

# news

news...announcements...promotions...facts...appointments...awards...publications...

## Pediatric Update conference is October 19

The fifth annual Yale Pediatric Update conference will take place on Friday, October 19 at the New Haven Lawn Club. This conference, the preeminent general pediatric course in the region, will provide important updates on a variety of topics of importance to practitioners who care for children. Topics will include closed head injury, infant feeding problems, rashes, choosing antibiotics, complementary medicine, office cardiology and therapies for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Featured speakers include Scott Sicherer, MD, associate professor of pediatrics from Mt. Sinai Hospital, who will speak about diagnosing and managing food allergies, and David Katz, MD, who will discuss organic and "natural" foods. Participants earn 8 category 1 CME credits. **For more information, call the Continuing Medical Education office at 203-785-4578 or go to <http://cme.yale.edu>.**

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## New faculty, continued

**Mark Mercurio, MD**, an attending physician in the newborn special care unit, has been appointed associate professor in neonatology.

Dr. Mercurio, who has been a part-time pediatric faculty member since 1988, is the founder and first director of the Yale Pediatric Ethics Program, and has been responsible for teaching ethics to Yale pediatric residents, fellows and physician associates. He is chair of the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital ethics committee and co-chair of the Yale-New Haven Hospital ethics committee.

Dr. Mercurio has a medical degree from Columbia University and a master's in philosophy from Brown University. He has held positions at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital, where he founded and directed the newborn ICU; Yale-New Haven Hospital and Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital. Dr. Mercurio, named one of state's best physicians by *Connecticut Magazine*, is in demand regionally and nationally as a speaker, and serves on several local and national committees related to bioethics.

**Karena L. Swan, MD**, has joined the pediatric endocrine faculty as an associate research scientist, and will also participate in endocrinology clinical activities at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital. Dr. Swan received her medical degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. She completed an internship and a residency at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital and a post-doctoral fellowship in pediatric endocrinology at Yale University.

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## KidNeeds program dedicated at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital

This summer, Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital hosted an event to dedicate a program for children with kidney disease in memory of the late Dr. Norman J. Siegel, former chief of pediatrics, who died in April 2006. The National Kidney Foundation of Connecticut presented a plaque to his widow, Rise Siegel, of Orange.

Dr. Siegel helped create KidNeeds, which supports children who have kidney disease, as well as their siblings, who are often unintentionally overlooked. KidNeeds enables parents to share concerns and experiences with other families in similar situations and offers financial assistance to families, as well as summer camp experiences in dialysis camps and post-transplant camps.



At the Norman J. Siegel, MD, KidNeeds plaque presentation are (l-r): Sanjay Kulkarni, MD, transplant surgeon; Sukru Emre, MD, director of the Yale-New Haven Transplantation Center; Margaret Hostetter, MD, chief of pediatrics at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital; Mrs. Rise Siegel; Kimberly Hathaway, CEO of the National Kidney Foundation of Connecticut; and Tucker Leary, YNH vice president.

# YALE pediatric UPDATE

The Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital Physician Letter

## Dr. Sukru Emre heads YNHCH's new liver transplant program

The Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital (YNHCH) has launched an exciting new liver transplant program with the arrival of Sukru Emre, MD, one of the world's most experienced liver transplant surgeons.

Dr. Emre, who made the liver transplant program at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York one of the best in the nation, arrived in July as the new director of the Yale-New Haven Transplantation Center, and section chief of organ transplantation and immunology in the department of surgery at Yale School of Medicine.

In addition to overseeing the activities of the transplantation center and its multidisciplinary group of physicians and caregivers, Dr. Emre will continue to practice his specialty, adult and pediatric liver transplantation. He brings expertise in performing split-liver transplants (dividing a liver between two recipients) and living donor liver transplants. Dr. Emre also expects to perform highly complicated surgeries such as portocaval shunts and hepatobiliary surgical procedures in children, and to strengthen the pediatric intestinal and kidney transplantation programs at YNHCH.

"My vision is to replicate what I did at Mount Sinai by creating one of the best pediatric liver and transplantation programs in the country at Yale-New Haven," said Dr. Emre, who came to the



Sukru Emre, MD, new director of the Yale-New Haven Transplantation Center

United States from his native Turkey in 1988. Dr. Emre received his medical degree and completed his residency at

## Cardiac surgery keeps evolving at YNHCH



Richard W. Kim, MD, new pediatric cardiac surgeon at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital

Pediatric cardiac surgery at the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital continues to evolve with the addition of a new surgeon, Richard W. Kim, MD, who is involved in all of the clinical cardiac programs at YNHCH and has joined the Yale

the University of Istanbul. He completed one fellowship in hepatobiliary surgery at the University of Istanbul and another in transplant surgery at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York.

