A Legend in Cardiology Named Heart Journal’s Next Editor-in-Chief

Valentin Fuster, MD, PhD, Director of Mount Sinai Heart and Physician-in-Chief at The Mount Sinai Medical Center, has been selected as the next Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the American College of Cardiology (JACC), the world’s most widely read cardiovascular journal. His five-year term will begin in July 2014.

JACC is the flagship publication of the American College of Cardiology (ACC), a 43,000-member organization dedicated to improving cardiovascular care and heart health around the world through education, research, and advocacy.

Last year, the ACC named Dr. Fuster a “Legend of Cardiovascular Medicine” for his leadership, innovation, and outstanding contributions in cardiovascular medicine. In 2012, Dr. Fuster also received the Research Achievement Award from the American Heart Association, and in 2011, he received what is considered the world’s most prestigious honor in cardiovascular research, the “Grand Prix Scientifique” by the Institut de France.

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Advancing Research into Liver Injury

Every year, more than 1 million Americans develop liver damage caused by prescription and over-the-counter drugs, and dietary and herbal supplements. The condition, known as drug-induced liver injury (DILI), can result in severe liver disease that requires transplantation. There are no tests to predict who is at risk, or to help physicians make an early diagnosis, which would prevent progressive liver damage.

Mount Sinai’s Division of Liver Diseases, however, is taking a leading role in uncovering the causes and risk factors for DILI with the goal of developing diagnostic tools. In August, Mount Sinai became the newest member of a National Institutes of
Advancing Research into Liver Injury (continued from page 1)

Health-funded consortium charged with stimulating and facilitating translational research into DILI. Mount Sinai is one of six academic medical centers, and the first in the Northeast, to participate in the consortium, known as the Drug-Induced Liver Injury Network. The research is being funded through the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

Jawad Ahmad, MD, and Joseph Odin, MD, PhD, both Associate Professors of Medicine (Division of Liver Diseases), have been named principal investigators of the effort.

“Mount Sinai has joined a prestigious network of clinicians and researchers,” says Dr. Ahmad. “Our inclusion reflects the strength of the faculty in the Division of Liver Diseases and the Recanati/Miller Transplantation Institute, as well as our ability to utilize a multidisciplinary approach that will involve clinicians, and translational and basic scientists.” Mount Sinai also brings unique qualities to the consortium: because it serves an ethnically diverse patient base, it is able to provide a representative population of patients who suffer from DILI.

“Ideally, we will develop a diagnostic or predictive test that will help us better tailor treatments for our patients.”

–Joseph Odin, MD, PhD

Drs. Ahmad and Odin, along with their consortium colleagues, will conduct retrospective analyses of drugs that are associated with a high incidence of DILI utilizing electronic medical records. They also plan to draw upon Mount Sinai’s unique resources in the Department of Genetics and Genomic Sciences to help complete a Genome-Wide Association Study to determine the genetic signature risk for DILI, and potentially a blood test based on that signature.

Additionally, they will work with the Charles Bronfman Institute for Personalized Medicine, which uses a new data management system known as CLIPMERGE (Clinical Implementation of Personalized Medicine through Electronic Health Records and Genomics) that analyzes DNA for genetic variations that may affect how different drugs work in a particular individual.

“The tool is easy for a patient to use and provides us with immediate feedback so that we can continue to improve the patient’s experience,” says Randall F. Holcombe, MD, Medical Director of the Derald H. Ruttenberg Treatment Center, and Director of Clinical Cancer Affairs at The Mount Sinai Medical Center.

Dr. Holcombe says the survey response has been “outstanding” since the center began using the app in July. Dozens of patients provided feedback within the first few weeks. “We are getting more responses than with traditional paper-based mail surveys,” he adds.

New Survey Tool Boosts Patient Satisfaction

A new smartphone app that enables patients to provide immediate feedback on their experiences at the Derald H. Ruttenberg Treatment Center of The Tisch Cancer Institute is helping The Mount Sinai Hospital continue its efforts to provide exceptional care.

The app works this way: Upon arrival at the Ruttenberg Treatment Center, patients are asked to provide their cell phone numbers as they fill out their paperwork. Then the technology prompts them with a text message asking them to take a brief survey on their smartphones after they leave.

The app, called RateMyHospital®, conforms to the federal HIPAA Privacy Rule for patients, which protects individually identifiable health information. The quick survey asks patients 12 questions using a five-star rating system, with five as the highest value. They can rate their satisfaction with important aspects of care, such as scheduling appointments, office wait times, physician accessibility, and the cleanliness of the facility.

According to Jeremy Boal, MD, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of the Mount Sinai Health System, RateMyHospital will eventually be rolled out at all clinical areas of Mount Sinai. “We view real-time feedback as critical to being able to provide the best possible experience of care for patients,” he says. “RateMyHospital gives us that ability, and we anticipate that this technology and approach will rapidly accelerate our improvement efforts and outcomes.”

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Study Finds Marijuana Can Be Harmful to Youngsters

A growing body of evidence suggests that the use of marijuana, or cannabis, can negatively impact the developing brains of approximately one in four adolescents, according to researchers at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and the University of Montreal.

The study, published in the August 16, 2015, issue of Neuropharmacology, highlights that the younger the user of cannabis, the more susceptible he or she is to delinquency, lower educational attainment, difficulty in conforming to an adult role, and mental health issues.

