Universal Flu Vaccine Moves Closer to Fruition

The quest to develop a universal influenza vaccine that would be administered only once or twice in an individual’s lifetime and cover every strain of the virus moved closer to becoming a reality in October, when researchers at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai showed that a novel method of protection against the influenza virus was safe and induced strong immune responses in humans. The interim results of this phase 1 clinical trial—led by Mount Sinai scientists Florian Krammer, PhD; Peter Palese, PhD; and Adolfo García-Sastre, PhD—were published online in the October 17, 2019, issue of The Lancet Infectious Diseases.

Two types of proteins, hemagglutinin and neuraminidase, cover the surface of the influenza virus. Current influenza vaccines target the head of the hemagglutinin—a structure that changes often. Mount Sinai’s strategy, known as chimeric hemagglutinin (cHA), targets the stalk of the hemagglutinin, which is less variable.

In the Lancet Infectious Diseases study, the research team tested several cHA vaccine regimens in combination with an adjuvant, an ingredient that boosts the immune response to vaccines. All of the regimens induced antibody responses. But, “one vaccine regimen induced a broad antibody response after the first dose, and this response was not only cross-reactive for the currently circulating influenza virus but also to avian (bird) and bat influenza subtypes,” according to Dr. Krammer, Mount Sinai Professor of Vaccinology and Professor of Microbiology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

This, he says, showed that one vaccination might be enough to induce

continued on page 4

“Two of the Luckiest New Yorkers in the City”

In a press conference held on Thursday, October 17, New York City Fire Department (FDNY) Commissioner Daniel Nigro stood with New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and shared the details of what he called “an extremely tragic coincidence.” Two emergency medical technicians (EMT), he said, had just suffered unrelated life-threatening medical emergencies at the same location, within minutes of each other.

FDNY EMT Lieutenant Raymond Wang was greeted by well-wishers on his discharge Wednesday, October 30.

It was thumbs-up for FDNY EMT Liam Glinane, who was released Wednesday, November 27.

continued on page 2
On that fateful day, Liam Glinane, a 28-year FDNY veteran, was driving an ambulance to the Fire Academy on Randall’s Island when he had a stroke on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and veered off the road, hitting another car. Lieutenant Raymond Wang was dispatched to the scene of the accident, but before he could tend to his colleague, Lt. Wang had an aortic dissection. “This is a tough day for our city and for the FDNY,” said Mayor de Blasio. Lt. Wang was described to be in critical condition; Mr. Glinane was in critical but stable condition.

It was fortunate that when Lt. Wang, a 19-year veteran of the FDNY, took ill, he was on a ride-along with a physician from Elmhurst Hospital. That physician was able to immediately treat the two unconscious paramedics while waiting for backup help. Soon after, Mr. Glinane was rushed to Mount Sinai Queens, which recently had opened its world-class Cerebrovascular Stroke Center featuring specially designed equipment that allows for improved speed and efficiency in stroke diagnosis and treatment. Lt. Wang, who was first taken to Elmhurst Hospital, was transferred to The Mount Sinai Hospital.

After life-saving procedures, Lt. Wang would be released from Mount Sinai 13 days later, surrounded by a cheering crowd of FDNY officials and paramedics, family, friends, and staff who treated him. However, it was not until Wednesday, November 27, that Mr. Glinane would be discharged. Again, the FDNY family, including Lt. Wang, would turn out in force.

“I am very happy to come to the hospital and be able to walk with Liam out of the hospital,” said a smiling Lt. Wang—who, himself, also had much reason to rejoice.

Lt. Wang, 47, it turned out, had survived a particularly severe form of aortic dissection—a tear in the aorta next to his heart that had caused a life-threatening decrease in his blood pressure, necessitating emergency heart surgery. Stephen D. Waterford, MD, MS, Assistant Professor of Cardiovascular Surgery, and Director of the Surgical Arrhythmia Program, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, led the team that performed life-saving surgery on Lt. Wang. “His lungs and heart were not working, and he had no blood flow to his right leg,” said Dr. Waterford.

Meanwhile, Reade De Leacy, MD, Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery, and Radiology, at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and Director of Cerebrovascular Services at Mount Sinai Queens, removed the blood clot blocking an artery in Mr. Glinane’s brain. “He presented with paralysis of the left side of his body, inability to speak properly, and poor awareness of where he was in space and his location. It was an incredibly serious illness,” Dr. De Leacy recalled.