In New York, Dr. Emre treated patients from Connecticut who plan to continue care with him at YNHCH, in addition to many from throughout the Northeast and others from as far as Texas and Puerto Rico. Dr. Emre has also treated patients from countries such as Norway, Saudi Arabia, Italy and Argentina. Data from the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) have shown that his patients' survival rates have been 99 percent after one year and 95 percent after five years, both of which are above the national averages.

In the next few months, Dr. Emre will be bringing an additional transplant surgeon whom he trained at Mount Sinai: Antonios Arvelakis, MD. [continued on page 2...](#)

University School of Medicine faculty as an assistant professor of cardiac surgery.

"This is a very exciting time to be joining the program," Dr. Kim said. "We are expanding, and we will continue to expand. This means we are able to offer the complete range of cardiac surgical care to more patients and be available 24 hours a day. We can provide state-of-the-art care for patients who need complicated procedures such as single ventricle operations, neonatal surgeries and hybrid procedures that [continued on page 2...](#)

Liver transplant program, continued

transplant doctors will work closely with Pramod Mistry, MD, chief of pediatric gastroenterology/hepatology, and Larry Moss, MD, surgeon-in-chief of YNHCH.

Dr. Emre has set a long-range goal of improving the quality, patient volume and research activities of all of Yale-New Haven's transplantation programs so that more patients can benefit from state-of-the-art surgical procedures such as kidney, liver and pancreas transplants. While transplant patients can expect to continue their relationships with their transplant doctors for the rest of their lives, "our goal is to make them healthy and allow them to live healthy lives," said Dr. Emre.

Yale-New Haven Hospital has been a pioneer in transplantation. The first liver transplant in Connecticut was performed at YNHCH in 1983. Two years later, surgeons here made history when they performed a liver transplant on the world's youngest patient. Marissa Emple, who was only 100 days old at the time, is now a healthy 22-year-old who just graduated from college.

Since then, the number of liver transplants performed per year in the United States has been increasing, and Dr. Emre has performed transplants on infants as young as two weeks of age. In



Joyce Albert, RN, (left) clinical transplant coordinator at Yale-New Haven Hospital, was recently reunited with Marissa Emple, who made history when she received a liver transplant at Yale-New Haven Hospital in 1985. Just 100 days old at the time, she was the world's youngest liver transplant patient. Albert was one of the nurses who followed Marissa's progress after her liver transplant.

2005 alone, 6,500 liver transplants were performed for patients who had serious liver dysfunction who would not have been able to survive without a new liver. The most common liver disease in children for which transplants are done is biliary atresia. Other diseases may include Alagille's Syndrome, alpha-1-antitrypsin deficiency, metabolic liver diseases, acute liver failure, Wilson's disease and viral hepatitis.

"Transplantation is still a developing field, and the procedures involved are cutting edge," said Dr. Emre. "They are complex operations that require unique

Pediatric cardiology program, continued

combine surgical skills with interventional cardiology."

In January, Toshiharu Shin'oka, MD, became director of pediatric cardiac surgery. Dr. Shin'oka is an international expert in the field of cardiovascular tissue engineering, which he expects to pursue in phase 1 clinical trials at YNHCH. Along with Dr. Kim, the team includes Gary S. Kopf, MD, and Dennis Mello, MD.

Dr. Kim arrived at YNHCH from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and

the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, where he completed fellowships in both cardiothoracic surgery and pediatric cardiothoracic surgery. He completed his medical degree at the State University of New York at Brooklyn, and was an intern, resident and chief resident in general surgery at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

While at Yale, Dr. Kim also completed a postdoctoral research fellowship in transplant immunology and vascular biology. He is currently an investigator in the Yale Interdepartmental Program in Vascular Biology and Transplantation.

skills, a high level of knowledge and close teamwork. Transplant requires cooperation among different disciplines, including the intensive care team, infectious disease experts, cardiology, pulmonary and endocrinology, as well as nurses, child life specialists and social workers."

