaches in his lab to study the interactions between auditory cortical processing and memory. Gideon’s primary appointment is in the department of psychology.

Please join me welcoming Joerg and Gideon. We look forward to working with you!

The accomplishments of our researchers are too innumerable to discuss at length, however I would be remiss to not mention some of the compelling studies that have been recently produced by our talented team:

- Identification of drugs that reduce the extent of hair cell synapse loss after noise (Richard A. Altschuler, Ph.D. and Josef M. Miller, Ph.D.)
- Method to measure auditory brain activity in the human brain (Gregory J. Basura, M.D., Ph.D.)
- Insights into the genetics of Meniere’s disease (Thomas E. Carey, Ph.D.)
- Discovery of a new mechanism for hidden hearing loss (Gabriel Corfas, Ph.D.) (See page 5)
- Methods to guide stem cells into the ear for auditory nerve regeneration (R. Keith Duncan, Ph.D.)
- Method to induce survival of embryonic stem cells in the deafened ear (Yehoash Raphael, Ph.D.)
- Understanding the brain mechanisms underlying tinnitus (Susan E. Shore, Ph.D.)

The KHRI has a tradition of collaboration and interaction that extends beyond the Institute’s walls, working with colleagues from across the University of Michigan and around the world. Together we work at a great institution and can change the lives of those who struggle with hearing loss and vestibular disorders every day. We continue to train future innovators in the field, and many of our doctoral students have gone on to assume positions at notable institutions like Boston Children’s Hospital, the National Institute of Health, and Case Western University.

I look forward to working with all of you to create a seamless transition from innovation in research to excellence in patient care.

Best Regards,
Gabriel Corfas, Ph.D.
Second Cause of Hidden Hearing Loss Identified by Haley Otman

Patients who complain they can’t hear their friends at a noisy restaurant, but pass a hearing test in their doctor’s office, may be describing hidden hearing loss.

Now, less than six years since its initial description, scientists have made great strides in understanding what hidden hearing loss is and what causes it. In research published in Nature Communications, University of Michigan researchers report a new unexpected cause for this auditory neuropathy, a step toward the eventual work to identify treatments.

“If people can have hidden hearing loss for different reasons, having the ability to make the right diagnosis of the pathogenesis will be critical,” says author Gabriel Corfas, Ph.D., director of the Kresge Hearing Research Institute at Michigan Medicine’s Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery.

Corfas published the research with co-author Guoqiang Wan, now with Nanjing University in China. They discovered using mice that disruption in the Schwann cells that make myelin, which insulates the neuronal axons in the ear, leads to hidden hearing loss. This means hidden hearing loss could be behind auditory deficits seen in acute demyelinating disorders such as Guillain-Barré syndrome, which can be caused by Zika virus.

Corfas and Wan used genetic tools to induce loss of myelin in the auditory nerve of mice, modeling Guillain-Barré. Although the myelin regenerated in a few weeks, the mice developed a permanent hidden hearing loss. Even after the myelin regenerated, damage to a nerve structure called the heminode remained.

Synapse loss versus myelin disruption

When the ear is exposed to loud noises over time, synapses connecting hair cells with the neurons in the inner ear are lost. This loss of synapses has previously been shown as a mechanism leading to hidden hearing loss.

In an audiologist’s quiet testing room, only a few synapses are needed to pick up sounds. But in a noisy environment, the ear must activate specific synapses. If they aren’t all there, it’s difficult for people to make sense of the noise or words around them. That is hidden hearing loss, Corfas says.

“Exposure to noise is increasing in our society, and children are exposing themselves to high levels of noise very early in life,” Corfas says. “It’s clear that being exposed to high levels of sound might contribute to increases in hidden hearing loss.”

The newly identified cause — deficiency in Schwann cells — could occur in individuals who have already had noise exposure-driven hidden hearing loss as well. “Both forms of hidden hearing loss, noise exposure and loss of myelin, can occur in the same individual for an additive effect,” Corfas says.

Previously, Corfas’ group succeeded in regenerating synapses in mice with hidden hearing loss, providing a path to explore for potential treatment.

While continuing this work, Corfas started to investigate other cells in the ear, which led to uncovering the new mechanism.

There are no current treatments for hidden hearing loss. But as understanding of the condition improves, the goal is for the research to lead to the development of drugs to treat it.

“Our findings should influence the way hidden hearing loss is diagnosed and drive the future of clinical trials searching for a treatment,” Corfas says. “The first step is to know whether a person’s hidden hearing loss is due to synapse loss or myelin/heminode damage.”

