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# Research Update

Institute for Clinical and Epidemiological Research

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## Hayden Bosworth Appointed Associate Director

### From the Director ...

Hayden has been an important and vital member of our unit since the day he started. He is the epitome of a collaborative researcher while maintaining high standards and productivity in his own research. He has consistently helped junior and senior investigators improve their research designs. He is a frequently preferred mentor for students and has served as an excellent leader of the post-doctoral training program in the unit for the last three years. Despite all his mentoring and collaboration, Hayden has stayed focused on his science. In three short years he has advanced from Research Assistant Professor to Research Associate Professor, having published over 30 articles in that time period.

I am very excited about working with Hayden as we enter a new phase in the Center. We will be challenged with recruiting new faculty in economics, further defining our data management and analysis cores, as well as focusing on a competitive renewal in the next year. Hayden will be instrumental in providing further vision and assistance to our excellent faculty and staff.

*Eugene Z. Oddone, M.D., M.H.S.*

Hayden Bosworth, Ph.D., in May, was named Associate Director of the Center for Health Services Research in Primary Care, replacing Ronnie D. Horner, Ph.D., who left the position in January. The duties of the associate director are to assist the director in setting strategic directions of research goals, and to act for the director in his or her absence.

Dr. Bosworth began his career with Durham's HSR&D as a senior health scientist in 1997 after receiving a B.A. from Brandeis University and an M.S. and Ph.D. in psychology from Pennsylvania State University. Since then he's become an associate research professor at Duke University Department of Medicine, an assistant research professor in Duke's Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Department, a senior fellow, Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development, and the HSR&D director for the Pre- and Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program.

"Dr. Horner was instrumental in my development when I first came here as a junior faculty member just finishing my post-doctoral fellowship at Duke University," says Dr. Bosworth. "Through his and Dr. Gene Oddone's guidance and others, I've been able to climb quickly."

Though in the associate director position only a short time, Dr. Bosworth has a clear vision of what he would like to accomplish. "My main responsibilities will be to encourage and foster young investigators to pursue research projects, particularly getting funding for first projects, and applying for career awards," says Dr. Bosworth, "as well as work with more senior researchers after they've completed their career awards. I'll also facilitate the movement of post-doctoral and post-medical fellows into VA faculty positions. I want to focus on bringing in investigators within the VA who would be interested in working with us doing significant health services research. Research development is going to be key and I'll keep us on track writing grants and acquiring funding."

Like Dr. Horner, Dr. Bosworth sees a big part of his job as encouraging and helping junior faculty getting funded, getting published, and assuring that they achieve at a "higher level." "Dr. Horner started the first generation of Durham HSR&D investigators and I want to start the second generation going, getting them up to speed and to keep

*Continued on Page 2*

*HSR&D Center of Excellence in Primary Care • Epidemiologic Research and Information Center  
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them funded,” says Dr. Bosworth. “There’s nothing more satisfying than to see people learn to do research and then become successful researchers through grant funding and publications on their own. It’s exciting to watch that process and I would like to see us continue growing and bringing in new faculty and junior faculty and letting them develop.”

Dr. Bosworth sees a good future ahead for the Durham HSR&D. “I think we have a very good interdisciplinary group with a lot of strengths. The direction we’re going in is exciting and there’s going to be some big changes. It’s satisfying to be involved and be a part of those changes and I’d like us to continue on this path.”

### John Whited Begins Telemedicine Studies

Starting in May, John Whited, M.D., began the first of two Department of Defense (DoD) - funded telemedicine studies. The one-year study is titled “A Modeled Economic Analysis of the Joslin Vision Network.” The Joslin Vision Network is a teleophthalmology system that is used to screen for diabetic retinopathy. Developed at the Joslin Diabetes Center, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School, this network includes a non-mydratic (undilated pupil) digital imaging system, a training program, a centralized image reading center, and a consultation service.

“This system has been deployed in the DoD, the VA, and the Indian Health Service and used in over 12,000 consultations,” says Dr. Whited. “We will be performing a modeled economic analysis of the Joslin Vision Network for each of these government agencies using existing data, literature-based information, and economic data to produce costs and modeled cost-effectiveness ratios for this system, so all three agencies will have an agency-specific outcome.”

