

Winter 1-2014

## Winter 2014

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## MAKING GREAT STRIDES IN PREVENTION AND WELLNESS RESEARCH

Almost a year and a half ago, Dr. Khurram Nasir joined the Baptist Health Medical Group (BHMGM) as director of Wellness and Prevention Research. At the time he was not just the director of Wellness and Prevention Research, he was the entire department. Today he is supported by a team that includes a research director, four research fellows, and two research assistants from BHMGM, as well as a research coordinator, a research manager and biostatistician from the Center for Research & Grants. Together over the past year this team has published 31 papers in peer reviewed journals and has presented over 80 abstracts at national conferences.



Part of the Wellness and Prevention Research team: (Rear L to R) Research Fellows Ebenezer Oni, MD; Sameer Shaharyar, MD; Ehimen Aneni, MD; Biostatistician Emir Veleदार, PhD; (Front L to R) Wellness and Prevention Research Programs Director Janisse Post, RN, MSHA; Research Projects Manager, Lara L. Roberson, MPH

Simultaneously, the team has enrolled over 130 Baptist Health South Florida (BHSF) employees into their Heart Healthy Study. Dr. Nasir is quick to add that much of this productivity is attributable to his BHSF colleagues and co-investigators including Wellness and Prevention medical directors, Dr. Arthur Agatston and Dr. Theodore Feldman, as well as Maribeth Rouseff, Assistant Vice President of Employee Health and Wellness and Dr. Thinkh Tran, BHSF Corporate Vice President and Chief Medical and Quality Officer.

Not a group to rest on its laurels, the Prevention and Wellness Research team has more research in development. The BCVI-Argosy Innovation in Research Fund, which enables cutting edge research has awarded it's first grant to Dr. Nasir. In collaboration with BCVI, this study will aim to identify novel biomarkers, genetic proteins, lipid distribution patterns and inflammatory markers to better predict the presence and progression of early coronary atherosclerotic plaque. Also in the works is the Miami Heart Study scheduled to start in 2015 which is targeted to enroll 4,000 people (2,000 employees from BHSF and 2,000 community members). This longitudinal study will examine the existing burden and progression of subclinical cardiovascular disease in South Florida, while looking for new, innovative ways to prevent and delay progression.

### **VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1**

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## More about Dr Nasir...

Khurram Nasir, M.D., MPH, came to BHSF from Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for Prevention Cardiology, where he remains an assistant professor today. He received his master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University and post-doctoral training in preventive cardiology in the division of cardiology at Johns Hopkins Hospital, followed by a year of internal medicine training at the University of Pittsburgh. He is the recipient of an NIH training award for the cardiac imaging training program at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. He completed his internal medicine residency at Yale University.

This past October, Johns Hopkins University awarded Dr. Nasir with their 2013 Distinguished Alumnus Award. The honor recognizes alumni whose professional achievements and humanitarian service typify the Johns Hopkins tradition of excellence. Just weeks later, Dr. Nasir and colleagues made headline news when CNBC broke a story about their article being published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology (JACC) which advocated that a Coronary Artery Calcium (CAC) numerical score which can place people in low, moderate or high-risk groups for development of cardiovascular disease (CVD), is a more accurate indicator of CVD than atherosclerosis or plaque buildup. Their article contends that as scientists work to develop a "Polypill" (a single pill combining medications that will reduce the overall risk of heart attacks and heart disease), the cost-effective CAC test should be used as the indicator to determine who should receive the medication.

You can join Dr. Nasir for a talk on "Update 2013 ACC/AHA Guidelines for the Treatment of Blood Cholesterol to Reduce CV Disease" at the *Research Exchange*, sponsored by Center for Research & Grants, Thursday January 9<sup>th</sup> 6 pm to 7pm, at Baptist Hospital Classroom 5. Register online through CME or BHU.



Dr Khurram Nasir

## My Unlimited Potential



Congratulations to Maribeth Rouseff and the entire "My Unlimited Potential" team. The group has had five abstracts accepted for the Epidemiology and Prevention/Nutrition, Physical Activity and Metabolism (EPU/NPAM) 2014 conference sponsored by the American Heart Association.

The "My Unlimited Potential" program enrolled 202 BHSF employees with two or more Cardio-metabolic risk factors, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure and high body mass index (BMI). Behavioral interventions were focused on diet and physical activity modifications

The study team found impressive results at the 12 week follow-up. The retention rate was high and BMI reduction, blood pressure goals and exercise capacity were significant.



Dr Thinh Tran,  
Corporate Vice President and  
Chief Medical  
and Quality Officer

## Research Exchange

**Research Exchange:** 2013 ACC/AHA Guidelines for the Treatment of Blood Cholesterol to Reduce Cardiovascular Disease

**Date/Time:** Thursday, January 9, 2014 6 pm–7 pm

**Location:** Baptist Hospital of Miami, Classroom 5

Dr. Khurram Nasir will present an analysis of the 2013 ACC/AHA guidelines for prevention and treatment of cholesterol in cardiovascular disease and identify appropriate use of statins for primary and secondary prevention according to these guidelines.

Dr. Nasir is Research Director, Center for Prevention and Wellness; Director, High-risk Cardiovascular Disease Clinic, Baptist Health South Florida; Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for Preventive Cardiology, Baltimore, MD.