Gabriel Corfas, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
Director, Kresge Hearing Research Institute

2017 RESEARCH AWARDS

Below is a list of grants awarded to faculty in our department for the 2017 calendar year to date:

JANUARY

University of Michigan Endoscopic Sinus and Skull Base Dissection Course 2017

PI: Mark Zacharek, M.D.
Sponsor: Stryker Instruments
Dates: 01/01/2017-04/30/2017

MARCH

Investigating the Mechanisms of Resistance to EGFR-Targeted Therapy in Head and Neck Squamous Cell Carcinoma

PI: Megan Ludwig
Sponsor: NIH F31 CA206341
Dates: 02/01/2017-01/31/2019

APRIL

Cellular and Synaptic Basis of Binaural Gain Control Through the Commissure of the Inferior Colliculus

PI: Michael Roberts, Ph.D.
Sponsor: Hearing Health Foundation Emerging Research Grant
Dates: 07/01/2017-06/30/2018

Patient and Provider Perspectives on Personalized Head & Neck Cancer Care

PI: Andrew Shuman, M.D.
Sponsor: AHNS/AAO-HNSF Young Investigator Combined Award
Dates: 07/1/2017-06/30/2019
Remembering Former KHRI Director, Josef M. Miller

Joe's research spanned many aspects of auditory neuroscience, from studying the effects of anesthetics on the representation of acoustic information in the auditory cortex to cochlear prostheses; from investigating how blood flows in the inner ear to develop strategies to prevent noise induced deafness, to promote regrowth of the auditory nerve and the use of stem cells to rebuild and replace the sensorineural epithelium. He published over 250 peer-reviewed articles, authored 50 book chapters, and edited two books. He led major research teams funded by a National Institutes of Health Program Project and established innovative training programs for graduate students and medical residents.

From early on in his career, he made his students and post-docs feel welcome, always finding common ground for new research projects. Many early research projects were conceived while sailing his boat, which he could see from his office window in Seattle. Joe devoted considerable energy and talent toward establishing collaborations in the U.S. and internationally, and developed many productive research projects with MD and PhD scientists in the U.S. and abroad. His established especially strong ties with the Karolinska institute, where he was appointed Foreign Adjunct Professor.

Joe's contributions went beyond the science. He played a key role in the formation of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology, served on the planning committees for the early meetings and was president of the association in 1983. Maybe even more importantly, he contributed to the writing of the legislation that led to the creation of the NIDCD, a step that brought necessary support for research in hearing, balance and communication. For his contributions, Dr. Miller received numerous honors, including honorary M.D. degrees from the University of Gotteborg in Sweden (1987) and the University of Turku in Finland (1995). He earned the University of Michigan Regents’ Award for Distinguished Public Service (1993), Presidential Citation from the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (1997), and Gold Medal Honor Award from the Prosper Meniere Society (2001).

Joe had a wide range of interests beyond science, an openness to new experiences, and an appreciation for the finer things in life. He loved to create a delicious meal, pour a special wine, and create a convivial atmosphere at his table. He liked to share stories about his special experiences, such as jumping from a Finnish sauna into the snow, and he filled his home with beautiful art and design. He had a ready smile and a warmth that touched many. Most of all, he enjoyed the last few years playing with his three granddaughters. He touched so many lives in so many ways that his legacy for honesty, integrity and friendship will be felt for years to come.

Josef is survived by his wife, Cheryl, his children Richard Miller, Deborah Ryan and Daniel Miller, his brother Robert Miller, and his grandchildren, Ariel Ryan, Ava Miller and Mia Miller.

2017 RESEARCH AWARDS CONT'D

May
Clinical Evaluation of the Cochlear Nucleus® CI532 Cochlear Implant in Adults
Pt: Teresa Zwolan, Ph.D.
Sponsor: Cochlear Corporation
Dates: 04/25/2017-04/06/2020

CEST-MRI Imaging in Prevention of Ototoxicity By a Disease Therapy
Pt: R. Keith Duncan, Ph.D.
Sponsor: MiCHR
Dates: 06/01/2017-05/31/2018

June
Advanced Research Training in Otolaryngology
Pt: Gabriel Corfas, Ph.D.
Sponsor: NIH
Dates: 07/01/2017-06/30/2022

Shaping Next Generation Aminoglycoside Antibiotics for Treatment of Multidrug-Resistant Diseases
Pt: Jochen Schacht, Ph.D.
Sponsor: Wayne State University / NIH R01 AI 123352
Dates: 04/01/2017-03/31/2020