Mr. Glinane, 63, was later transported to The Mount Sinai Hospital, where he continued his recovery and rehabilitation at the Brain Injury Unit at the Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Center. Under the care of Richard Frieden, MD, Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine, and a team of therapists—Kristen Eggers, PT; Aura Weltman, OT; and Carly Traiman, SLP—
Celebrating the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center

The Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center honored six individuals for their commitment to New York City’s young people at its 16th Annual Breakfast of Legends benefit at the Ziegfeld Ballroom on Thursday, November 14. The Center provides free, comprehensive, and confidential health and wellness services to more than 12,000 young people annually and is a national leader in adolescent health research and training.

“Today, in its 51st year, the Center remains true to its original vision and mission—the care of New York City’s adolescents and young adults,” James S. Tisch, Co-Chairman, Boards of Trustees, Mount Sinai Health System, said in a warm welcome to guests.

Angela Diaz, MD, PhD, MPH, Jean C. and James W. Crystal Professor in Adolescent Health, Professor of Pediatrics, and Environmental Medicine and Public Health, and Director of the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center, recognized the volunteers, benefactors, leadership, and staff who made the event—and the Center’s work—possible: “Thank you for helping us give young people a place of healing, and a place of hope.”

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, emphasized the importance of innovation in the care of adolescents, who face constantly evolving challenges. “At the Center, innovations are ongoing—including its groundbreaking work with HIV-infected youth and transgender adolescents,” Dr. Charney said.

Mr. Glinane recovered physically and cognitively. Finally, on the day before Thanksgiving—41 days after his stroke—Mr. Glinane, serenaded by bagpipes and cheers, and with Lt. Wang at his side, was discharged from Mount Sinai. As the two FDNY veterans walked out together, Lillian Bonsignore, Chief of FDNY Emergency Medical Services, said, “I would consider this our new FDNY Thanksgiving. We certainly have so much to be thankful for. We almost lost two of our heroes, people who have dedicated their lives to saving other people. Today, we can see that that was given back to them.”

“Today, in its 51st year, the Center remains true to its original vision and mission—the care of New York City’s adolescents and young adults,” James S. Tisch, Co-Chairman, Boards of Trustees, Mount Sinai Health System, said in a warm welcome to guests.

Mr. Glinane told the large crowd of well-wishers standing outside The Mount Sinai Hospital. “This is a total success story, thanks to the staff of the building behind me. They’ve literally made a total difference in my outcome—to the hospital, to how I came in here, to how I’m leaving on my own power with 100 percent functionality.”

Today, Mr. Glinane is close to being fully recovered and, despite a long road of outpatient stroke rehabilitation ahead of him, he says he has every intention of going back to work. “I’ve got the greatest job in the world,” he said. “I’m self-sufficient, I’m not a burden, I’m back in the game. I’ve got another shot at life.”

The honorees were:

Jerry Bruno, Strategic Project Manager, City of New York Department of Homeless Services;
Rachel L. Colon, LCSW, Primary Care Social Work Coordinator, Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center, who received the Center’s Staff Award;
Yasmeen Mock, Head of Client Relations and Chief Operating Officer, Kimelman & Baird, LLC;
Lisa M. Satlin, MD, Herbert H. Lehman Professor and Chair, Jack and Lucy Clark Department of Pediatrics, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai;
Patricia Wang, President and Chief Executive Officer, Healthfirst;
Raja M. Flores, MD, Steven and Ann Ames Professor and Chair of the Department of Thoracic Surgery, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, who was presented with the Dr. Joan E. Morgenthau Lifetime Advocate for Youth Award by Dr. Morgenthau’s daughters Ellie Hirschhorn and Joan Bright for his kindness, warmth, and clinical skill in treating adolescent patients.

“Today, in its 51st year, the Center remains true to its original vision and mission—the care of New York City’s adolescents and young adults,” James S. Tisch, Co-Chairman, Boards of Trustees, Mount Sinai Health System, said in a warm welcome to guests.

Angela Diaz, MD, PhD, MPH, Jean C. and James W. Crystal Professor in Adolescent Health, Professor of Pediatrics, and Environmental Medicine and Public Health, and Director of the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center, recognized the volunteers, benefactors, leadership, and staff who made the event—and the Center’s work—possible: “Thank you for helping us give young people a place of healing, and a place of hope.”

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, emphasized the importance of innovation in the care of adolescents, who face constantly evolving challenges. “At the Center, innovations are ongoing—including its groundbreaking work with HIV-infected youth and transgender adolescents,” Dr. Charney said.