*Research Exchange* is an educational series sponsored by the Center for Research & Grants, in which Baptist Health South Florida investigators share research outcomes with clinicians in the interest of implementing best practices and improving patient care.

Registration is available online at [Baptisthealth.net/CME](http://Baptisthealth.net/CME) or on [Baptist Health University \(BHU\)](http://Baptist Health University (BHU)), or by calling 786-596-2544.

# Introducing Our Neuroscience Research Team



The Neuroscience Center team includes (L – R): Felix Ruiz, CNA, Clinical Data Coordinator; Rod Bedgio, RN, Stroke Data Analyst; Maygret Ramirez, RN, Stroke Data Analyst; Sergio Gonzalez-Arias, MD, Medical Director, Neuroscience Center and Chief of Neurosurgery; Michele Ryder, RN, Vice President of Clinical Operations Baptist Hospital of Miami; Amy K. Starosciak, PhD, Neuroscience Clinical Research Administrator; Cris Alegria-Agurto, MBA, Neuroscience Product Line. Not pictured: Marguerite Rowell, RN, Nursing Director, Neuroscience Center.

Baptist Hospital of Miami's Neuroscience Center provides comprehensive and innovative techniques to diagnose and treat the brain, spine, and nervous system. Comprised of expert staff across the neuroscience disciplines, the center is home to neurologists, neurosurgeons, neuroradiologists, interventional neuroradiologists and rehabilitation specialists, as well as specialty-trained nurses and other clinical professionals. The Neuroscience Center is led by Vice President, Michele Ryder, RN, Medical Director, Sergio Gonzalez-Arias, MD, and Nursing Director, Marguerite Rowell, RN. With the addition of Clinical Research Administrator, Amy K. Starosciak, Ph.D., the Neuroscience Research Council was created.

The Neuroscience Research Council is a group of doctors, nurses, and non-clinical staff who are conducting or want to conduct neuroscience research. Its purpose is to develop and oversee a program of patient-oriented, outcomes-based clinical, translational, and basic science research within the Neuroscience Center. The long-term goal of the council is to lead an active, interdisciplinary research program in the neurosciences that facilitates improvement in clinical care. With this purpose and goal in mind, the research council will uphold the Neuroscience Center's philosophy to provide the most effective care in the least invasive manner by conducting sophisticated and innovative clinical research.

As with much of research in the neurosciences, the research conducted by the Neuroscience Center is truly interdisciplinary in several important ways. First, there are dedicated research staff members from the Center for Research and Grants who work alongside Baptist Hospital Neuroscience clinical staff to monitor patient outcomes, perform quality improvement, and achieve research goals. Second, there are partnerships between clinicians in different neuroscience disciplines who collaborate on projects. For example, interventional neuroradiologists may collaborate with neurologists to ensure that patients are accurately screened for a clinical trial. Lastly, there are partnerships in academia and industry. Clinicians in the Neuroscience Center collaborate with the University of Miami and Florida International University (among others) and/or conduct clinical trials sponsored by pharmaceutical and device companies. Neuroscience research is young at Baptist Health, but it has all the necessary components to make it a long-lasting and successful program.



# Population Health and Outcomes Research

The Center for Research and Grants has created a new division - Population Health and Outcomes Research. This division, consisting of existing Center for Research and Grants staff and aligned under the direction of Don Parris, PhD, was created to support the research efforts at our Centers of Excellence and provide guidance and leadership for population health and outcomes research activities across Baptist Health.

Population health is defined by Kinding and Stoddart as, “the health outcomes of a group of individuals, including the distribution of such outcomes within the group”. The goal of population health management is to improve outcomes, decrease costs, and enhance the patient experience.

The newly formed Population Health and Outcomes Research division consists of three teams. A team of research administrators located at our Centers of Excellence play an essential role in managing and directing the research activities within each Center. We currently support the following Centers of Excellence: Orthopedics (Gary Kiezbak, PhD), Wellness and Prevention (Lara Roberson, MPH), Robotic Surgery/Center for Women and Infants (Michelle Gallas, PharmD, PhD) and Neuroscience (Amy Starosciak, PhD).

Second, a biostatistics core consisting of two biostatisticians (Emir Veledar, PhD and Gail Walker, PhD) was formed. These highly trained individuals perform advanced statistical analysis on research data and provide biostatistical consulting services for the development of research projects and grants.

Lastly, the grants and development team, consisting of Allison Bivin and Karen Holmes, provide guidance and support for obtaining grant funding for research studies, health innovation projects and other programs. They are highly skilled in the areas of grant writing and grants management.

Fostering a healthy patient population is essential to improving the quality and efficiency of care in the new value-based care delivery system. Developing evidence-based clinical care delivery models for our patients that are of high value, high quality, cost-effective and appropriate will result in superior clinical outcomes. The newly formed Population Health and Outcomes Research Division will play an important role in helping Baptist Health achieve these goals.



Don Parris, PhD,  
Director of Population Health and  
Outcomes Research

## FACES FROM THE 2013 BHSF RESEARCH SUMMIT

Presented by the Center for Research & Grants

*elevating care through discovery*

