Mount Sinai Helps Boost Citywide Colon Cancer Screening Rates

In a successful public-private partnership, led in part by researchers at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York City boosted its colon cancer screening rate for residents ages 50 and older to 70 percent, and eliminated all racial disparity between 2003 and 2014.

The results of the program, the Citywide Colon Cancer Control Coalition (C5), were compiled recently by Mount Sinai researchers and appeared in the January 15, 2016, issue of Cancer. The report was requested by the American Cancer Society, which is leading an effort to boost national colonoscopy rates to 80 percent by 2018.

According to the partnership’s Co-Chair Steven Itzkowitz, MD, Professor of Medicine (Gastroenterology), and Oncological Sciences, at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York City lagged behind the rest of the country in 2003 with just 42 percent of New Yorkers receiving colonoscopies, compared with the national average of 52 percent.

“We started out with deplorable disparities in terms of race,” says Dr. Itzkowitz. “Screening rates for whites were 48 percent, Hispanics were...”

Improving Total Knee Replacement Pain Management

Mount Sinai researchers have determined that a team-based care approach, consisting of the patient, family members, the orthopaedic surgeon, and other medical practitioners, in conjunction with newer pain management strategies, is the key to maximizing patient outcomes for total knee replacement (TKR) procedures. Their findings were published in the February issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

“This is a highly successful procedure used to treat symptomatic knee arthritis and injury that is not responsive to nonsurgical treatments, such as injections, weight loss, physical therapy, and nonnarcotic medications,” says lead study author Calin S. Moucha, MD, chief of adult reconstruction and joint replacement surgery at The Mount Sinai Hospital and Associate Professor of Orthopaedics at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

“How we manage postsurgical pain turned out to be a large factor in promoting early postoperative mobility, reducing medication side effects, increasing patient satisfaction, and achieving better outcomes,” says Dr. Moucha. Participating in the study with Dr. Moucha were Emily J. Levin, MD, Clinical Instructor, Department of Anesthesiology, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and Mitchell C. Weiser, MD, PGY 5.
Drinking Milk During Pregnancy May Help Prevent Seasonal Allergies in Children

Eating foods that are high in vitamin D during the first and second trimesters of pregnancy may enable women to reduce the chances that their babies will develop seasonal allergies later in life, according to a new study by researchers at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

The findings, which were published on February 10, 2016, in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, showed that school-age children were 20 percent less likely to experience hay fever if their mothers consumed more vitamin D during pregnancy. Effects were seen with 100 IU per day—the amount of vitamin D in an 8-ounce glass of milk. Taking vitamin D supplements did not yield the same protective effect.

“Virtually all previous studies have not delineated between food sources of vitamin D and supplement sources of vitamin D,” says the study’s lead author, Supinda Bunyavanich, MD, MPH, MPhil, Assistant Professor of Genetics and Genomic Sciences, and Pediatrics, at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. “The fact that the effect was dependent on the source of vitamin D was very interesting.”

Dr. Bunyavanich’s team assessed the relationship between vitamin D and allergies by measuring vitamin D intake and serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels during pregnancy, and serum levels in the babies’ umbilical cord blood at birth, and later, when the children were between 6 and 10 years of age. The results were then correlated with whether the children exhibited symptoms of hay fever by the time they reached school age. The blood results took into account all possible sources of vitamin D, including sun exposure.

The researchers also sought to discover whether vitamin D intake might decrease allergen-specific antibody levels, but were not able to find a connection.

“A takeaway message from the study is that early life could be an important time period during which you can shape your child’s allergy trajectory,” says Dr. Bunyavanich, who is also a member of the Icahn Institute for Genomics and Multiscale Biology and The Mindich Child Health and Development Institute. “Rates of allergies and hay fever have been increasing over the past few decades, which is a concern for families and a public health issue. There are many different theories about why allergies are increasing, but there is no proven explanation.”

The significant finding that vitamin D-rich foods may help prevent seasonal allergies now paves the way for a potential interventional follow-up trial. Such a study could involve randomly assigning expectant mothers to a vitamin D-rich or usual diet, with researchers following the babies through childhood to evaluate whether rates of allergies differ, says Dr. Bunyavanich.

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at 57 percent, blacks at 55 percent, and Asians in the low 20s. What’s impressive is that by 2007, we reached 62 percent in terms of the total colonoscopy rate, and there was zero separation by race,” he says. By comparison, rates of 62 percent were not reached nationally until 2012.