Retrospective Assessment of Juvenile Onset Recurrent Respiratory Pappillomatosis
Pt: Marc Thorne, M.D.
Sponsor: Eastern Virginia Medical School/NIH
Dates: 09/30/2016-09/29/2018

Monitoring Juvenile Onset Recurrent Respiratory Pappillomatosis (JORRP)
Pt: Marc Thorne, M.D.
Sponsor: Eastern Virginia Medical School/NIH
Dates: 09/30/2016-09/29/2021
**Lauren A. Bohm, M.D.**

Assistant Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, University of Michigan Medical School

Dr. Lauren Bohm joined our department in 2016. She’s no stranger to the University of Michigan, having completed her medical school training here in 2010. Following medical school, Dr. Bohm completed her residency at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine, with a focus in Otorhinolaryngology, and a fellowship in pediatric otolaryngology at Children’s Hospital and Clinics of Minnesota. Dr. Bohm’s research is interested in the outcomes of velopharyngeal insufficiency, airway management, and craniofacial malformations.

**Clinical Interests:**
- Pediatric airway
- Cleft lip and palate
- Hearing loss
- Hemangiomas
- Lymphatic malformations
- Mandibular distraction
- Sinonasal disease
- Speech disorders, swallowing disorders
- Thyroid disease

**Research Interests:**
- Outcomes research in velopharyngeal insufficiency
- Airway management
- Craniofacial malformations

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**Steven B. Chinn, M.D., MPH**

Assistant Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, University of Michigan Medical School

Dr. Steven Chinn joined the faculty at the University of Michigan as a member of the Head and Neck Oncology Division in 2016. He received his medical degree from the Keck School of Medicine, his post-graduate surgical training in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Michigan in 2014, and a two-year dual fellowship in Head and Neck Surgical Oncology and Microvascular Reconstructive Surgery at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. His clinical expertise is in the treatment of all types of head and neck cancers, including minimally invasive robotic surgery and complex reconstructive surgery to restore form and function after cancer treatment.

**Clinical Interests:**
- Transoral robotic surgery (TORS)
- Microvascular free tissue transfer
- Salivary gland tumors
- Cranial base surgery
- Oral cavity cancer surgery

**Research Interests:**
- Survival and functional outcomes for head and neck patients
- Reconstruction of head and neck
- Genomics and expression profiles of head and neck cancer
- Molecular mechanisms of metastatic spread
- Molecular epidemiology of head and neck cancer
- Cancer stem cells of the head and neck
- Targeted therapies and clinical trials

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**Karen A. Cooper, M.D.**

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, University of Michigan Medical School

Dr. Karen Cooper graduated from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, and joins our department from the University of Wisconsin, where she completed her otolaryngology-head and neck surgery residency in 2002 and assumed a faculty position thereafter. She’s a diplomat of the American Board of Otolaryngology, a member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, and past president of the Wisconsin Society of Otolaryngology. Dr. Cooper practices the entire scope of general otolaryngology, providing medical and surgical ear, nose and throat care to children and adults.

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**Aaron L. Thatcher, M.D.**

Assistant Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, University of Michigan Medical School

Dr. Aaron Thatcher joins our faculty after completing a fellowship in pediatric otolaryngology at the University of Michigan in 2017. He completed his medical degree at the Ohio State University College of Medicine in 2011, followed by residency in the U-M department of otolaryngology in 2016. Dr. Thatcher participates in multidisciplinary teams at the University of Michigan, including the Pediatric Tumor Board, Head and Neck Cancer Tumor Board, Melanoma Tumor Board, and the Vascular Anomalies Board. He is passionate about providing the best care to children with ENT disorders.

**Clinical Interests:**
- Head and neck masses, malignancies, and melanomas
- Thyroid and airway surgery
- Recurrent respiratory papillomatosis
- Voice disorders and vocal cord paralysis
- Skull base lesions
- Tympanostomy tubes
- Pediatric sleep apnea

**Research Interests:**
- Ultrasound innovation and education
- Recurrent respiratory papillomatosis
- Clinical quality improvement for neck masses
- Pediatric airway safety
- Translational research in pediatric head and neck malignancies
HHT is a rare genetic disorder characterized by the presence of multiple telangiectases and arteriovenous malformations (AVMs) lacking intervening capillaries, resulting in direct connections between arteries and veins. These direct connections can be fragile and rupture, causing bleeding. Individuals with HHT may have telangiectases in the nose and on the face, hands and mouth. They may also have AVMs in the lungs, gastrointestinal tract, liver and brain.