The second and larger study, a two-year project that begins in September 2002, is titled “A Teledermatology Outcomes Study: A Prospective Randomized Evaluation.” This will be a joint venture between DoD and Durham HSR&D. Though the enrollment and subsequent teledermatology consultations will occur at Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, Dr. Whited and his research team will provide the study design, data analysis, and statistical support.

Dr. Whited says the study will be a significant milestone in teledermatology research. “This project will be the first outcomes study in teledermatology that assesses response to treatment. It is important because clinical outcomes are a missing feature, not only of teledermatology, but also of telemedicine research in general. The lack of measured clinical outcomes performed via randomized clinical trials is, in my opinion, one of the major reasons that telemedicine implementation is much less ubiquitous than many people believed it would be at this time. Third-party payers are reluctant, with some justification, to pay for consultation methods that have little or no supporting data that they are at least comparable to traditional care in terms of patient outcomes.”

The study will assess whether telemedicine is at least comparable to traditional face-to-face clinic-based consultations. “I think teledermatology’s worth will be shown

if it is a comparable alternative to traditional care,” says Dr. Whited. “I really don’t know what to expect in terms of clinical outcomes and that is one of the reasons that this study is so exciting to me. Research that others and I have done indicates that teledermatology results in comparable diagnostic outcomes compared to clinic-based evaluations. Therefore, you might predict that would translate into comparable downstream patient outcomes, but we really don’t know. I think the DoD, in choosing to fund this study, has shown great insight into the importance of answering this question.”

The outcomes of this study will have a significant benefit for VA medical services as well. “Although the study will involve enrollment of a DoD patient population,” says Dr. Whited, “much of the results should be directly applicable to the VA healthcare system. There is also the indirect but very important benefit of using the complementary features of these government agencies to answer health care questions that are important to both. It’s probably safe to say that DoD is the largest user and developer of telemedicine services in the world and, as we know, VA is a leader in health services research. The synergistic results I would expect to come from DoD-VA research collaborations can benefit health policy decision-making for both the DoD and the VA.”

### ICER Welcomes New Faculty

Health Services Research would like to welcome two new faculty members, Kelli Dominick, Ph.D., and Deborah Fisher, M.D., as new members of our research faculty.

Kelli Dominick, Ph.D., who started with HSR&D in July 2001 as an Office of Academic Affiliations-funded post-doctoral fellow, became a member of the HSR&D faculty on May 20th. During her fellowship, Dr. Dominick examined VA medical and pharmaceutical data to determine patterns of medical care for osteoarthritis patients. She and Dr. Hayden Bosworth are currently working on a patient survey, “Understanding Racial Variations in the Pharmacological Treatment of Osteoarthritis.”

“We’ve identified some racial variations in care,” says Dr. Dominick, “and we’re trying to get at some of the underlying reasons for these variations. Overall, we’re doing a patient survey study that assesses disease severity, patient preferences and physician practices, and to determine whether these components are linked to race, primarily in pharmacological treatment of osteoarthritis.”

Now, as a faculty member, Dr. Dominick’s duties will expand. “My immediate focus will be the completion of the ALS in Gulf War veterans study, which fits well into my epidemiology interests. I will also be continuing to work on arthritis-related projects.” Dr. Dominick’s long-term research interest is to focus on osteoarthritis care and pharmaco-epidemiology.

Deborah A. Fisher, M.D., M.S., who began with HSR&D as an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality health services research fellow in the summer of 2000, came on board as a new faculty member this July 1. Dr. Fishers’



*Kelli Dominick, Ph.D.*

research area is gastroenterology. She has just completed a lengthy study on colorectal cancer and the access to health care as an outcome. Looking at what was associated with access to care in the VA, Dr. Fisher found that the most significant predictor was the patient's insurance status. "Even in the VA, which is generally thought of as an equal access system, insurance status of a patient is still an important predictor of access to care and health outcomes," said Dr. Fisher.