The innovative C5 program, which included the support of all New York City public hospitals, is believed to have resulted in 800,000 colonoscopies since 2005.

The Mount Sinai Hospital played a special role in the effort by demonstrating how health educators and lay volunteers from the community, known as patient navigators, could be trained to help guide patients through the colonoscopy procedure. These patient navigators called patients to explain what a colonoscopy is, how to prepare for it, and to remind them of their upcoming appointments. They also helped patients plan for transportation, child care, and other needs on the day of the procedure.

“We demonstrated over a short period of time that patient navigators really helped. The lay navigators could call a patient and say, ‘It’s not so bad, I had one. Here’s what you have to do,’” Dr. Itzkowitz says.

He and his colleague Lina Jandorf, MA, Professor of Oncological Sciences at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and Director of The Tisch Cancer Institute Community Outreach Programs, proved that health educators actually save hospitals money by reducing no-show rates and costs associated with patients who arrive at their appointment with an inadequately cleansed bowel, he says.

The Mount Sinai Hospital also served as a model for other hospitals during the initiative by creating a “direct access system” that allowed patients to make an appointment for a screening colonoscopy on the recommendation of their primary care doctors.

Dr. Itzkowitz says the other factors that helped the initiative included the large number of doctors and endoscopists in New York City; the city’s annual allocation of $1.5 million to help pay for colonoscopies for the uninsured; New York State’s requirement that all ambulatory surgery centers dedicate 10 to 20 percent of caseloads to charity cases; and an overall commitment to colon health by leaders of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and New York City’s Health and Hospitals Corp., which runs the city’s 11 public hospitals. Other initiatives, including a city-funded public media campaign that placed advertisements on buses and in the subway to target certain populations, also played a role.
Celebrating a Mount Sinai Legend on his 90th Birthday

Arthur H. Aufses, Jr., MD, one of Mount Sinai’s most respected physicians, celebrated his 90th birthday with nearly 250 colleagues, family, and friends on Monday, February 8, at the Harmonie Club in Manhattan.

Dr. Aufses served as Chair of the Department of Surgery for 22 years, retiring from that position in 1996, and he currently holds appointments as Professor of Surgery, and of Population Health Science and Policy, at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. He also is Chairman Emeritus of The Ruth J. & Maxwell Hauser and Harriet & Arthur H. Aufses, Jr., MD Department of Surgery.

“Dr. Aufses represents the highest standards in almost every way: a superior surgeon, an incredible clinician, a spectacular leader, a great chairman, and putting it all together, a role model for all of us,” Kenneth L. Davis, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mount Sinai Health System, told the guests.

“Dr. Aufses has touched many lives. He helped break down barriers for women and ethnic-minority surgeons, and his support has helped many residents and fellows become better physicians than they ever thought possible,” said Michael L. Marin, MD, FACS, The Jacobson Professor of Surgery, and Chairman, Department of Surgery, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and Surgeon-in-Chief, Mount Sinai Health System.

During his tenure as Chair, Dr. Aufses transformed the Department of Surgery by staying abreast of advances, such as the advent of laparoscopic surgery, and adapting to the rise of ambulatory surgery, as well as implementing a tremendous expansion of the transplant program to include the liver, pancreas, and heart. In 1988, he organized the surgical team that performed the first liver transplant in New York State. His major clinical and research interests are inflammatory bowel disease and surgical education, and he has published more than 235 papers and chapters in various journals and textbooks.

Dr. Aufses’ many awards include a Jacobi Medallion—named for Dr. Abraham Jacobi, an early Mount Sinai Medical Board President—and the highest award for distinguished achievement in medicine or extraordinary clinical and educational services within The Mount Sinai Hospital. At the celebration, Dr. Aufses was presented with the medallion Dr. Jacobi received at the Annual Dinner of the Associated Alumni of Mount Sinai Hospital, held in 1910 in honor of Dr. Jacobi’s 50 years of service.

All tickets to the birthday celebration benefited the newly established Arthur H. Aufses, Jr., MD Lectureship.

“Dr. Aufses represents the highest standards in almost every way: a superior surgeon, an incredible clinician, a spectacular leader, a great chairman, and putting it all together, a role model for all of us.”

— Kenneth L. Davis, MD
A Decade of Growth for the Child Life Zone

In February, the Child Life Zone at Kravis Children's Hospital at Mount Sinai commemorated its tenth anniversary with a week of special guests, musical performances, art projects, and more. The celebration marked an extraordinary decade of growth for “The Zone,” which has provided a fun and friendly environment for therapeutic and educational play activities for pediatric patients and their families. It also has attracted a steady stream of celebrities—Heisman Trophy winners, National Football League (NFL) draftees, singers, and other notables—who have visited the patients over the last decade.