Three patients—Moza, Richard, and Anisa—recounted how the Center had transformed their lives. “It is not just a health center, but a chance for a fulfilled life,” Moza said.
The 2019 “What a Wonderful World” gala, a benefit for the Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine, was a festive evening of music, dance, and expressions of gratitude to four honorees for their support of music and music therapy. The recent event, held at Space 54 in Manhattan, was hosted by the nonprofit Wonderful World: Friends of Music Therapy Inc.

This year’s honorees were Deborah Korzenik, Senior Associate General Counsel of the Mount Sinai Health System, for her work in patient care and medical ethics; Christian McBride, a Grammy Award-winning bassist and composer and the host of the NPR program Jazz Night in America, who received the Pheebe Jacobs Award, presented by the jazz guitarist Pat Metheny; David Amram, the prolific composer, conductor, and musician, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award; and Julia Justo, a photographer and painter who was honored for her resilience as a music therapy patient.

The gala was hosted by its Chair, Edwin Sirlin, and featured performances by artists including Bruce Sabath, the star of Fiddler on the Roof; the salsa band of Tito Rodriguez Jr.; the Garry Dial Trio; Erik Lawrence; and Mr. McBride. The emcees were Mercedes Ellington and Bill Daughtry.

“We are proud of the breadth and scope of patients we serve and our research projects with doctors and nurses, from neonatal care to oncology, Alzheimer’s and stroke,” said Joanne V. Loewy, DA, LCAT, MT-BC, Founder and Director of the Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine, based at Mount Sinai Beth Israel.

The Department of Music Therapy serves the Mount Sinai Health System, providing a range of clinical services for adults and children, both in-house and within the community. Its music therapists are licensed and board certified to provide care that complements medical treatment, assisting with sedation, pain management, and neurologic and respiratory function. For more information, please visit musicandmedicine.org.

Universal Flu Vaccine Moves Closer to Fruition (continued from page 1)

 protection against changing seasonal influenza viruses and pandemic influenza viruses yet to arise. “The results indicate that we are moving toward a universal influenza vaccine, but these are still interim results.”

Dr. Palese, Horace W. Goldsmith Professor of Medicine, and Professor and Chair of the Department of Microbiology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, says the “ideal vaccine, given only once in a lifetime and protective against all influenza virus strains,” would go a long way in improving the health of millions of people in the United States and around the world.

A universal vaccine would overcome “antigenic drift,” the small changes in the genes of influenza viruses that render viruses different from one another and allow them to escape human immunity. This is the primary reason why influenza vaccines vary in effectiveness from one season to another and must be updated every year.

Still, influenza vaccines do offer protection from severe disease and physicians strongly recommend that patients get them annually. Despite their widespread availability, however, more than half of Americans were unvaccinated as of the beginning of December 2019, according to NORC at the University of Chicago, which conducts the National Immunization Survey for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Influenza remains deadly for some. The World Health Organization estimates that influenza-related respiratory illnesses account for between 290,000 and 650,000 deaths per year.

Dr. Krammer says, “Developing new vaccines takes a lot of time and it’s hard to estimate how long it will take, but I firmly believe we will have a universal flu vaccine in our lifetime and probably sooner.”

In addition to Dr. García-Sastre, a co-senior researcher on the Lancet Infectious Diseases study, and the Irene and Dr. Arthur M. Fishberg Professor of Medicine, and Director of the Global Health and Emerging Pathogens Institute, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, contributors included Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center; Duke University School of Medicine; the University of Chicago; and the nonprofit international health organization PATH. Funding was provided by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
Mount Sinai Hosts Disability Awareness Fairs

Two informational fairs about disability awareness drew Mount Sinai faculty, staff, and students, as well as patients and community members interested in learning about local organizations and resources dedicated to the care of people with disabilities. The events, which were held at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s and The Mount Sinai Hospital during Disability Awareness Month in October, were hosted by the hospitals’ Diversity Councils and were co-sponsored by the Office for Diversity and Inclusion and The Joseph F. Cullman, Jr. Institute for Patient Experience. Among those providing educational resources were representatives from the Lighthouse Guild, the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, Access-A-Ride, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the Harlem Independent Living Center, as well as Mount Sinai staff from a variety of areas, including Language Services, Rehabilitation Medicine and Human Performance, and the Seaver Autism Center for Research and Treatment.

