

NETWORK UPDATE

April/May 2009

Note from the Communications Director

Irons joins RCMI Translational Research Network

Lee Irons joins the RTRN as Interim Project Manager. Irons has worked with Dr. Keith Norris at Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles for five years on various RCMI related projects, e.g., as the Chair of the RCMI Clinical Research Advisory Committee (RCAC), which sets policies for the Drew Clinical Research Center and reviews applications from investigators. Mr. Irons plays a key role in the development and implementation of the CDU Research Strategic Plan with its focus on the advancement of research collaboration via a system of research clusters parallel to those of RTRN. In addition, he has edited numerous supplements publishing the research papers from a variety of international meetings, including the last three RCMI International Symposia (Baltimore, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii). He began serving as the RTRN Interim Project Manager in March of 2009.



Pilot Study – Effects of Vitamin D3 [25(OH)D3] on Vascular Function and Cardiovascular Risk Factors

NIH Data Safety Monitoring Board approves protocol

As of March 2009, the study protocol has been approved by the NIH/NCRR Protocol Review Committee, the institutional IRBs, and the RTRN Protocol Review Committee. As of April 2009, the NIH Data Safety Monitoring Board has also approved the protocol.

The 3-month study is scheduled to begin enrollment in July 2009.

Steering Committee and Subcommittees

Strategic goals outlined during April Steering Committee meeting

The RTRN Steering Committee, chaired by M. Edwina Barnett, met via telephone conference call on April 2, 2009 with approximately two dozen committee members (some from various RCMI institutions, some from NIH/NCRR) on the line. The Sub-Committees presented their recommendations and suggestions. Dr. Yanagihara announced changes to the deadlines for the Small Grants RFA, and those changes were approved. The sub-goals under each of the three strategic goals were revised, augmented and approved (see below). The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which concerns reliance by one RCMI IRB on the

review and approval of other RCMI IRBs, was also approved. In addition, Dr. Shelia McClure (NIH/NCRR) encouraged everyone to attend the National Advisory Research Resources Council (NARRC) on September 15, 2009, since RTRN will be discussed there. Finally, Dr. Valerie Montgomery-Rice of Meharry Medical College was elected as the new Steering Committee Chair for a two-year term, and the outgoing Chair was thanked for her past service.

Strategic Goal #1: Infrastructure for Multi-site Research

Sub-goals

- * Network Project Management across sites
- * Communication, Social Networking and Collaboratory Tools
 - DTCC Define bandwidth requirements for applications
 - Provide Gateway to PI/PD Portal
 - Program Podcasts
- * Scientific Editorial Assistance
- * Translational Technology Development
- * Technology Transfer Consult Service
- * Biomedical Statistics Consult Service

Strategic Goal #2: Facilitate Clinical /Translational Research Process

Sub-goals

- * Network Project Management
- * Network Processes and Work flows
- * Evaluation of Network IRB and other regulatory and compliance programs
- * Communication of targeted FOA to RTRN Research Clusters
- * Technology Transfer Policies for Collaboration
- * Assess Network-based shared major instrumentation resources for RCMI user communities
- * Establish procedures and web-based facility for RCMI user communities to access shared major instrumentation resources
- * Establish a pool of Mentors/Coaches

Strategic Goal #3: Training and Education

Sub-goals

- * Development of Web-based Health Disparities Curriculum
 - Develop Courses
 - Links to existing Courses
- * Educational Resources for the Lay Community
 - RCMI Resources
 - Links to SEPA and other Educational Resources
 - Tutorials
 - Community Engagement and Community Partnered Research
 - Other topics
- Certifications and Assurances for Technical Staff and Study Coordinators
 - * Training on the use of Instrumentation
 - * Mentoring and Faculty Development in Translational Research Coaching & "Team Science"

Collaborative Research

Funding Opportunities: [RTRN Small Grants Program Deadline Extended to May 8, 2009 read more](#)
Funding Opportunities: [ARRA \(American Recovery and Reinvestment Act\) Funds still available read more](#)

Translational Research Clusters

Any RCMI researcher interested in participating in one or more of the Translational Research Clusters (TRC) can visit the RTRN web site, http://www.rtrn.net/research_clusters/index.htm for more information and can complete the on-line participation form.

Working Groups

RTRN BCB Working Group Chair spearheads activities for Bioinformatics Awareness Month

RTRN Bioinformatics & Computational Biology - Working Group (BCB-WG) co chair Dr. Raphael D. Isokpehi, along with members of the HealthGrid Association and scientists from the National Center for Integrative Biomedical Informatics (NCIBI), University of Michigan visited the RTRN Data Technology Coordinating Center (DTCC) on April 23, as one of their activities to coincide with Bioinf

ormatics Awareness Month (<http://compbio.jsums.edu/awareness>). HealthGrid members Mary Kratz and Howard Bilofsky as well as Phil Andrews and Jim Cavalcoli from NCIBI shared updates and recent developments pertaining to HealthGrid initiatives and the NCIBI respectively. In turn, the DTCC staff provided their guests with an overview of the network, its services and current efforts to incorporate informatics to enhance translational research.