“Being in the hospital can be difficult and overwhelming,” says Lisa M. Satlin, MD, the Herbert H. Lehman Professor and Chair of Pediatrics for the Mount Sinai Health System and Pediatrician-in-Chief of Kravis Children’s Hospital. “We are delighted that we can give our hospitalized children a wonderful distraction, and with that a chance to relax and have fun.”

The Zone was opened in partnership with the Garth Brooks Improving Total Knee Replacement Pain Management (continued from page 1)

Traditional pain management for TKRs includes a computerized patient-controlled analgesia pump, which can lead to nausea, vomiting, urinary retention, low blood pressure, constipation, and itching. Newer pain-control strategies, referred to as multimodal protocols, more effectively manage pain and limit side effects. These include a combination of pain management medications, such as oral medications and nerve blocks taken before and after surgery; regional anesthesia with preoperative nerve blocks performed by an anesthesiologist; and intraoperative pain injections within the knee performed by the orthopaedic surgeon.

Using these multimodal protocols was found to lower patient pain severity ratings in the first few days following surgery, minimize the unwanted side effects more commonly associated with traditional pain control management, and reduce the overall amount of narcotic pain medication needed in postoperative pain control. It also helped patients to be better able to participate in early postoperative physical therapy and be more satisfied with their postoperative pain control.

Additionally, the study authors note that patients should avoid long-term chronic narcotic use for knee arthritis pain control prior to surgery because it can lower pain threshold and result in increased postoperative pain. They also suggest that patients and their orthopaedic surgeons discuss a continuation of prescribed oral medications for possibly as long as several weeks after the procedure, an effort aimed at reducing the risk of rebound pain and the development of chronic pain, as well as promoting physical therapy and other activities.

Apart from pain management, they note that having a strong support system of family and/or friends—who are involved throughout the perioperative, surgical, and postoperative process—can be helpful to the patient in achieving the quickest recovery.

“Successful outcomes after total knee replacement surgery require a complex recipe,” says Dr. Moucha. “Pain management is one of the main ingredients, and it appears that we have identified some of the best methods. Further research is still needed in order to align optimal efficacy, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency.”
Around the Health System

Learning to Deliver Compassionate Care

Medical students from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai performed special patient rounds on Tuesday, February 16, as part of The Gold Humanism Honor Society’s (GHHS) annual “Solidarity Day for Compassionate Care.” This national program encourages hospital staff and medical school students to develop more caring, compassionate relationships with patients. Twenty students visited 12 patients in The Mount Sinai Hospital Palliative Care Unit and Kravis Children’s Hospital at Mount Sinai, practicing “Tell Me More” interactions. The students conversed with patients about topics unrelated to their diagnoses, developing compassionate communication skills they can use in future patient interactions. Created by GHHS chapter members at the Icahn School of Medicine in 2014, dozens of GHHS chapters nationwide use the “Tell Me More” program.

Medical student Yotam Arens learns more about the life of patient Juan Sanabria.

LGBT Community Health Screenings

More than 100 individuals stopped by the “Love Yourself, Love Your Health” education and screening fair on Thursday, February 18, co-sponsored by LGBT Health in the Mount Sinai Office for Diversity and Inclusion and by the LGBT Center of New York, located at 208 West 13th Street. Attendees had the opportunity to speak with health care professionals from the Mount Sinai Health System about transgender services, fitness, primary care, and a variety of other health programs. The event also provided 200 health screenings and health education giveaways. Courtney Paul of Bravo’s new series, Workout New York, made a special appearance to offer tips on exercise and health.

Recognizing Outstanding Staff at Mount Sinai Beth Israel

Ten Mount Sinai Beth Israel employees received a 2016 Heart Award, one of the hospital’s most prestigious honors, at a lunch reception on Friday, February 26, held at Podell Auditorium. The award recognizes employees—nominated and selected by their peers—who continuously focus on patient safety, enhancing the patient experience, and making Mount Sinai Beth Israel the hospital of choice for patients, staff, and the community. Mount Sinai Beth Israel President Susan Somerville, RN, congratulated the 2016 awardees at the reception.