Ninety-five percent of HHT patients have frequent epistaxis. Although many patients can manage their epistaxis with humidification and nasal lubricants, others experience more severe epistaxis, requiring regular medical attention. Until recently, treatment for telangiectases in the nose has been limited to cautery, laser ablation, septal dermoplasty and nasal closure The two most widely used treatments, cautery and laser ablation, are short term solutions, reducing or preventing epistaxis for just three to 18 months, requiring repeated interventions and trips to the operating room. This makes it difficult for patients to enjoy normal professional and social lives. To provide better care for our patients, Melissa A. Pynnonen, M.D., Jeffrey E. Terrell, M.D., and Mark A. Zacharek, M.D., FACS, from our rhinology and skull base division offer novel treatment methods with improved results.

Visit http://bit.do/UMHHT, or call 734-936-6510 to learn more.
MEET OUR CLINICAL FACULTY

Our Rhinology and Skull Base division is made up of six clinical faculty who specialize in the treatment of diseases and disorders of the nose, paranasal sinuses and skull base tumors. They continually exhibit exemplary patient care and clinical training, and dedicated, innovative research that continues to change the lives of our patients.

**Erin L. McKean, M.D., MBA:** Associate Professor, Departments of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and Neuroscience; Chief, Division of Rhinology and Skull Base

**Clinical Interests:** minimally invasive skull base surgery, benign and malignant skull base tumors, CSF leaks, sinus cancers, head and neck cancer

**Research Interests:** outcomes of open and minimally invasive skull base surgeries, factors predicting blood loss in pituitary surgery, long-term effects of head and neck radiation on pituitary function

**Melissa A. Pynnonen, M.D.:** Associate Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

**Clinical Interests:** diseases of the sinuses; cranial base disorders, including acute and chronic sinusitis; complications of sinusitis, including involvement of the eye or brain; polyposis; mucoceles; spinal fluid leaks; tumors involving the nasal cavity and sinuses

**Research Interests:** understanding the determinants and consequences of medical uncertainty in sinusitis care

**Lawrence J. Marentette, M.D.:** Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

**Clinical Interests:** head and neck surgery, craniofacial surgery, cranial base disorders, skull base tumors, facial trauma and facial plastic surgery.

**Research Interests:** skull base tumor biology

**Jeffrey Terrell, M.D.:** Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Associate Chief Medical Information Officer

**Clinical Interests:** disorders of the internal nose and of the sinuses, including sinusitis, chronic sinusitis, complications of sinusitis, sinus surgery, nasal polyps, fungal sinusitis, CSF leaks, mucoceles, tumors of the nose and sinuses, hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia, and Wegeners disease

**Research Interests:** clinical studies of medical and surgical interventions for sinusitis, clinical informatics

**Scott A. McLean, M.D., Ph.D., FACS:** Assistant Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

**Clinical Interests:** head and neck cancer surgery, head and neck skin cancer, facial plastic and reconstructive surgery, salivary gland tumors, sentinel lymph node biopsy, cranial base surgery

**Research Interests:** clinical outcomes in skin cancer treatment. Circulating tumor cell (CTC) detection and analysis.

**Mark A. Zacharek, M.D.:** Associate Professor, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

**Clinical Interests:** chronic sinusitis, allergic rhinitis and allergy immunotherapy, nasal polyps and nasal masses, endoscopic sinus, skull base surgery

**Research Interests:** mechanisms of chronic rhinosinusitis, Nitric Oxide (NO) and chronic rhinosinusitis, resident education, surgical simulation, 3D volumetric imaging of the sinus, skull base
Congratulations Class of 2017!

RESIDENTS

Robert J. Morrison, M.D.,
will begin a Laryngology fellowship at Vanderbilt University.

Andrew J. Rosko, M.D.,
will continue his education at the University of Michigan, pursuing a Head and Neck Oncology fellowship.

Kyle K. VanKoevering, M.D.,
will begin a Skull Base Surgery fellowship at Ohio State University.

Aileen P. Wertz, M.D.,
will begin a Pediatric Otolaryngology fellowship at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

FELLOWS

Tiffany A. Glazer, M.D.,
completed our Head and Neck Oncology Surgery fellowship. She joins the University of Wisconsin as an assistant professor of head and neck oncology.

Yuna C. Larrabee, M.D.,
completed our Facial Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery fellowship. She is practicing at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Associates.

