SinaInnovations Conference Focuses on “Team Science”

The topic of “team science” took center stage at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai’s second annual SinaInnovations conference on Monday, November 18, and Tuesday, November 19. Hundreds of scientists, students, and participants from diverse industries gathered in Stern Auditorium for keynote addresses and panel discussions that examined how teamwork drives creativity. The conference also featured smaller breakout sessions run by leaders in academia and industry that explored topics such as scholarship and diversity within team science.

Introducing the conference, Dennis S. Charney, MD, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and President for Academic Affairs, Mount Sinai Health System, told the audience that Mount Sinai’s “culture of institutional innovation” follows the model of teamwork and mentorship established by Bell Laboratories, the famous research and development arm of AT&T Corp.

Winning Teams: From New York Yankees to Navy SEALs

At Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai’s recent SinaInnovations conference, two leaders with unparalleled success in building and managing winning teams delivered keynote addresses before standing-room only crowds in Stern Auditorium: Joseph Torre, the legendary former manager (and now Baseball Hall of Fame inductee) of the New York Yankees, and Rear Admiral Scott P. Moore, Deputy Commander Naval Special Warfare command (Navy SEALs).

“The one thing I learned during my career as a player and as a manager is that you can’t do it alone,” said Mr. Torre, now Executive Vice President, Baseball Operations, Major League Baseball, who led the Yankees to four World Series titles between 1996 and 2000.
Mr. Torre said he was “lucky to inherit a team of solid young players who wanted to win. If players joined from another ball club they would say, ‘where do I fit in?’” During his years as a manager, he read many motivational books, and the phrase that resonated with him was, “Players win games, but teams win championships.”

In special operations, successful teamwork can mean the difference between life and death. Rear Admiral Moore, a Navy SEAL for more than 30 years, has directed at least 1,000 dangerous special operation missions in the last decade, including the rescue of hostages in Afghanistan and Somalia. Leadership, said Rear Admiral Moore, is about communication and keeping teams focused. Trust, he said, makes teams effective.

“It takes months of constant training and multiple skill sets to gain an absolute level of trust within a team,” he added. “That happens when everyone feels good about doing anything that’s assigned, and they all have an extremely high level of confidence that they’ll solve whatever the problem is.”

Other important aspects to building a solid team, he said, include advancing the team’s capability as far as it can go, empowering lower-level leaders, and exposing the team’s weaknesses instead of showcasing its strengths. This, he said, “takes a little guts, and it takes leaders who will allow failure,” but it advances a team’s problem-solving capabilities.

**Dubin Breast Center Gala**

On Monday, December 9, more than 450 guests attended the third annual Dubin Breast Center Gala at the Mandarin Oriental, New York, raising a record $2.1 million that will be used to support the center.

The evening’s guests included Eva Andersson-Dubin, MD, and Mount Sinai Trustee Glenn Dubin, who founded the Center; Elisa Port, MD, Director of the Dubin Breast Center of The Tisch Cancer Institute; and the event’s two honorees: Ramon Parsons, MD, PhD, Chairman of the Department of Oncological Sciences and holder of a Ward-Coleman Chair in Cancer Research; and philanthropist and wellness advocate Sonia Jones.

**Philippines Disaster Relief Fundraiser**

A recent bake sale and raffle organized by the Diversity Council of Beth Israel Brooklyn raised $4,000 to help victims of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. The November cyclone, which claimed almost 6,000 lives in the Philippines, is considered the most powerful storm ever recorded at landfall. One month after the typhoon hit, more than 1,770 people were still missing, and 4 million people were still displaced.

The proceeds from the bake sale and raffle were donated to local nongovernmental organizations.
Studying a New Treatment for Type 2 Diabetes

There are more than 25 million people in the United States, including 1.6 million in New York State, who have type 2 diabetes, which occurs when the body is resistant to the action of insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas to lower the blood sugar. Type 2 diabetes, which is often associated with obesity, can result in kidney failure, limb amputations, blindness, heart disease, and stroke when blood sugar levels are uncontrolled.

“Many of these individuals who are living with type 2 diabetes and obesity are trying tirelessly to manage their diabetes and blood sugar, but without success,” says Aida Saliby, MD, of the Department of Endocrinology at Beth Israel Medical Center. “They do not respond fully to diet and lifestyle modifications, or they become resistant to the effects of oral medications, requiring additional treatments to manage their disease. Given the severe and growing diabetes epidemic, there is a substantial need to develop new, more effective therapies,” she says.

Under the leadership of Dr. Saliby and David Carr-Locke, MD, Chief of the Division of Digestive Diseases, Beth Israel researchers are collaborating with the Gerald J. Friedman Diabetes Institute to enroll patients in a clinical trial to evaluate the EndoBarrier®, a new approach to type 2 diabetes treatment.

The EndoBarrier is a thin, flexible tube-shaped liner designed to change the way the body responds to food by forming a physical barrier between food and a portion of the wall of the intestine, and altering the release of hormones. This may act to help reduce appetite and improve the body’s ability to control blood sugar, researchers believe.

“The device, which requires no incision, is guided through the mouth and into the stomach, where it is placed at the beginning of the small intestine,” explains Dr. Carr-Locke, who performs the procedure. “It is designed to stay in place for one year, and during that time we will measure blood sugar levels and weight before it is removed. Evidence to date suggests that there is continued control of blood sugar even after the device has been removed.”

