

IN GOOD HANDS

- WITH THE DIVISION OF RHEUMATOLOGY

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“Affliction comes to us, not to make us sad but sober, not to make us sorry but wise.” ~Henry Ward Beecher



SENSATIONAL STAFF

Patricia Murphy, MSN, CNP, CNM is our new Rheumatology nurse, working with Dr. Ramsey-Goldman. She received her BSN from Northern Illinois University, MSN as a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner from Loyola University, and post masters certificate as a Certified Nurse-Midwife from the University of Illinois at Chicago.



Pictured: Patricia Murphy

Ms. Murphy has lived all around the Chicagoland area, and thensome. She says, “I was born on the south side, 79th and Stony. My family moved to Northbrook when I was three, New Jersey when I was eleven, and back to the Chicago land area when I was seventeen. I have lived in Downers Grove ever since I moved back.”

During those younger years in New Jersey, she developed an admiration for the field of medicine. Ms. Murphy tells, “When I was a little girl, I became interested in the medical field. I volunteered at nursing homes in high school and have been committed since then.”

Ms. Murphy has devoted her career to Women’s Health and was one of the first to be certified as a Lactation Consultant through the International Board of Certified Lactation Examiners. She is also a certified Childbirth Educator. She is very excited to bring these skills to the women who receive care here, at the Division of Rheumatology.

In her free time, Ms. Murphy does yoga and walks her border collie with her son. “I feel I have been very blessed,” she says, “and it is important to give back. So, I often volunteer at the DuPage Community Clinic, a center that cares for the uninsured. I also am a Lector and Eucharistic Minister at Old St. Pat’s.”

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THE GOOD FELLOWS

Angelica Gierut, MD, a first year fellow in the Division of Rheumatology, has always had an interest in medicine. She says, "When I was little, I always looked forward to going to the pediatrician. 'Doctor' is what I always answered to the 'what are you going to be when you grow up?' question."

Her movement into Rheumatology came later in life. "My mentor, John Robinson, directed the medical school immunology course. Most of our case study examples in our small groups were based on rheumatologic diseases such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, etc. I was attracted to the idea of using immunologic manipulation in order to restore the imbalance that occurs in many of these disorders. I credit my pursuit of rheumatology to Dr. Robinson's support & the enthusiasm he has for immunology. It really left an impression," she tells.

Coming to Northwestern wasn't a tough decision for Angelica. She explains, "I am originally from the Chicago suburbs, and I wanted to stay close to my roots while still being at one of the best rheumatology programs in the U.S. Naturally, Northwestern was an easy choice for my fellowship."

The first year of her fellowship has been a hectic one. "This year has felt like internship all over!" Angelica laughs, "In residency, you become "doctor" overnight and start answering pages as if you're supposed to know the answer. The same thing happens with subspecialty fellowship." The attending and the patients both have been teaching her a lot.



Pictured: Angelica Gierut, MD

Calendar of Events:

- April 3 - Ramanavami
- April 8 - Passover Begins
- April 12 - Easter Begins (Western)
- April 19 - Easter Begins (Orthodox)
- April 22 - Administrative Professionals Day
- April 22 - Earth Day
- April 24 - Arbor Day
- May 8 - Buddha Purnima
- May 10 - Mother's Day
- May 25 - Memorial Day
- May 28 - Shavuot begins

The second year holds many expectations for Angelica. She says, "In my second year, I anticipate having more time for reading and solidifying the clinical concepts that I encountered in the first. I also look forward to "learning the ropes" of the research business and hopefully having success with the projects I will be working on this coming year." These next few years will help move her toward a particular area of interest in rheumatology based on the focus of research.

Here and now however, Angelica is focusing on the present. She tells, "My main goal right this moment is to become as knowledgeable about rheumatology as I can, so that I can be as helpful as possible when patients need my advice. I also want to become as familiar as possible with the research process so that I can set myself up for success in the future."

When she's not busy here at Northwestern, you might see Angelica out riding. "I really enjoy classical equitation," she says. "I practice the style of riding called Dressage, and have been since I was twelve. It is similar in many aspects to the Lipizzan horses that we have here in Wadsworth, IL. It is so rewarding to work with the horses and develop their athletic talent. Showing is very competitive, but lots of fun, much like medicine. It is something that will always be a part of my life."

THE FACULTY

Leena Sharma, MD, is a professor here, in the Division of Rheumatology, and has been with Northwestern since she began as an Instructor in 1989. Her interest in medicine began at an early age. Dr. Sharma tells, “I was encouraged down the path of Medicine by my parents who are immigrants from India. We came here when I was in pre-school. My parents had some worries about raising children in a new country and they strongly encouraged my sister and me to pursue medicine as a career that would allow us to be self-sufficient. I had this goal from a young age.”

Originally from Mandalay, Burma, Dr. Sharma has travelled quite a bit to get to the United States and Northwestern University. “We left Burma when I was a toddler, after the military coup that installed the current government. I spent a little bit of time in India, a few years in London, and then came to Milwaukee where I stayed through the end of medical school. My husband and I completed medical residency in Texas. We had always wanted to live in Chicago. I considered several rheumatology fellowship programs in this area; Northwestern was clearly the best, and I have been here ever since,” she says.