Aaron L. Thatcher, M.D.,
completed our Pediatric Otolaryngology fellowship. He continues on as an assistant professor of pediatric otolaryngology at the University of Michigan.

Brittny N. Tillman, M.D.,
completed our Head and Neck Oncology Surgery fellowship. She is practicing at UT-Southwestern Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery.

Skull Base Dissection Course

Residents from various otolaryngology-head and neck surgery programs enjoyed our Skull Base Dissection Course, which took place earlier this year. Attendees participated in didactic lectures, cadaveric dissection and live surgery under the guidance of U-M faculty and guest lecturers.

We were joined by guest lecturer Amber Luong, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor and director of research at the University of Texas Southwestern, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

The program was also attended by visiting Ghanaian physicians as part of the ongoing education collaboration with Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, or KATH, in Kumasi.
2017-2018 INTERNS

Susan E. Ellsperman, M.D., completed her undergraduate education at the University of Southern Indiana, where she played on the women’s soccer team. After graduating, she continued her education at Indiana University School of Medicine. There, she was inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society, which recognizes students, residents, and faculty who are exemplars of compassionate patient care and who serve as role models, mentors, and leaders. She was also inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. When Dr. Ellsperman is not working, she enjoys yoga, pilates, running, cooking, and spending time with friends and family.

Janice L. Farlow, M.D., Ph.D., completed her undergraduate and medical school education at Indiana University and Indiana University School of Medicine respectively. There she received a Ph.D. in Medical and Molecular Genetics, identifying genetic variants associated with complex neurological disease using high-throughput sequencing, supported by a Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute Pre-Doctoral Training Grant and the Wells Graduate Fellowship. She also served on the Board of Trustees for Indiana University and the Board of Directors for the Association of American Medical Colleges, led the Indiana University Student Outreach Clinic and the Indiana University Medical Student Council. She was inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society, and received awards from the United States Public Health Service, American Medical Association, and Indiana University. When Dr. Farlow isn’t working, she is kept busy by her two-and-five-year-old daughters, and enjoys cooking large meals with friends and family.

Michael J. Sylvester, M.D., attended undergraduate school at Princeton University, before completing his medical degree at Rutgers - New Jersey Medical School. During his time at Rutgers, Dr. Sylvester was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, a professional medical organization that recognizes and advocates for excellence in scholarship and the highest ideals in the profession of medicine. He also published manuscripts in peer-reviewed Otolaryngology journals, and presented oral and poster presentations at national Otolaryngology meetings. He enjoyed giving back by mentoring and coaching medical students interested in Otolaryngology. When Dr. Sylvester is not working, he enjoys running, rock climbing, and skiing.

Johnny (Yanjun) Xie, M.D., completed his undergraduate and medical school education at Johns Hopkins University and Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, respectively. While at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Dr. Xie traveled to Nicaragua as part of a mission trip to screen and treat hearing loss. He was also involved in research that endeavored to find biomarkers for vestibular migraines. When Dr. Xie is not working, he enjoys traveling, outdoor activities like hiking and cave spelunking, painting and drawing, and trying out new recipes.

WELCOME 2017-2018 FELLOWS

- Andrew Joseph, M.D.
  Facial Plastics Surgery
  Residency: Johns Hopkins

- Elizabeth Knecht, M.D.
  Pediatric Otolaryngology
  Residency: Loma Linda University

- Andrew Rosko, M.D.
  Head and Neck Oncology Surgery
  Residency: University of Michigan

- Jayne Stevens, M.D.
  Head and Neck Oncology Surgery
  Residency: San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium

2017 Simulation Bootcamp

The Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck surgery hosts an annual simulation course, during which instructors from around the Midwest help junior residents develop essential skills.

With emphasis on experience and practice rather than lectures and formal didactics, learners leave with increased comfort and confidence as they embark on their early careers.

The 2017 Course took place on Saturday, July 22 at the University of Michigan Clinical Simulation Center. More than 30 residents from institutions like Michigan State University, The University of Chicago, and many others participated in this amazing educational experience.

Save the Date!
2018 Simulation Bootcamp is Saturday, July 14

Check out this year’s photos here: http://bit.ly/2017ORL
**Victors Melanoma Research Team**

Mucosal melanoma is a rare form of melanoma, making up only about 1% of melanoma cases. Approximately 50% of mucosal melanomas begin in the head and neck region. Unlike most cases of skin melanoma, mucosal melanoma is not considered to be related to or affected by U.V. exposure, and there are no obvious identified risk factors. Lacking an identifiable culprit and given its rare occurrence, most cases of mucosal melanoma are quite advanced once identified, giving it a poor prognosis.