Bringing Joy to Pediatric Patients

Representatives from the nonprofit Needlers Foundation, which raises funds to support underprivileged children in need of neurosurgery, brought joy to pediatric patients in December when they visited Mount Sinai Kravis Children’s Hospital with loads of donated toys. “We are incredibly appreciative of their partnership and collaboration,” says Alejandro Berenstein, MD, Director of the Pediatric Cerebrovascular Surgery Program and Hyman-Newman Institute for Neurology and Neurosurgery at Kravis Children’s Hospital, who has partnered with the nonprofit organization for more than 20 years. “The Needlers Foundation is a unique group of individuals who are dedicated to helping the most fragile individuals in our society, children whose families are unable to pay for their medical care or have to travel great distances to access care. With their support, we have been able to help more than 350 children since 1995.”

Courage, Strength & Hope—and Plenty of Pink—for Breast Cancer Awareness

“Cancer affects all of us, whether you are a daughter, a mother, a sister, a friend, a co-worker, a doctor, or patient,” says Ms. Abreu. Adds Evelyn Placencia, Director, Patient Financial Services, Patient Accounts (Commercial Unit), “Here at 160 Water Street, we are a family. Decorating and acknowledging the month of October signifies our love, support, and unity for family, co-workers, patients, and other colleagues throughout the Mount Sinai Health System.”

Amid pink balloons and desk decorations, and prominent pink banners that proclaimed “Courage, Strength & Hope,” Mount Sinai staff located at 160 Water Street also wore pink—and plenty of it—every Friday in October to commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The all-pink effort was led by Carmen Cacho, Carmen Abreu, Evangeline Counts, and Dawn Wiggins, Financial Representatives on the Patient Financial Services team.

Honoring Excellence in Communication With Patients

For the past four years, the Cullman Family Award for Excellence in Physician Communication has honored Mount Sinai Health System physicians and advanced practice providers who demonstrate exceptional communication in clinical practice. Recipients of this year’s award were ranked in the top 1 percent nationally in provider communication for 2018 as measured by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ Clinician and Group Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems patient experience survey.

In a ceremony on Tuesday, October 15, at the Corporate Services Center, 51 awardees were recognized for their outstanding achievements. Nineteen were previous recipients.

The presentations were made by Vicki LoPachin, MD, Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President of the Mount Sinai Health System; along with David L. Reich, MD, President of The Mount Sinai Hospital and Mount Sinai Queens; Burton P. Drayer, MD, Chief Executive Officer of the Mount Sinai Doctors Faculty Practice; and Mount Sinai Trustee Susan R. Cullman. “Thank you for putting our patients at the center of everything you do,” Dr. LoPachin said. “You truly exemplify the values and the mission of Mount Sinai.”

Recipients of the 2019 Cullman Family Award for Excellence in Physician Communication are:

Andrew Blank, MD
Sidney Braman, MD
Susan Bressman, MD
Jillian Capodice, MS, LAC
Kelly Cassano, DO
Audrey Chun, MD
Richard Colucci, MD
George Diaz, MD, PhD
Christopher DiMaio, MD
Srinivas Dukkipati, MD
David Dunkin, MD
Michael Edelstein, DPM
Krysthel Engstrom, MD
Frank Fang, MD
Daniela Fanto, MD
Thomas Fiorentino, MD
Nehal Galal, DO
Emily Gallagher, MD

Vani Gandhi, MD
Lori Garjian, MD
Cerrene Giordano, MD
Marsha Gordon, MD
Jessica Grant, MD
Mark Green, MD
Constantinos Hadjipanayis, MD, PhD
Timothy Harkin, MD
Alicia Hernandez, MD
Judith Hoffman, MD
Heather Isola, MPAS, PA-C
Tonia Kim, MD
Amy Korobow, MD
Lawrence Krakoff, MD
Michael Leitman, MD
Dayna McCarthy, DO

John Meyer, MD
Satish Nagula, MD
Koji Park, MD
David Perlman, MD
Elliott Rosch, MD
Rachel Saunders-Pullman, MD, MPH
George Schmitz, MD
Debra Shabas, MD
Elizabeth Sharp, MD
Steven Smith, MD
Chantal Spencer, MD
Maria Stern, MD
Ronald Tamler, MD, PhD
Christine Taai, CPNP, RN
Ryan Ungaro, MD
Alfonse Vicenzo, MD
Meredith Wilkes, MD

The Bowery Mission Medical Clinic is Seeking Volunteers

Every Wednesday, from 6 - 8 pm, The Bowery Mission Medical Clinic provides free medical care to anyone in need. The Medical Clinic is always seeking doctors, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and social workers to serve homeless and uninsured patients. Sign up at www.bowery.org/volunteer to receive more information and apply.

Honorees were joined by Mount Sinai Trustee Susan R. Cullman, second row, far left; Vicki LoPachin, MD, second row, far right, and other members of Mount Sinai Health System leadership.