

INSIDE OUTCOMES

News from the Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy

APARASU TAPPED FOR FULBRIGHT SPECIALIST ROSTER

UH College of Pharmacy's **Rajender R. Aparasu, Ph.D., FAPhA**, professor and chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy, has been selected for the Fulbright Specialist Roster for a five-year term.

Funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Fulbright Program serves to promote the international engagement of academic scholarship and build linkages between U.S. and overseas eligible institutions on curriculum, assessment, faculty development, research training, and other program development activities.

Aparasu's primary areas of expertise include geriatrics, psychopharmacology, pharmacoepidemiology, and evidence-based medicine. His current project, supported by an R01 grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, is evaluating safety profiles of anticholinergic medications in elderly nursing home residents.

He has authored or coauthored nearly 100 peer-reviewed journal articles and seven book chapters, as well as serving as editor or co-editor and contributor on two books.



Most recently, Aparasu served as co-chair of the Research Review Committee for the 21st Annual International Society of Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research International Meeting May 21-25 in Washington, D.C.

UH WINS ISPOR STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION

A team of doctoral program students from the University of Houston College of Pharmacy clinched the Student Research Competition title at the International Society of Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research (ISPOR) 21st Annual International Meeting May 21-25 in Washington, D.C.

The 11th annual Student Research Competition saw the UHCOP team climb its way to the top in five-round bracket of 20 total teams. The competition features an academic "quiz-bowl" style format in which questions from the official ISPOR Book of Terms and ISPOR Good Research Practices for Outcomes Research are posed to two teams in head-to-head competition.



The winning UHCOP team of **Ruta Sawant, Archita Bhansali, Aisha Vadhariya and Navneet Upadhyay** are flanked by coaches, left, faculty member **Marc Fleming** and, right, fellow student **Nandita Kachru**.

It was a combination of knowledge, confidence, preparation and strategy that won the day for UHCOP Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy students **Archita Bhansali, Ruta Sawant, Navneet Upadhyay and Aisha Vadhariya**. Team members also credited their coaches, fellow student and past competitor **Nandita Kachru** and Assistant Professor **Marc L. Fleming, Ph.D., MPH, R.Ph.**

Winning the 2016 competition was extra rewarding for the UHCOP team, as the win not only came with a cash prize for the college's student chapter but also took out the team that eliminated the UHCOP in the first round of last year's event.

FACULTY & RESEARCH NEWS



Above, front row, UHCOP faculty member Susan Abughosh and PHOP doctoral candidate Archita Bhansali and, back row, UHCOP faculty members Sujit Sansgiry and Marc Fleming, and Cigna HealthSpring Clinical Pharmacy Manager Omar Serna.

DONUT HOLE STUDY STRIKES GOLD

Coverage Gap Among Medicare COPD Patients Focus of Study Honored with Gold Medal at AMCP Meeting

A collaborative project by UH College of Pharmacy, Cigna HealthSpring and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) researchers to identify characteristics among Medicare-enrolled Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) patients in relation to their prescription drug coverage was awarded a Gold Medal from the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy.

Partially supported by GSK, the UHCOP-led project was honored at the AMCP & Specialty Pharmacy Annual Meeting April 19-22. Using retrospective data of more than 3,000 COPD patients, the researchers identified patient age, Centers for Medicare Services risk score, and ER visits as predictors of entering the gap while low income subsidy level as an additional predictor of time to coverage.

The project was led by UH Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) faculty member **Sujit S. Sansgiry, Ph.D.**, and coauthored by PHOP Ph.D. candidate **Archita Bhansali, M.S.** ('13), and fellow faculty members **Marc L. Fleming, Ph.D., MPH, R.Ph.**, and **Susan Abughosh, Ph.D.**; Cigna HealthSpring's **Omar Serna, Pharm.D.** ('08), BCACP; and GSK's **Michelle Kamdar, Pharm.D.**, and **Richard Stanford, Pharm.D.**

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING, PRESCRIBER WEBINARS AIMED AT STATIN ADHERENCE BOOST

Two faculty members in the UHCOP Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes have received grants from the pharmaceutical industry to explore how to improve patient adherence to statin therapy, with one project aimed at also educating prescribers on current guidelines regarding statins.