At Michigan, we believe the key to treating and curing all types of melanoma is to develop earlier detection methods and innovative approaches to treatment. Scott A. McLean, M.D., Ph.D., of our Division of Head and Neck Oncology is researching the role that circulating tumor cells have in the metastasis of melanoma. These circulating cells shed from a primary tumor and circulate in the bloodstream and can serve as seeds for subsequent growth of additional tumors in vital distant organs. By detecting these circulating cells and treating them, we believe we can improve patient outcomes and even cure melanoma.

In April 2015, Dr. McLean founded the Victors Melanoma Research Team to help raise funds for melanoma research here at the U-M Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

**Boston for Bridget**

Bridget Anne Moloney-Pelto was a loving, dynamic woman with a passion for adventure. In 2011, Dr. McLean diagnosed Bridget with mucosal sinonasal melanoma. Despite receiving a poor prognosis, Bridget embraced life and lived each day to its fullest until her death in November 2014. Her zest for life inspired many, including Dr. McLean. In memory of Bridget, Dr. McLean and members of the Victors Melanoma Research Team ran the Boston Marathon in Bridget’s memory while also raising more than $7,000 for melanoma research.

**Tailgate to Tackle Melanoma**

This fall, the Victors Melanoma Research Team will take their cause to the football stadium with a fundraising tailgate before and during the University of Michigan vs. Michigan State University football game on Oct. 7. Participants will enjoy great food as we raise funds for melanoma education and research, all while taking in the sights and sounds of a great U-M tailgate. The tailgate will take place at the Richard L. Postma Family Clubhouse, beginning four hours before game start time (formal announcement to follow when game time is announced).

**Inaugural Head and Neck Oncology Research Symposium**

The inaugural University of Michigan Head and Neck Oncology Research Symposium took place on Friday, May 12, at the Junge Family Champions Center inside the University of Michigan football stadium. The meeting was an opportunity for head and neck cancer specialists from around the state to review the latest advances in personalized medicine for head and neck cancer, and to engage in dialogue on improving multi-specialty collaboration in the treatment of head and neck cancer.

Seventy-six registrants, including researchers and referring physicians, attended the symposium. Speakers included Mark E.P. Prince, M.D., Carol R. Bradford, M.D., and Scott A. McLean, M.D., as well as numerous other University faculty.

Attendees enjoyed a tour of the field and locker room at the conclusion of the conference. Check out the album from the symposium here: http://bit.ly/2017HNResearch
A Sound Partnership

by Allison Wilson, with additional reporting by William Foreman

In Ghana, a country of 26 million people, there are only about 20 ear, nose and throat, or ENT, physicians practicing at any one time. Limited access to ENT care in the West African country has led to high rates of chronic ear conditions that, when left untreated, can cause permanent hearing loss and life-threatening illness.

The University of Michigan Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery has been collaborating with physicians in Ghana to develop more robust ENT education and facilities there — particularly for otology, or diseases of the ear. The department recently established a medical education partnership with the ENT residency program at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, or KATH, in Kumasi.

U-M faculty began visiting KATH in 2015, initially to assess patient needs and supply the hospital with medical equipment for otology care and training. During each trip, the team leads ENT courses and surgery simulations for KATH attendings and residents, and tends to its patients in the clinic and operating room.

Michigan photographer Roger Hart accompanied the department on one of their first trips to KATH, capturing the early stages of a collaboration committed to impacting long-term change.

U-M’s ENT partnership with KATH is modeled after OB-GYN training programs U-M helped establish in Ghana 30 years ago. Timothy R.B. Johnson, M.D. (Residency 1979), professor and chair of U-M’s Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, forged that original partnership, and saw potential for similar success at KATH. “Our training partnerships have developed leaders who have gone on to be important change agents improving care in Ghana,” he says.

Greg Basura, M.D. (Fellowship 2012), assistant professor of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery and leader of the partnership’s otology specialty, says the medical education partnership has emphasized training KATH’s two main ENT attendings, Rita Larsen-Reindorf, M.D., and Issahalq Duah Mohammed, M.D. “The impetus is on them to train the next generation of physicians,” he says.

Larsen-Reindorf and Duah attend lectures about skull-based anatomy, ear anatomy and pathology, and learn how to screen patients for ear drum perforations and chronic infection. The curriculum is designed to prepare them for KATH’s most pressing otology needs: caring for severe middle ear infections and cholesteatoma — a bone-eroding skin growth in the middle ear.