Additional activities included a distance learning opportunity hosted by RTRN BCB-WG co leads, Dr. Raphael D. Isokpehi, Jackson State University and Dr. Robert Dottin, Hunter College of the City University of New York. The student seminar series was facilitated by DTCC, the group conducted an exchange that allowed both school's students to discuss complex research findings in bioinformatics and computational biology.

The topics included:

Mike Scarpatti (Hunter College): Multiple Sequence Alignments

Shaneka S. Simmons (JSU): Universal Stress Protein Family

Luis Campodonico (Hunter College): A Better Understanding of Pancreatic Cancer through Bioinformatics

Tolulola Oyeleye (JSU): Bioinformatics Tools Categorizer



Kara Egbuta (Hunter College): Immune-Based Therapies in HIV

Centdrika Dates (JSU): Comparative Genomics of Francisella

DTCC Activities

DTCC hosts representatives from CDISC (Clinical Data Interchange Standards Consortium) and Duke Translational Medicine Institute (DTMI)

On April 28th and 29th, the DTCC had the pleasure of hosting a CDISC workshop. The first day was dedicated to a CDISC Overview and Workshop, led by Chris Tolk (CDISC Director of Terminology). Day two focused on mapping from non-standardized data collection forms into CDISC-compliant standardized format and was led by Meredith Nahm (Associate Director for Clinical Research Informatics, DTMI). The first full face to face meeting is scheduled for July 23rd, and will be held at Duke University. Update on Clinical Research Network Feasibility Award (CRNFA) activities:

This is a joint effort between Duke (DTMI), two RCMI sites (Meharry and UPR), DTCC, Vanderbilt (REDCap Consortium), and CDISC (Clinical Data Interchange Standards Consortium).

Goal of study: Investigate and evaluate the feasibility of standards to support site use of local data collection and management software in the RTRN clinical research network.

To begin the investigation, mapping of blank data collection forms from non-standardized forms into CDISC-compliant format is being conducted. Three studies were selected, based on indication, size, and focus on minority health disparities. Studies selected for the mapping exercise were:



Chris Tolk, Director of Terminology from CDISC

1. The RTRN Pilot Study: Effect of Vitamin D on Vascular Function and Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Overweight, Hypertensive African-Americans

2. The Jackson Heart Study, and

3. Meharry Women's Health Research Study

- The DTCC Biostatistical division will host its second webinar in the BIostatistics Seminar Series on February 18, 2009 at 2pm CST. The presenter, Dr. Jimmy Efird, University of Hawaii, will discuss computing power and sample size. Additional information is available at http://www.rtrn.net/news/special_announcements.htm.

DTCC explores Benefits of Joining REDCap Consortium

It is likely that the RTRN Data Technology Coordinating Center (DTCC) will become the newest member of the REDCap Consortium. Currently, the DTCC is reviewing possible membership; and hopes that by

joining, one of the benefits will be providing the program as one of the several data management solutions for RTRN investigators. As part of our ongoing efforts to support RTRN investigators in their research, the Data Technology Coordinating Center seeks to offer a diversity of data management solutions (open source and proprietary) that best suit RTRN current and future needs. Currently Oracle Clinical's Remote Data Capture (OC RDC) is offered as the regulatory-compliant solution of choice for multicenter clinical trials.

Many RTRN researchers are currently using the REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture) program as an open source solution for their data management needs. With this in mind, DTCC has evaluated the REDCap program in comparison to OC RDC.

In brief, our findings are that although the program offers an easy to use, open source, web-based application, there are limitations to keep in mind when selecting it as a data management solution. Specifically, the program is not regulatory compliant (and so not suitable for studies that will result in FDA submission), does not currently employ data standards (interoperability and data sharing are very limited), there is no interoperability with other software (such as OC), there is no global library (each study has to recreate its own) and coding of medications and adverse events is not supported.

However, REDCap can fill a need for RTRN researchers, and DTCC can address many interoperability and data sharing issues through standardization of processes and adoption and implementation of data standards. Furthermore, by using fields and forms that are compatible with OCRDC, data can be uploaded into the regulated system easily if needed, where it can be coded, data management can be supported at DTCC, and forms used again and again for similar studies. We are also currently working with REDCap developers, Duke Translational Medicine Institute, and RTRN investigators using REDCap to conduct an assessment of the feasibility and cost/benefit analysis for translating data from REDCap into the OC system. This approach will ultimately give RTRN researchers a 'leg up' on others using the open source software.