Abughosh

Susan Abughosh, Ph.D., assistant professor, has received a one-year, \$184,587 grant from Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. for her project "Improving adherence to statins with targeted motivational interviewing interventions based on group based trajectory models among patients enrolled in a Medicare advantage plan."



Fleming

Marc L. Fleming, Ph.D., MPH, R.Ph., assistant professor, has received a one-year, \$98,314 grant from Sanofi US for his project, "Physician educational webinars to improve statin prescribing and guideline adherence among patients in a Medicare advantage plan."

Fleming recently presented his findings from a \$10,000 New Investigator grant by the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy at the 2016 AACP Annual Meeting July 23-27 in Anaheim, Calif. Fleming's project, entitled "Communication about Addiction and Willingness to Counsel and Refer," was designed to solicit input on pharmacists' use of the Texas Prescription Drug Monitoring and interactions with patients who are suspected of having substance abuse problems.



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STUDENT NEWS

PHOP doctoral candidate **Ruta Sawant**, M.S. ('14) was recognized as Runner-up in the 2nd Annual UH Graduate Research and Scholarship Projects Day Oct. 30, 2015.

Her poster presentation was entitled "Impact of Insulin Tier Status on Medication Adherence for MAPD Beneficiaries." The project was coauthored by UnitedHealth Group's Alexander Nguyen, Pharm.D. ('14), formerly of Cigna HealthSpring; Cigna HealthSpring's Omar Serna, Pharm.D. ('08), BCACP, and Tara Esse, Pharm.D. ('09), BCACP; and **Sujit Sangsiry**, Ph.D., Sawant's faculty advisor.



Sawant

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PHOP Ph.D. candidate **Archita Bhansali**, M.S. ('13), was inducted into Phi Kappa Phi, the world's oldest multidisciplinary honor society, in April 2016.

Election to Phi Kappa Phi membership is by invitation only. Each chapter screens prospective members based upon their grade point averages and good character. Bhansali had three manuscripts published in peer-reviewed journals, with another 10 submitted or in development. Bhansali has completed internships with pharmaceutical companies AbbVie and GlaxoSmithKline.



Bhansali

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Three PHOP doctoral students completed internship programs within the pharmaceutical industry during Summer 2016: **Farid Chekani**, who works under **Rajender R. Aparasu**, Ph.D., FAPhA



Chekani



Upadhyay

– Life Sciences division of IHS in Washington, D.C.; **Ruta Sawant**, M.S. ('14), a student of **Sujit S. Sangsiry**, Ph.D. – Health Economic and Outcomes Research division at Biogen in Cambridge, Mass.; and **Navneet Upadhyay**, M.S. ('14), who works under **Hua Chen**, Ph.D., M.D. – Global Commercial Operations unit of Amgen in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

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PHOP Ph.D. candidate **Manvi Sharma**, M.S., has been selected for the UH Future Faculty Fellowship Program, a competitive selection program of the UH Graduate School and the UH Office of the Provost design to prepare graduate students for careers in academia. The program is supported by the National Science Foundation-funded Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL) network comprising 23 research universities.



Sharma

4 FINALISTS AMONG COLLEGE'S 30 PRESENTATIONS AT ISPOR

Four of the more than 30 presentations by Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy program students, faculty members and recent graduates were recognized as finalists in the Research Poster Competition at the International Society of Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research's 21st Annual International Meeting May 21-25 in Washington, D.C.

Mark Hatfield – "Rescheduling Hydrocodone Combination Products: Assessing the Impact on Opioid Utilization," with coauthor UHCOP faculty member Marc Fleming, Ph.D., MPH, R.Ph.;

Ya-Huei Li – "Modeling Ecodevelopmental Context of STDs/HIV Risk and Protective Behaviors Among African American Adolescents," with UHCOP adjunct faculty member Osaro Mgbere, Ph.D., M.S., MPH; University of Texas School of Public Health's (UTSPH) Paula Cuccaro, Ph.D., and UHCOP faculty members Susan Abughosh, Ph.D., Hua Chen, M.D., Ph.D., and E. James Essien, M.D., DrPH;

Ayush Patel, Ph.D. ('15), now with GlaxoSmithKline – "Effect of Psychopharmacotherapy Discontinuation on Body Mass Index Among Bipolar Children and Adolescents," with coauthors UTSPH's Wenyaw Chan, Ph.D., Legacy Community Health's Melissa Ochoa-Perez, M.D., and UHCOP faculty members Chen, Jeffrey Sherer, Pharm.D., BCPS, CGP, and Rajender Aparasu, Ph.D., FAPhA; and