Dr. Sharma was led to Rheumatology during her senior year in medical school. “Rotating through the internal medicine wards at the county hospital of the Medical College of Wisconsin with Larry Ryan, a Rheumatologist, was tremendously inspiring,” she tells. “There was little doubt in my mind about what field to pursue after that rotation.”



Pictured above: Dr. Leena Sharma

Coming to specialize in osteoarthritis developed during her fellowship years, where 50% of Dr. Sharma’s time was devoted to a collaborative clinic with Orthopedic Surgery. She explains, “It was via that interaction that I became interested in mechanical factors, which became the major theme of our group’s research. Mechanical factors and their role in arthritis receive greater emphasis within orthopedics, physical therapy, physical medicine and rehabilitation, than they receive within rheumatology. However, of these fields, it is from rheumatology that most of the investigators come who study the natural history and epidemiology of OA.”

Dr. Sharma was able to bring a mechanical factor theme to the natural history study of OA, and thus created a unique niche. She credits her experience with Orthopedics. “Also, because I watched (and participated in some) procedures, I think I gained a more three dimensional feeling of the knee, which has helped me greatly in my work,” she says.

LET’S WELCOME

Newcomers to the Division:

- **Hemant Agrawal**
Research Associate in Perlman Lab
- **Marie-alix Gregoire**
Visiting Scholar in Goldman Group
- **Chris Moran**
Data Entry Temp in R. Chang Group

The big project that Dr. Sharma and her group are working on is known as MAK-3 (Mechanical Factors in Arthritis of the Knee). This study involves a cohort of 250 participants all with knee OA in at least one knee, and the overall goal is to identify factors that predict progression or worsening of disease and factors that predict decline in physical functioning. “This phase is particularly exciting,” Dr. Sharma says, “in that participants undergo a quantitative gait analysis and we are continuing to use state-of-the-art MRI approaches.”

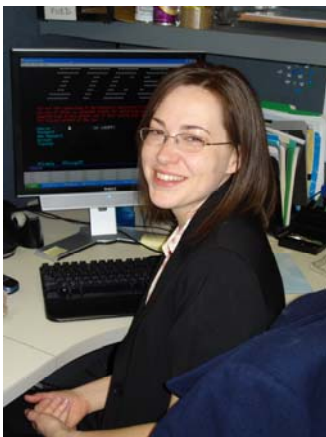
Northwestern has been a supportive community for Dr. Sharma and her work. She tells, “My team, our collaborators, our division, assistance I have received from multiple levels and individuals are what make all of this possible.”

**IN GOOD HANDS IS WRITTEN BY AARON DELEE
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RHEUMATOLOGY NEWSFLASHES



Dr. Christian Stehlik and **Andrea Dorfleutner** have recently been published in the internationally renowned *Journal of Immunology*. Their article, entitled “Activation of inflammasomes requires intracellular redistribution of the apoptotic speck-like protein containing a caspase recruitment domain,” appeared 2009 Mar 1; 182(5): 3173-82. Kudos to Dr. Stehlik and Andrea Dorfleutner on their work well-done!



Congratulations to **Kelly Thompson**, our Division Financial Assistant, on being a finalist for the Northwestern University Employee of the Year 2009! The 32nd Annual Staff Service Recognition Luncheon will take place on Thursday, May 7, 2009. Kelly has been an inspira-

tion with the transition from CUF5 to Project Café. While educating others and learning the new system, she has stayed on top of her daily tasks. Congratulations, Kelly!



Melissa Mavers, Dr. Harris Perlman, Bo Shi, and **Drs. Richard Pope & Eric Ruderman** have had an article published in the acclaimed *European Journal of Immunology*. Their article, entitled “The CDK domain of p21 is a suppressor of IL-1beta-mediated inflammation in activated macrophages,” appeared 2009 Mar; 39(3): 820-5. God job, everyone!

YOGA HELPFUL FOR RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

A program of yoga poses, breathing and relaxation significantly reduces joint tenderness and swelling for people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA), according to research funded in part by the Arthritis Foundation.

Scientists from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore randomly divided a group of 30 sedentary adults with RA into two groups: one group participated in an eight-week program of yoga and the other was put on a waiting list and served as the control. Those in the yoga group took two one-hour classes per week and were instructed to practice at home as well. Traditional yoga poses were modified as needed to accommodate for limitations due to RA. Also included in the sessions were deep breathing, relaxation and meditation techniques.

The research team found that those who participated in eight weeks of yoga classes had significantly fewer tender and swollen joints than they did before starting class. Those in the waitlist control group saw no significant changes in their tender and swollen joint counts.

Arthritis Foundation grant recipient Steffany Haaz, MFA, says, “We have previously reported that yoga helps people to feel better, and we wanted to make sure it wasn't harmful to arthritic joints. So, we were glad to find that there actually seems to be improvement in joint symptoms for RA patients. The next big question is figuring out how and why yoga might be having this effect, since it is such a multi-faceted activity.”

Haaz S, et al. The effect of yoga on clinical parameters in patients with rheumatoid arthritis. Abstract presented at American College of Rheumatology Annual Scientific Meeting, San Francisco, October 25-29, 2008.



From—<http://www.arthritis.org/yoga-ra-08.php>