“Overall, it is impossible to ignore the evidence that cannabis is not harmless to the developing brain, but there remain large gaps of knowledge that need to be filled in order to help inform public policy,” says the study’s lead author, Yasmin Hurd, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry, Neuroscience, and Pharmacology and Systems Therapeutics at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

Dr. Hurd—also Director of Mount Sinai’s MD/PhD program—and her team analyzed 120 peer-reviewed studies on the impact of cannabis among teenagers. They examined chemical reactions in the brain, the influence of genetics and environmental factors, and the “gateway drug phenomenon,” where people begin to use other illegal drugs.

In addition, the investigators examined experimental animal models to directly explore the long-term behavioral and neurobiological consequences of the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis, THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol. They concluded that certain subsets of adolescents are at greater risk for developing negative mood and anxiety disorders, or making their existing disorders worse through regular cannabis use.

The high degree of neuroplasticity in the adolescent brain—characterized by a period of dynamic development—makes it particularly vulnerable to chemicals that may alter it. And teenagers, in general, are the likeliest population to experiment with marijuana. A recent study by the nonprofit organization The Partnership at Drugfree.org found that nearly half of all teens have tried the drug, a 21 percent increase since 2008.

According to Dr. Hurd’s study, the majority of teenagers stop using cannabis as they mature into adulthood without migrating to other illegal drugs, suggesting there are differences in individual vulnerability.

With some states beginning to legalize marijuana for recreational and medicinal use, there is an unfortunate general perception that it is not as harmful as cigarette smoking or alcohol use, the researchers contend. Moreover, the debates and policies surrounding legalization are being done without consideration of scientific data or how it could impact teenagers, they add.

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–Yasmin Hurd, PhD

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“I am deeply honored to be selected as the next Editor-in-Chief of JACC,” says Dr. Fuster, who also serves as Director of the Zena and Michael A. Wiener Cardiovascular Institute and the Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis Center for Cardiovascular Health, and is Richard Gorlin, MD/Heart Research Foundation Professor.

“In this important leadership role, I will oversee the JACC’s vital research findings that are published each week, and are so crucial in advancing the field of cardiology and the care of patients.”

As the JACC’s next Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Fuster brings with him three decades of global leadership in patient care, scientific research, and clinical trials. His extensive discoveries into the understanding of the role of platelets in heart disease, and the causes of atherothrombosis—a degenerative process of the arteries brought about by smoking, diabetes, and arterial hypertension—for example, have appeared in the world’s leading peer-reviewed medical journals. He is also a pioneer in the prevention of heart disease through novel educational programs around the world.

“We are very proud of Dr. Fuster, a true leader at Mount Sinai and globally in the field of cardiovascular diseases. We congratulate him on this extraordinary accomplishment,” says Dennis S. Charney, MD, the Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean of Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at The Mount Sinai Medical Center. “As one of Mount Sinai’s most renowned physician-scientists, Dr. Fuster will be sharing his expertise through one of the world’s most prestigious medical and scientific journals, and helping to explore and advance the latest frontiers in biomedical research.”
Cancer Clinical Trials Video Presentation
The Tisch Cancer Institute will host a video presentation on cancer clinical trials at Mount Sinai. All faculty and staff who wish to learn more about these clinical trials are encouraged to attend.

Monday, September 16
Noon – 12:30 pm
Hatch Auditorium

Grand Rounds Preventive Medicine
Taha A. Kass-Hout, MD, MS, Chief Health Informatics Officer, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, presents “Digital Disease Detection.”

Friday, September 20
9 – 10 am
CAM Building
D5-122

Grand Rounds Radiology
Scott L. Friedman, MD, Dean, Therapeutic Discovery, Director, Division of Liver Diseases, presents “Mentoring in Academic Medicine: A Vital Link to Success.”

Wednesday, September 25
4 – 5 pm
Annenberg
MC 330

IT Town Hall Special Speaker
Ben Shneiderman, PhD, Founding Director, Human-Computer Interaction Laboratory, University of Maryland, presents “Information Visualization for Medical Informatics.”

Thursday, September 26
2 – 3 pm
Stern Auditorium

Two-Day Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, and Sex Trafficking of Minors
The Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center will host a conference on two critical issues in child and adolescent well-being. The conference will highlight findings in forthcoming Institute of Medicine reports on “Child Abuse and Neglect” (Thursday, October 3), and “Sex Trafficking of Minors” (Friday, October 4), as well as focus on awareness, identification, education, and practical strategies. To register, visit www.mssm.edu/cme/courses/MSAHC2013. For more information, contact Tamara Ehlin at 212-423-2855 or e-mail tamara.ehlin@mountsinai.org.

Thursday, October 3, and Friday, October 4
8 am – 5:30 pm
Stern Auditorium

Jewish Holiday Services

Wednesday, September 18, Erev Sukkot
6:50 pm: Mincha/Ma’ariv

Thursday, September 19, First Day Sukkot
8:30 am: Shacharit
6:30 pm: Mincha/Ma’ariv

Friday, September 20, Second Day Sukkot
8:30 am: Shacharit
6:40 pm: Mincha
6:50 pm: Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, September 21, Shabbat Chol HaMoed
8:30 am: Shacharit
10 am: Reading Book of Kohelet
6 pm: Mincha

Wednesday, September 25, Hoshanah Rabbah
Erev Shemini Atzeret
6:30 pm: Mincha/Ma’ariv

Thursday, September 26, Shemini Atzeret/Erev Simchat Torah
8:30 am: Shacharit
10:30 am: Yizkor
6:40 pm: Mincha/Ma’ariv

Friday, September 27, Simchat Torah
8:30 am: Shacharit
6:40 pm: Mincha
6:50 pm: Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, September 28, Shabbat
8:30 am: Shacharit
6 pm: Mincha

Peck Jewish Chapel
Guggenheim Pavilion 2 West

Mount Sinai

INSIDE MOUNT SINAI
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