Xin Wang – "Comparison of Cardiovascular Risks Following Smoking Cessation Treatments Using Varenicline vs. NRT Among Schizophrenic Smokers," with coauthors Pfizer's I-Hsuan Wu, Ph.D. ('14), UH Graduate College of Social Work's Patrick Bordnick, MPH, MSW, Ph.D., LCSW, UT School of Public Health's R.J. Peters Jr., DrPH, and UHCOP faculty members Chen, Essien, Abughosh, Sherer, and Michael Johnson, Ph.D.

ALUMNI NEWS


**MARK KRAMER,
PH.D., R.PH.**

*DIRECTOR, PHARMACY
RESEARCH, M.D. ANDERSON
CANCER CENTER*

1. Why were you interested in pursuing pharmaceutical health outcomes and policy?

I work in an academic institution where education is supported and valued. MD Anderson has invested

significantly in establishing a data warehouse of integrated patient data and information. This data warehouse will enable researchers to conduct outcomes research separately from clinical trials. Given the high cost of new cancer treatments available today, I'm especially interested in conducting pharmacoeconomic evaluations as new agents approach or enter the market.

2. Why was UHCOP the right choice for you?

The program was conveniently located for me, with many of the classes available in the Texas Medical Center. Before entering the program, I met with the director of the program and my

temporary Ph.D. program advisor to discuss class availability. As I had a full-time job, it was important to me to have some flexibility in scheduling my classes. I greatly appreciated the ability to attend the program on a part-time basis and the faculties' considerations with my work schedule.

3. Where do you work now and what are your responsibilities?

As Director, Pharmacy Research, at MD Anderson Cancer Center, my responsibilities include direction and oversight of the Investigational Pharmacy Services, our clinical pharmacokinetics program, the pharmacy laboratory, and the pharmacy fellowship in oncology research. In addition, I am a vice chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is responsible for reviewing research studies at MD Anderson to ensure they are appropriately designed and to protect the rights and welfare of the patients. It's in this role as an IRB member that I am most connected to the mission of MD Anderson and our patients.

4. How did the UHCOP program prepare you for this job/career?

As I already had my position when I started the Ph.D. program, I was more interested in improving my research skills, broadening my research acumen, and increasing my opportunities to work with other researchers, at MD Anderson and elsewhere, in the interest of 'Making Cancer History®'.


**HEMALKUMAR
MEHTA, PH.D.**

*ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MEDICAL BRANCH AT
GALVESTON*

1. Why were you interested in pursuing PHOP?

I wanted to move a step beyond what I had learned about drug discovery, development and

manufacturing, and learn the aspects of post-marketing research that examines the effect of drugs in real-world settings. It seemed fascinating to understand what it takes for a drug to get FDA approval and why certain drugs are taken out of the market after years of widespread use. UH provided a perfect curriculum for me to explore my curiosity deeper, with scientific methods.

2. Why was UHCOP the right choice for you?

UHCOP is a leader in teaching, research and community service. The college's renowned, experienced faculty hold a diversified portfolio of research work that offers students different choices to select their own career path, and the cross-institution collaboration provides quality education and resources for

students to become innovative researchers and leaders.

3. Where you working now and what are your responsibilities?

I am an assistant professor in the Department of Surgery at The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) as well as an adjunct assistant professor at UHCOP. At UTMB, I am affiliated with the Center for Comparative Effectiveness on Cancer and Other Diseases (CCECO) and the Comparative Effectiveness Research on Cancer in Texas (CERCIT).

My primary responsibility is to conduct research that assesses the quality of care and comparative effectiveness of diagnostic, treatment and surveillance modalities in cancer and non-cancer patients. I am also engaged in mentoring medical residents on their research projects.

4. How did the UHCOP program prepare you for this job/career?

The UHCOP program prepared me exceptionally well for my current job, and provided an excellent platform to grow personally as well as professionally.

Students are always encouraged and offered the opportunity to present their research work at conferences, which helped in developing communication skills and networking. Teaching assistantship, mentoring students for their class projects, and participation in organizations helped develop my skills in leadership, teaching, time management, teamwork and communication.