*Deborah A. Fisher,  
M.D., M.S.*

For the past two years of her fellowship her research focus was on gastrointestinal (GI) malignancies, particularly Barretts esophagus and esophageal cancer, as well as colorectal cancer screening and surveillance programs. Dr. Fisher expects, however, that her research focus will shift more towards colorectal cancer screening and surveillance. "My focus on colorectal cancer screening and surveillance will be looking to improve screening rates at the primary care level and also looking at outcomes from the screening itself from a more GI focus."

### Will Yancy Wins Young Investigator Award

William S. Yancy, Jr., M.D., won the North American Association for the Study of Obesity Ethan Sims Young Investigator Award for his paper, "Effects of a Very-Low-Carbohydrate Diet Program Compared With a Low-Fat, Low-Cholesterol, Reduced-Caloric Diet."\* Dr. Yancy presented the paper in February at the first annual meeting of Nutrition Week 2002 in San Diego.

Dr. Yancy, whose research focus is obesity and weight loss, noted that low-carbohydrate diets remain popular despite little scientific evidence to show their effectiveness. As a result, he set out to determine the six-month effects of a directed very-low-carbohydrate diet that included exercise recommendations, nutritional supplements, group instruction, and feedback compared to a low-fat, low-cholesterol, reduced-calorie diet, with exercise and group meetings. His interim analyses found that the lower carbohydrate diet led to greater weight loss, about 30 pounds or 14% of their original body weight, greater loss of fat mass, and similarly favorable serum lipid changes. The low-fat diet group lost about 20 pounds or 9% of their original body weight. The LDL cholesterol, or bad cholesterol, levels for both groups did not change significantly. Systolic blood pressure, however, in both groups, went down about eight points. The study concluded that further research into very-low-carbohydrate diets is needed.

\*Yancy WS, et al. "Effects of a Very-Low-Carbohydrate Diet Program Compared With a Low-Fat, Low-Cholesterol, Reduced-Caloric Diet" *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2002; 72(2S):343S.

### Deborah Fisher Receives Abstract of Year Award

Deborah Fisher, M.D., an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality health services research fellow, received the Gastroenterology Research Group/American Gastroenterology Association Abstract of the Year Award for

her abstract, "Access to Care: Colorectal Cancer."\* The award was presented during the 2002 GRG/AGA Symposium in May. Dr. Fisher noted that the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States is colorectal cancer (CRC), with access to care being a modifiable risk factor affecting its outcome.

The purpose for her study "was to determine if race, education, and insurance status were associated with [healthcare] access to a population of veterans diagnosed with CRC." The study concluded that, in the VA health care system, "race and income were not significantly associated with decreased access to care, although lack of insurance was still independently associated. The significant association of VA disability status with access to care is expected as a disability rating confers increased eligibility for VA healthcare." The study states that "those without insurance are vulnerable populations within the VA system. Because access to care may be associated with access to screening, these findings have implications for CRC screening programs."

As a follow-up, Dr. Fisher, whose research focus is on CRC screening and surveillance, plans to "examine associations between access to care, history of screening, and stage at presentation."

\*Fisher DA, Martin C, Galenko J, Sandler RS, Provenzale D. "Access to Care: Colorectal Cancer" *Gastroenterology* 2002, April; 122(4)(Suppl): A-462.

### Sandra Zinn Begins Career Development Award

Sandra Zinn, Ph.D., having just completed a two-year post-doctoral research fellowship, began a three-year Research Career Development Award on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

During the past two years of her post-doctoral fellowship, Dr. Zinn, whose area is neuropsychology, has been working on two different tracks related to cognitive development. "For one of my projects, under the mentorship of Dr. Scott Swartzwelder [Ph.D.], I have been looking at the recovery of cognitive impairment in individuals with chronic alcohol abuse who have entered treatment and are trying to stay sober," says Dr. Zinn. "For the other track, working with Dr. Ronnie Horner [Ph.D.], I was looking at the effects of cognitive impairment on stroke outcomes."

She feels that her two-year fellowship was very fruitful and has given her an excellent foundation to go forward in her research. "I've learned a great deal about statistical techniques used in health research, what health services are all about, and why this matters. I've learned a lot about epidemiological principles and approaches to health problems as well as how to work with colleagues from a variety of disciplines," says Dr. Zinn. "I've also looked a lot at rehabilitation outcomes, something I did not imagine I would be doing, but I feel that is a very good fit for me."