The department has traveled to KATH a total of four times, with another trip planned for March 2017. Basura says the two attendings are showing great skill and are beginning to better understand operating room processes. “They’re improving on their diagnoses, and their scope of practice is expanding.”

Basura, Mark Prince, M.D., interim chair of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery, and Jeff Moyer, M.D. (Residency 2003), associate professor of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery, set up a temporal bone simulation lab to train ENT specialists how to drill through bone at the cranial base during ear surgery. Basura, who gave the first ever temporal bone drilling course in Ghana, knows this type of lab is essential.

“This is a long-term medical educational partnership,” he says. “We’re helping them build the foundation for epidemiological research. If I can look back on this in 30 years and say ‘Wow, look at what they’re doing. This training is interwoven into their residency. These docs can better manage the disease and serve the people of their country,’ that’s really what it’s all about.”

Be a Victor for Michigan

Philanthropy is a vital resource that allows the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery to do more teaching and learning and to transfer ground-breaking research into life-saving clinical applications. We rely on private support to help us do this vital work. If you would like to make a gift online or learn about the many opportunities for giving, please visit www.med.umich.edu/oto/giving/.

You may also contact:

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Thank you for your confidence in us and for supporting our work. There is no more gratifying gift than one that improves the health and health care of our patients.
A Career Come Full Circle by Jocelyn Reinert

Although it sometimes seems like every doctor you meet comes from a long line of medical professionals, that’s not the case with Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery alum John M. DelGaudio, M.D., Professor at Emory Medicine’s Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. However, like many in the medical field, Dr. DelGaudio exhibited a natural aptitude for science and medicine at an early age.

“There was no particular influence [to pursue a career in medicine], other than my interest in science and anatomy,” said Dr. DelGaudio. “No one in my family had ever been in any medical or scientific field.”

From this early interest arose a rewarding and successful career in rhinology and skull base surgery.

Dr. DelGaudio graduated at the top of his class from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, where he was encouraged by an intern to look into Otolaryngology as a specialty. At the time, Jefferson Medical College didn’t have requirements to rotate on Otolaryngology, but did offer it as part of a neurosciences block. Dr. DelGaudio took a chance on the specialty, and his decision to stick with Otolaryngology was made quickly after.

“I was amazed by the intricate anatomy. On my first day I scrubbed on a parotidectomy and a neck dissection and I knew that I wanted to pursue Otolaryngology as a career,” said DelGaudio.

Jefferson Medical College’s influence on Dr. DelGaudio’s career wasn’t finished, though. After attending lectures by Jefferson alumni Joe Spiegal, M.D. and Robert Sataloff, M.D., FACS, his decision was reinforced. Discovering that Drs. Spiegal and Sataloff had completed residency at the University of Michigan Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery also meant the University of Michigan was at the top of his list for residency programs. After a visit to campus, his decision was confirmed.

Residency at the University of Michigan gave Dr. DelGaudio many opportunities, including formative training and research opportunities designed to help students exceed the highest standards of patient care and research.

“Because I was chosen for an additional year of research during residency, I began my residency with one group of residents but finished with another. This allowed me to create strong bonds in both years,” said DelGaudio.

Although Dr. DelGaudio juggled his residency education with a growing family, the additional challenges made his successes and free time all the more enjoyable, and he graduated from residency in 1995, with a focus on head and neck surgery, before joining the faculty of the Department of Otolaryngology at Emory University in Atlanta, GA.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. DelGaudio’s career took an unexpected turn. Although his primary focus through school was head and neck surgery, the diagnosis of an incurable tumor to a senior faculty member at Emory University, Gerald S. Gussack, M.D., tasked Dr. DelGaudio with the takeover of Gussack’s practice. Dr. DelGaudio’s career track was shifted to accommodate Gussack’s additional focus on laryngology, and rhinology and sinus surgery — a division where he would eventually make a name for himself in the academic world.

“Being thrown into the fire as the primary rhinologist in an academic institution, having not performed a fellowship in rhinology, I had to learn on the job. I learned how to perform advanced sinus surgery and branched out to skull base and orbital surgery. My lack of fellowship training has not hindered me, and has resulted in my having a different outlook and approach to many problems than other rhinologists,” said DelGaudio.

A shifting career focus that resulted in a successful practice seems to have come full circle, too, as Dr. DelGaudio was honored as the first ever Gerald S. Gussack Endowed Professor of Otolaryngology.