The ENDO Trial will evaluate the efficacy and safety of EndoBarrier in individuals who have uncontrolled type 2 diabetes and are obese. Specifically, researchers will evaluate weight loss; and improvements in select cardiovascular risk factors, including cholesterol and blood pressure. Beth Israel is one of up to 25 clinical trial sites in the United States selected to participate in the study.

SinaInnovations Conference Focuses on “Team Science” (continued from page 1)

“As you know,” he said, “Bell Labs was responsible for many of the innovations that led to the digital revolution. That formula for success provides Mount Sinai with a road map to invent the future of medicine.”

In a panel discussion titled “Team Science in Academic Medical Centers and Pharma,” Noshir Contractor, PhD, Director of the Science of Networks in Communities Research Group at Northwestern University, said increased specialization has made collaboration more important than ever, while digitization has made it easier and more cost-effective.

John Stamatoyannopoulos, MD, Associate Professor of Genome Sciences and Medicine at the University of Washington, a participant in a panel on “Team Science Success Stories,” said, “Exciting scientific challenges are very complex and they transcend any one discipline now.”

His fellow panel member, W. David Lee, Executive in Residence at Kodiak Venture Partners, a venture capital firm in Waltham, Massachusetts, said teams have traditionally driven discovery in the fields of high-energy physics and semiconductors. “How do you build an accelerator? It takes a physicist, a chemist, and engineers,” he said. “If you look back in time, the Nobel Prizes in physics are always the physicists building the technology that’s needed to make the breakthrough. I think there’s a convergence now that is bringing that into biology.”

In a panel titled “The Psychology of Great Groups,” Jon Gertner, author of The Idea Factory: Bell Labs and the Great Age of American Innovation, told the audience that “new ideas arise from the interface of different disciplines, different domains, different talents, and different people.”

Gordon Edelstein, Artistic Director of the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Connecticut, and Matthew VanBesien, Executive Director of the New York Philharmonic, who were on the panel with Mr. Gertner, described the moments when actors in a play or musicians in an orchestra reach the height of their art.

“I think great professionals just know when things are coming together in that incredibly special way,” said Mr. VanBesien. As a theatrical director, Mr. Edelstein said, “It is all about taking the talent of the actors and loving them, and facilitating and encouraging them to make the wildest, bravest choices they can make.”

For more information on SinaInnovations, visit Icahn.mssm.edu/sinainnovations.
**Events**

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**Holiday Services**

All are welcomed to attend the following holiday services announced by Mount Sinai's Department of Spiritual Care and Education:

| Eucharistic Celebration for the Feast of Christmas Day | New Year’s Day  
| Wednesday, December 25 | Wednesday, January 1  
| 11:20 am | 11:20 am  
| The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus Hatch Interdenominational Chapel |  

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**Seminar Series Laboratory Medicine**

Yumi Kasai, PhD, Assistant Director, Genomics Core Facility, presents “Clinical Sequencing.”

Tuesday, December 17  
8 – 9 am  
The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus  
Icahn 8-40 Conference Room

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**Grand Rounds Cardiology**

William Stevenson, MD, Director, Clinical Cardiac Electrophysiology Program, Harvard Medical School, presents “Sudden Death In Coronary Artery Disease: Are Defibrillators Enough?”

Monday, December 16  
5 – 6 pm  
The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus Hatch Auditorium

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**Grand Rounds Surgery**

Robert Y. Rhee, MD, Chief, Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, Maimonides Medical Center, presents “Endovascular Treatment of Thoracic Aortic Dissection: Is it Time Yet?”

Thursday, December 19  
7 – 8 am  
The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus Hatch Auditorium

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**Grand Rounds Pediatrics**

William T. Mahle, MD, Marcus Professor of Pediatrics, Emory University School of Medicine, presents “Missed Diagnosis of Critical Congenital Heart Disease and How You Can Avoid it.”

Thursday, December 19  
8 – 9 am  
The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus Hatch Auditorium

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**Preventing and Controlling Diabetes**

In recognition of Diabetes Awareness Month in November, the Mount Sinai Diabetes Center hosted an educational event for patients, staff, and the community in the Guggenheim Atrium on how to prevent and control diabetes. It included “Viva Fitness" demonstrations and tastings by the Food and Nutrition Department.

The event was sponsored by the Center’s Stanley Mirsky, MD, Diabetes Education Unit, which provides free diabetes self-management classes. The late Dr. Mirsky was a pioneering diabetes researcher and a long-time clinician at The Mount Sinai Hospital dedicated to patient care and education. He also authored highly acclaimed books to help individuals better understand and live with diabetes. To learn more about the Diabetes Education Unit, or to attend a class, call 212-241-3422 and press option 4.

From left: Jennifer Mirsky and Susan Mirsky, the daughter and wife, respectively, of the late Stanley Mirsky, MD; Nava Billet, RD; and Antonio Vidal, Patient Services Executive Chef, Morrison Healthcare, provided healthy food at the event.

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**Wellness**

**Quit Smoking Today: Introducing The Mount Sinai Hospital Employee Tobacco-Cessation Program**

This program is free, open to all employees, and offers a full range of services, including consultation and assessment, withdrawal symptom management, behavior modification, relapse prevention, and prescription of nicotine replacement. For a one-on-one appointment with the tobacco-cessation physician call 212-824-7690. For more information, email Kristin Oliver, MD, at kristin.oliver@mountsinai.org.

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**Mount Sinai**

INSIDE MOUNT SINAI  
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