Her research during her career development award will be a continuation of her research in cognitive impairment in stroke rehabilitation outcomes, with Dr. Swartzwelder as her mentor. "I'll be enrolling stroke patients from the Durham VA for this study, assessing their frontal lobe functions, and looking at their rehabilitation process and outcomes," says Dr. Zinn. "I'm also developing a pilot project with Dr. David Edelman and Dr. Helen Hoenig that will look at disability in diabetes and its relationship to cognitive impairment and

depression.”

“One of my long-term goals is to develop intervention techniques for people with cognitive impairment who are thought to be hopeless and not able to benefit from treatment. My present and upcoming involvement in rehabilitation outcomes really fits well with this goal.”

### New M.D. Fellows Arrive

The Center would like to welcome three new M.D. research fellows: Drs. Jamy Darone Ard, Saghar Susan Hedayati, and Lori Ann Orlando. Each year The Center supports physicians interested in the structure, process, and effects of healthcare services that can be used to improve the VA medical system through two-year medical fellowships.

#### Jamy Darone Ard, M.D.

Jamy Darone Ard, M.D., began his HSR&D-funded fellowship this July. His research interests are culturally appropriate behavior modification for African-Americans to promote weight reduction, increased physical activity, and improved dietary habits, as well as culturally appropriate studies of intervention therapies for hypertension, obesity, and diabetes.

“I want to focus on clinical research that deals with reducing health disparities in minorities in areas of cardiovascular health,” says Dr. Ard. “To use behavior modification for risk factor reduction as well as improve the techniques currently employed to help minorities lose weight and have healthier diets is one of my key objectives. Through my own research efforts and collaborations with other investigators, I want to design clinical trials and implement interventions that will attract and retain African-American participants. To achieve this, I want to develop the necessary skills to become an independent clinical investigator. The coursework and mentorship the HSR&D program provides will accelerate my progress towards this goal.”



Jamy D. Ard, M.D.

Dr. Ard received his B.S. in Biology from Morehouse College, where he was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society his junior year, and graduated Summa Cum Laude in 1993. He attended Duke University's School of Medicine, graduating in 1997. He did his residency in Internal Medicine at Duke University Medical Center where he was the chief resident for Ambulatory Care his final year. He was a fellow in clinical research for hypertension at DUMC as well.

In addition to clinical research, Dr. Ard is interested in medical education. “I enjoy teaching, and hope someday to have the opportunity to play a role in the education of medical students and residents,” says Dr. Ard.

Dr. Ard is the lead or co-author of a number of journal articles and is a member of the National Medical Association and an associate member of the American College of Physicians.

#### Saghar S. Hedayati, M.D.

Saghar S. Hedayati, M.D., joined The Center as an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHQR)-funded fellow this July. A recent Duke fellow in nephrology, Dr. Hedayati's research interests are outcomes research in dialysis and transplants, risk-stratification for future dialysis and transplant recipients, and to better define the predictors of morbidity and mortality in these populations.

“I am particularly interested in women's health in end-stage renal disease and the chronic kidney disease population,” says Dr. Hedayati. “I think the general health maintenance issues in this subpopulation of patients are not properly addressed - specifically cancer screening, hormone replacement therapy in early menopause, and osteoporosis. I'm also interested in depression in patients with chronic kidney disease who are nearing dialysis, whether uremia makes these patients more prone to depression, and whether initiation of dialysis partially reverses this process.”



Saghar S. Hedayati, M.D.

Dr. Hedayati received a B.S. in Biology from the University of Maryland at College Park, where she was elected to the Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society, in 1994. She graduated from George Washington University School of Medicine, with honors, in 1998. She completed her internship and residency in Internal Medicine at Duke University Medical Center in 2001 and completed a one-year fellowship in nephrology at DUMC in June 2002.

#### Lori Ann Orlando, M.D.

Lori Ann Orlando, M.D., began her AHQR-funded fellowship this July. Her research interests are medical decision making and continuous quality improvement.

Dr. Orlando received a B.S. in Biology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1990. She received her medical degree from Tulane University School of Medicine in 1998 and completed her internship and residency in Internal Medicine with the Tulane Health Sciences Center in 2002.