Front row, from left: Althea Reid, Patient Care Associate; Yazmin Navarro, Manager; Terry Attilio, LCSW, Social Work Coordinator; Hinde Nessenbaum, CI, Coordinator; and Milord Baptiste, Lead X-ray Technician. Back row, from left: Cheryl Gilmore-Hall, RN; Carzei O’Neill, CASAC, Counselor; Teisha Horton-Jordan, RN; Susan Somerville, RN; Jinquan Ye, CST, Surgical Technician; and Lakiyah Glivens, Registrar I.

Luis R. Perez receives a blood pressure screening at the LGBT Center of New York from Julie Spilman, MEd, Director, Health Education & Outreach, Karpas Health Information Center, Mount Sinai Beth Israel.
Brain Awareness Week

To commemorate Brain Awareness Week, Monday, March 14, through Sunday, March 20, The Friedman Brain Institute joins The Dana Foundation, a private philanthropic organization that supports brain research through grants, publications, and educational programs, in its global efforts to increase public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research. The events include:

The Art of the Brain

This is an exhibition of photographs and medical illustrations that celebrates the beauty of the brain as seen through the eyes of Mount Sinai scientists. The photographs were created with the aid of advanced imaging technology, allowing researchers to gain a better understanding of how the brain works, with the ultimate goal of accelerating the development of new treatments for brain disorders. The exhibit will feature a variety of images, including the “Reactive Astrocytes Cluster to Contain Activated Leukocytes” (see below). This year, the exhibition will take place at two locations:

Monday, March 14 – Saturday, March 19
Monday - Thursday, 10 am – 6 pm
Friday, Noon – 4 pm
Saturday, 10 am – 1 pm
Grady Alexis Gallery
215 East 99th Street

Monday, March 14 – Sunday, March 20
Mount Sinai Beth Israel
Phillips Ambulatory Care Center Atrium

The Fourth Annual Brain Awareness Fair

Local students, their parents, and the public are invited for an afternoon of educational hands-on activities and demonstrations led by Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai faculty and staff. Faculty will also provide information on a number of topics, including addiction, Alzheimer’s disease, autism, and mental health at the “Meet the Experts” booth. Hosted by Mentoring in Neuroscience Discovery at Sinai (MiNDS), with support from The Friedman Brain Institute, and the Center for Excellence in Youth Education (CEYE) at Mount Sinai.

Tuesday, March 15
1 – 5 pm
The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus
Guggenheim Pavilion Atrium

A Commitment to Patient Safety

The Mount Sinai Hospital’s Office for Excellence in Patient Care invites faculty, staff, and the public to participate in activities during National Patient Safety Awareness Week, Monday, March 14 – Friday, March 18. A series of events will spotlight the hospital’s enhanced patient safety program, which was launched in January and aims to strengthen and sustain a culture of safety among all staff at Mount Sinai. The program’s top initiatives include:

- **Patient Safety Wednesdays**, weekly rounds by a team of hospital leaders to educate staff on select clinical or environmental safety topics; and
- **The “Great Catch Program,”** which teaches staff how to identify and alert leadership of potential safety issues, and awards individuals and units for their efforts.

Patient Safety Awareness Week activities include a one-day Patient Safety Fair and daily presentations by patient safety leaders, among them, Bruce Darrow, MD, PhD, Chief Medical Information Officer, and Marc Napp, MD, Senior Vice President, Medical Affairs, Mount Sinai Health System.

Patient Safety Fair
Wednesday, March 16
Guggenheim Pavilion Atrium

To learn more, contact Robin Maley, RN, MPH, Clinical Program Director, Patient Safety, at robin.maley@mountsinai.org or 347-216-0943.

21st Annual Medical Student Research Day

Medical students will present the results of their basic and clinical research projects. Student oral presentations will be given by Mitra Heshmati, PhD, (mentor, Scott Russo, PhD, Associate Professor of Neuroscience); Imikomobong Ibia (mentor, Charles Mobbs, PhD, Professor of Medicine, Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, and Neuroscience); Emily Leven (mentor, Eyal Shemesh, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, and Psychiatry); Paul Peng, PhD, (mentor, Joshua Brody, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine – Hematology and Medical Oncology); and Elizabeth Tarras (mentor, Rosanne Leipzig, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine, Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, and Population Health Science and Policy). Hosted by the Medical Student Research Office.

Thursday, March 10
12:30 - 2 pm
Introduction and student oral presentations
Stern Auditorium

2 - 4 pm
Poster presentations and lunch
Guggenheim Pavilion Atrium

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