RCMI Events and Announcements

UCC to host 3rd annual Scientific Research Symposium

RCMI Program Director, Dr. Eddy Rios-Olivares will be honored at the 3rd annual Universidad Central Del Caribe Scientific Research Symposium. Each year the event highlights a distinguished member of the UCC research faculty. Dr. Rios-Olivares has an impressive career as a researcher, professor and administrator. The symposium will consist of plenary sessions, poster presentations, and competitions for residents and medical students. This is a great opportunity to share knowledge and collaborate with research peers.

The symposium will be held at the Universidad Central del Caribe campus on Thursday, May 14, 2009, from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

For additional information, contact Professor Elsa Gilbes at 787.798.3001 ext. 2700 or via e-mail at: asuntos_academicos@uccaribe.edu

Marketing efforts to raise awareness for Morehouse Research Core Facilities

Over the past several months, one of the most prominent activities of the MSM/RCMI G12 program has been to raise awareness of its research core facilities; providing insight to the magnificent research

occurring within our labs and the technology and equipment found in the labs. Under the direction of the Core Administrator, the program has developed a strategic marketing plan that has created local and national exposure for the cores.

Highlighted below are some of the program's more recent and upcoming activities:

We have created an extensive marketing collateral, including a logo, a marketing video and informative flyers on each lab within the research cores.

We currently sponsor an annual seminar series entitled "Technology of Science". The Technology of Science seminar series was created to highlight the RCMI research cores and their technology and equipment capabilities. The most recent seminar was held on April 28, 2009. A next seminar will be announced in May.

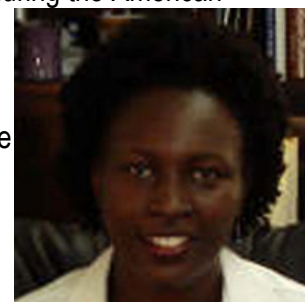
We have exhibited at two major meetings: the RCMI International Symposium held in Honolulu, HI in December 2008 and the national meeting of the Association of Biomedical Resource Facilities (ABRF) held in Memphis, TN in February 2009.

Our RCMI research cores as well as other research centers, institutes and programs of Morehouse School of Medicine will be exhibiting at the International BIO meeting to be held in Atlanta, GA in May 2009. This meeting focuses on biotechnology and is slated to have over 18,000 attendees and approximately 2000 exhibitors. The RCMI funded Core Administrator will be the lead exhibitor for this activity.

For further information or inquiries about the cores, please contact Pamela Alexander at 404.752.8669 or email palexander@msm.edu.

Clark University CCRTD Professor recognized during AACR meeting

RTRN would like to congratulate Dr. Valerie Odera-Marah, assistant professor at Clark Atlanta Center for Cancer Research and Therapeutic Development. She was recently recognized during the American Association for Cancer Research 100th Annual Meeting 2009 for her poster presentation. This is a great achievement and honor in that AACR's meeting exhibited more than 6,000 abstracts and hosted between 13,000 - 17,000 participants. Dr. Odera-Marah's abstract scored in the top 3-4% of abstracts to be presented in the poster sessions and, therefore, was selected for this special recognition.



Dr. Valerie Odera-Marah

Web site

Work on the RTRN web site continues as we regularly update the site with the latest information and announcements from the RCMI institutions as well as provide improved functionalities for the network's members.

Here are a few of the updates to the RTRN web site:

News aggregator launched to share RCMI information

The DTCC has launched a NEWS AGGREGATOR as a new function of the RTRN website. The tool is used to deploy the "Top News Stories" throughout the RTRN community via frequent e-mail blasts. The News Aggregator will ensure recipients will be kept abreast of the most important happenings occurring in the RCMI community. Additionally, the news stories will be posted to the "IN THE NEWS" section of the web site for continued viewing. The News Aggregator can be a vital resource for sharing information across the Network.

By submitting your articles/links to DTCC via e-mail at communications@rtrn.net, your TOP STORY will be disseminated in a visually appealing, electronic format to the entire RTRN community as well as posted to the "IN THE NEWS" section of the web site.

How To instructions added to the web site

As an added convenience, members of the RTRN community can view instructions on "Setting up a Webinar/Teleconference" and "Posting Minutes/documents to the Secure RTRN Portal". A link to the instructions can be found on the RTRN homepage and the "Research Cluster" page, <http://www.rtrn.net/help/SetupWebTel.htm>.

Network members participating in steering and subcommittee, working group and research cluster activities should find this information extremely useful when collaborating on various projects. Webinars and teleconferences are frequently requested services from the network, and posting minutes ensures that all the great work occurring in the groups is being archived and shared.

We will continue to work on the site to ensure it becomes more dynamic and resourceful. We welcome your comments and suggestions pertaining to the RTRN website, www.rtrn.net.

This Network Update has been prepared for the RTRN community to keep you abreast of network milestones and the numerous activities of the RCMI centers. We will distribute these updates on a monthly basis. **Please provide comments and/or suggestions to communications@rtrn.net.** Continue to visit www.rtrn.net for additional news and information.