“My long-range goals are to find ways to improve the decision-making process in health care,” says Dr. Orlando. “I would like to stay in academic medicine and when I complete this fellowship I'd like to take on the role of teacher, researcher, and clinician in an academic medical center as a general internist.”

Dr. Orlando is co-author to several journal articles and is a member of the American Medical Association, the Society of General Internal Medicine, and the American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine.

### Durham Research Recognized

The recent VA headquarter's publication *HSR&D Impacts 2002* cited five studies, out of twenty-two it recognized from throughout the nation, produced by Durham HSR&D faculty “that demonstrate HSR&D's commitment to making a difference in veterans health care.” Durham researchers'

studies were recognized in four of the seven research categories for research: aging, chronic diseases, health systems (e.g., health care delivery, organization, quality and outcomes), mental illness, sensory disorder and loss, substance abuse; and special populations (e.g., women, ethnic and cultural groups).

In the category of aging, the study "Preparing for the End of Life: Preferences of Patients, Families, Physicians, and Other Care Providers," by Karen Steinhauser, Ph.D., Elizabeth Clipp, Ph.D., Steve Grambow, Ph.D., James Tulsy, M.D., and others, which measured the quality of dying, published in the September 2001 issue of *Journal of Pain & Symptom Management*, was highlighted. Another highlighted study, "Informal Costs of Dementia Care: Estimates from the National Longitudinal Caregiver Study," by Dr. Elizabeth Clipp and others, which determined the impact of dementia on veterans' families, was published in the July 2001 issue of *Journal of Gerontology Series B-Psychological Sciences & Social Sciences*.

For chronic diseases, Morris Weinberger, Ph.D., a researcher for the cited study "Impact of Automated Calls with Nurse Follow-up on Diabetes Treatment Outcomes in a Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care System," which showed how telemedicine can improve diabetes care, was published in the February 2001 issue of *Diabetes Care*.

Under the category of health systems, the study "Teledermatology: Current Status and Future Directions," by John Whited, M.D., emphasized how teledermatology produces faster results, published in the February 2001 issue of *American Journal of Clinical Dermatology*, was cited.

Under the category of sensory disorders, Ron Horner, Ph.D., and Tara Dudley, M.S., and others from the Durham VA Medical Center, were cited in their study "Adherence to Post-acute Rehabilitation Guidelines Is Associated with Functional Recovery in Stroke" in the January 2002 issue of the journal *Stroke*.

## Recent Faculty Publications

McBride CM, **BASTIAN LA**, Halabi S, Fish L, Lipkus IM, **BOSWORTH HB**, Rimer BK, Siegler IC. "A Tailored Intervention to Aid Decisionmaking About Hormone Replacement Therapy" *American Journal of Public Health* 2002; 92:1112-1114.

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**ODDONE EZ**, Petersen LA, **WEINBERGER M**, Freedman J, Kressin NR. "Contribution of the Veterans Health Administration in Understanding Racial Disparities in Access and Utilization of Health Care" *Medical Care* 2002; 1 (Supplement): I-3 – I-13.

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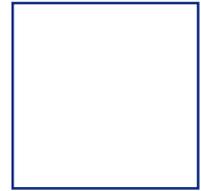
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## Research Update



Department of  
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**BOSWORTH HB** and **ODDONE EZ**. "A Model of Psychosocial and Cultural Antecedents of Blood Pressure Control" Journal of the National Medical Association 2002, April; 94(4): 236-248.

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*Research Update* is published by the Health Services Research and Development Service, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Durham. For questions or comments contact Ed Cockrell, Administrative Officer, VAMC (152), 508 Fulton Street, Durham NC, 27705. Telephone: (919) 286-6936, Fax: (919) 416-5836. E-mail: COCKR001@mc.duke.edu Web Page: <http://hsrd.durham.med.va.gov/> The Institute's mission is to provide quality information on issues regarding the organization, financing, and delivery of veterans' health care, and to build the epidemiological capacity of the Veterans Health Administration through the generation, synthesis, and dissemination of epidemiological information. The Institute also has a mission to educate health professionals through a spectrum of training grants in the techniques of health services and epidemiological research.