

In the Spotlight



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September 25, 2009

Center for Drug Discovery Hosts Second Symposium

The University of Georgia's Center for Drug Discovery will host its second Conference on Drug Discovery on November 5, featuring three renowned scientists who are international experts in HIV, Hepatitis C and inflammatory diseases -- Dr. Raymond Schinazi of Emory University, Dr. Jeffrey Glenn of Stanford University and Dr. Jilly Evans of Amira Pharmaceuticals. The day-long event will be held at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education's Mahler Auditorium. Registration is free and open to the public.

Dr. Raymond Schinazi is the Frances Winship Walters Professor of Pediatrics and Chemistry, Senior Research Career Scientist and Core Director of Emory University's Virology/Drug Discovery CFAR Center for AIDS Research. His presentation is entitled "Curative Therapies for HIV and HCV."

Schinazi is best known for his innovative and pioneering work on d4T (stavudine), 3TC (lamivudine), FTC (emtriva), D-D4FC (reverset), RCV (racivir), and DAPD (amdoxovir), all drugs that are now approved by the FDA, or are at various stages of clinical development. He is the founder of several biotechnology companies focusing on antiviral drug discovery and development, has published over 420 peer-reviewed papers and 7 books, and holds more than 70 U.S. patents.

Dr. Jeffrey Glenn, who will present "New Approaches to Hepatitis C," is Director of the Center for Hepatitis and Liver Tissue Engineering at Stanford School of Medicine, and Associate Professor of Medicine, Gastroenterology and Hematology at Stanford. His primary research interest is molecular virology, with a strong emphasis on translating this knowledge into novel antiviral therapies. Exploitation of hepatic stem cells, development of a small animal model for HCV and engineered human liver tissues are other research interests.

Dr. Jilly Evans is a founding member and lead biologist of Amira Pharmaceuticals, a biopharmaceutical company in San Diego that has developed small molecule compounds for clinical assessment in inflammatory diseases. She will address the "Development of FLAP Inhibitors: Novel Drugs for the Treatment of Inflammatory Diseases."

Evans received her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of British Columbia, where she worked with Michael Smith, winner of the Nobel Prize in 1993 for the development of site-specific mutagenesis. Prior to founding Amira, Evans worked at Merck Frosst Canada as a lead biochemist in the Merck team that worked on COX-2 inhibitors. She led the Merck orphan GPCR ligand identification group for five years, during which time they solved the identity of ligands for several orphan GPCRs including the motilin receptor and the CysLT1 and CysLT2 receptors.

"We are delighted that the Center for Drug Discovery has been able to attract such nationally and internationally recognized scientists, who are at the cutting edge of the drug discovery field, as plenary speakers. Infectious viral diseases, therapeutic targets and cell signaling in disease states are at the core of the mission of the Center. Students, postdocs and faculty should find the conference to be intellectually stimulating and scientifically rewarding," said Dr. Vasu Nair, director of the Center for Drug Discovery, William H. Terry, Sr., Chair, Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar in Drug Discovery, and head of the College of Pharmacy's Department of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences.

The Center for Drug Discovery was established in 2004 under Nair's direction. The CDD's mission is to create a world-class center to promote scientific research and discovery of new chemical and biological entities targeted against infectious diseases and cancer."

For registration and more information, contact Robyn Ansley, Center for Drug Discovery, 706-542-9755, or go to the CDD website at www.uga.edu/cdd.