“Personally, this is an especially important recognition, since it was the sudden illness of Dr. Gussack that resulted in my career changing direction and leading me to a career in rhinology and skull base surgery,” said DelGaudio.

Additionally, Dr. DelGaudio serves as the President of the American Rhinologic Society (2016-2017), a role he calls the greatest honor of his career.

Dr. DelGaudio acknowledges the lasting impact of his University of Michigan education on his career, both academically and clinically. His time here exposed him to renowned Otolaryngologists from whom he has learned, and who shaped his interests in reflux disease — an area of research that has resulted in many publications, culminating in his Triologic thesis on the relationship of reflux to chronic rhinosinusitis.

“My training at U of M has instilled in me the basic knowledge and skills that I needed to take on whatever I encountered in practice. No one learns or sees everything in residency, but what I learned in residency has given me the foundation that I needed to be successful in a tertiary care practice. The quality of training that I received also instilled in me the confidence to go beyond my training and push my boundaries to continue to grow my skill set,” said DelGaudio.

Alumni Profiles

We are incredibly proud to train the next generation of leaders in the field of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery, and we are encouraged by the innumerable accomplishments of our alumni. Check out our alumni profiles here: http://bit.ly/OTOAlumni and contact Amy Lenz (lenzam@med.umich.edu) if you wish to be featured.
ALUMNI UPDATES

William R. Carroll, M.D., has been named the chair of the Department of Otolaryngology in the UAB School of Medicine. Prior to joining the UAB faculty as an associate professor of surgery, Carroll served as an assistant professor of surgery at the University of Michigan Hospitals and as a section chief of otolaryngology at the VA Hospital in Ann Arbor.

Kevin Fung, M.D., a former Head and Neck Surgery fellow here at the University of Michigan has been appointed as the Chair/Chief of the Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery at the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, Western University and its teaching hospitals, London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph’s HealthCare London, effective July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2022.

Brian Nussenbaum, M.D. has been selected as the new executive director of the American Board of Otolaryngology (ABOTO), and will succeed Dr. Robert Miller when he retires at the end of 2017. Dr. Nussenbaum completed his fellowship in head and neck oncology and microvascular reconstructive surgery at the University of Michigan.

Steven J. Wang, M.D., a former U-M Head and Neck Oncology and Microvascular Reconstructive Surgery fellow, has been appointed chair of the Department of Otolaryngology at the University of Arizona College of Medicine. He has served in the interim role since June of 2016.

P. Daniel Ward, M.D., M.S., FACS, a former U-M Head and Neck Oncology resident and Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery fellow, was named to the 2016 RealSelf 500 list. The RealSelf 500 Award is presented to 500 doctors worldwide and is a prestigious honor that recognizes the top plastic surgery influencers on RealSelf—the most trusted online source for information about plastic surgery and cosmetic treatments.

EVENTS

2017
AAO-HNSF Annual Meeting and OTO Expo
Sep. 10-13, Chicago, IL
Lawrence-Hawkins Symposium
Oct. 4, Ann Arbor, MI
Tailgate to Tackle Melanoma
Oct. 7, Ann Arbor, MI

2018
Triological Combined Sections Meeting
Jan. 18-20, Scottsdale, AZ
Sinus and Skull Base Dissection Course
Jan. TBD, Ann Arbor, MI
North American Skull Base Society Meeting
Feb. 16-18, Coronado, CA
2018 COSM Spring Meeting
April 18-22, National Harbor, MD
Charles J. Krause, M.D. Lectureship and Residency/Fellowship Graduation
June 22, Ann Arbor, MI
Simulation Bootcamp
July 14, Ann Arbor, MI

Michigan Work Society Meeting
Oct. 4-6, Ann Arbor, MI

Follow us on social media to see event pictures, videos, and stay updated on happenings in the department!

Save the Date: 2018 Michigan Work Society Meeting Oct. 4-6

Mark your calendars for the 2018 Michigan Work Society Meeting, scheduled for October 4-6, 2018. In response to overwhelmingly positive feedback following our last MWS Meeting, the 2018 Academic Meeting and Gala Dinner will once again take place at the Jack Roth Stadium Club. Attendees will enjoy access to the football field and locker rooms. This is an event you don’t want to miss! More information to follow.

Check out the full album of photos from our 2016 Michigan Work Society meeting! Either scan the QR code to the right or use the following short link to view the full album: http://bit.ly/2017HNResearch