

A nationwide search for a new division chief has provided ample opportunity for Peter Gorevic, MD, Lillian and Henry M. Stratton Professor of Medicine, and his colleagues in the Division to recall with pride the many achievements attained by Mount Sinai in this field.

# Division of Rheumatology

These accomplishments continue a tradition that began in the 1950's with the work of Drs. Alexander Gutman and Tsai-Fan Yu in gout, as well as the leadership of Dr. Harry Spiera and his interests in scleroderma, polymyalgia rheumatica, giant cell arteritis and Sjogrens disease. Dr Gorevic's studies in amyloidosis, cryoglobulinemia, and autoinflammatory diseases are likewise heralded.

"Mount Sinai is one of only four major referral centers for the amyloid diseases in the US. Our faculty practice has been steadily expanding at a rate of approximately 20 percent per year."

Mount Sinai's reputation for excellence in this field extends to education as well. Over one hundred candidates—including members of Mount Sinai's housestaff—vied for the single fellowship position open this past year. Graduating fellow Jenny Diep, MD, valued her experience at Mount Sinai so highly that she decided to remain in the Division as a Clinical Instructor.



## NOVEL TREATMENT FOR DEADLY CONDITION

Under Dr. Gorevic's leadership, Mount Sinai participated in a multicenter clinical trial of a new treatment for amyloid A (AA) amyloidosis, a frequently fatal condition for which few treatments exist. Results of the phase II/III trial of eprodisate (Kiacta®) demonstrated its effectiveness in slowing the progression of AA amyloidosis-associated renal disease.

The study's results were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. In the discussion section of the article, the authors—including Dr. Gorevic—commented, "The drug directly targets formation of AA amyloid rather than the underlying inflammatory condition and is a member of a new class of compounds... This treatment approach has potential applicability to other types of amyloidosis, including AL amyloidosis, familial amyloidosis, and Alzheimer's disease."

Of the 187 patients who entered the initial study of eprodisate, 110 continued in the worldwide, open-label extension. Additional data related to safety and outcomes are being collected through this extension. Dr. Gorevic presented results from this study at the national meeting of the American College of Rheumatology in November 2007.

Highlights of the past year demonstrate the numerous ways in which the current faculty is building upon historical strengths in this field.

- A phase I clinical trial is currently in progress to study novel therapeutics for cardiovascular and neurological forms of transthyretin-associated amyloidosis, the most common form of hereditary amyloidosis.
- Positive results were obtained from a phase III trial for a novel therapy for patients with treatment-refractory gout. These results were presented to the Federal Drug Administration in April, 2008. The treatment was found to be more efficacious than a placebo in reducing uric acid and incidence of gout attacks, and in the disappearance of tophi (nodular masses of uric acid crystals).
- Leslie Kerr, MD, Associate Professor, and Michael Naarendorp, MD, Clinical Professor, staff two arthritis clinics at North General Hospital, bringing high quality care for rheumatic conditions closer to patients living in the East Harlem community.
- Mount Sinai is the second site in the United States where an NIH-funded international study is examining efficacy of diflunisal (Dolobid®) as a novel therapeutic agent for familial amyloidotic polyneuropathy, a genetic disease caused by mutations in the protein transthyretin.
- Mount Sinai provides the site for patient education, and members of the faculty have served as speakers for the Amyloidosis Support Network, a national organization that monitors research developments and provides patient support and information regarding amyloid diseases.
- Robert Spiera, MD, Adjunct Clinical Instructor, participated in NIH-sponsored studies of Wegener's granulomatosis. Dr. Spiera is also examining the potential use of imatinib (Gleevec®) as a therapeutic agent for recent-onset scleroderma.