Dr. Emre encourages pediatricians to refer potential transplant patients to the program as early as possible. "An early referral allows us to educate the family and guide them through the basics of care," said Dr. Emre. "If their situation becomes more serious, we may be able to advocate for them as far as their position on the donor list."

One of Dr. Emre's major interests is maximizing the availability of donor organs by performing split liver transplants, domino transplants and living donor liver transplants – transplanting a section of healthy liver from a living donor into a recipient whose liver has been removed. About 17,000 Americans are currently waiting for a liver transplant, with their names prioritized so the sickest people always go to the top of the list.

**Direct referrals to the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital Transplantation Center can be made by calling Dr. Emre's office at 203-785-2565, or the Transplant Referral Line at 866-YALE-TXP.**

He expects to be involved in the expansion and development of the pediatric heart transplant program at YNHCH. He conducts laboratory research into pediatric transplantation and molecular techniques to address congenital heart problems in utero, a field that he said has significant potential.

"It is important that we learn more about how some congenital heart problems develop so we can intervene at an early stage," Dr. Kim said. "Right now I'm looking at gene therapy techniques and using stem cells to try and correct these abnormalities before babies are born."

YNHCH opens Connecticut's first pediatric minimally invasive OR



Milissa McKee (right), MD, director of pediatric minimally invasive surgery at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, completes surgery on an 8-year-old patient using specialized instruments, monitors and simulation equipment. With her are (l-r): Karen Diefenbach, MD, pediatric surgery fellow; Dorothy Toung, MD, anesthesia fellow; David Freyle, MD, pediatric anesthesia attending physician.

Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital (YNHCH) has opened the first minimally invasive operating room for pediatric patients in Connecticut. The new surgical suite is designed to allow surgeons and nurses fingertip control over many specialized instruments and simulation equipment. This new technology allows surgeons to perform the most advanced procedures, including on neonates.

"Minimally invasive surgery has already brought dramatic changes to the lives of children at YNHCH," said Milissa McKee, MD, director of minimally invasive surgery at YNHCH. Each year an increasing number of the nearly 1,500 operations performed by YNHCH's pediatric surgeons are now minimally invasive, according to Dr. McKee. Specialists in areas such as cardiology, urology, cardiac surgery and orthopedics will be using the new minimally invasive surgical center.

The new operating room is called OR1, and is used primarily for minimally

invasive laparoscopic surgery. OR1 is designed to allow the surgeon to control up to 31 separate medical devices at the touch of a button, including cameras, operating room lighting and video

Dr. Lawrence Moss, surgeon-in-chief at the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, examines a 16-month-old who had surgery when he was five months old.



This new technology allows surgeons to perform the most advanced procedures, including on neonates.

conferencing systems. It also allows the surgical team to quickly retrieve critical patient data such as CT or MRI images at the touch of a button for instantaneous reference.

The retrieval system is easily accessed from either of two command centers located inside or outside the sterile field, and from the nurses' workstation. The video capabilities of OR1 maximize efficiency and communication, with everyone in the OR having ready access to images of the surgical field, physiologic signs and other critical information.

Pediatric patients who undergo minimally invasive surgery, compared to traditional surgery, leave the hospital with wounds that measure a fraction of an inch. Pain is minimized, complications are eliminated, and patients go home sooner and quickly get on with their lives. "This new operating room makes the surgeon's work easier and allows us to help even more patients," Dr. McKee said.

Welcome new faculty



Kevin Ching, MD, has joined the faculty as an assistant professor in pediatric emergency medicine (PEM). Dr. Ching received his medical

degree from the MCP/Hahnemann University (Drexel) College of Medicine in Philadelphia. He completed his pediatric residency at New York Presbyterian Hospital, Weill Cornell Medical Center; and was a fellow in PEM at the New York University School of Medicine/Bellevue Hospital Center.

In addition, he was a fellow in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights in Washington, D.C., where he conceived the charter and budget for the Asian American and Pacific Islander Health Initiative Presidential Advisory Commission, signed by President Bill Clinton.

Dr. Ching is interested in the use of medical simulation as an educational tool, and plays an active role in preparing and overseeing simulation exercises for the housestaff. His research focuses on the role of nebulized steroids during asthma exacerbations.

Kelly Hodges, MD, has been



appointed clinical instructor in pediatrics, and will work as a clinician in the pediatric Primary Care Center and the well-baby nursery. Dr. Hodges has a medical degree from the Medical College of Wisconsin, and completed an internship and residency at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital. She is a recipient of the

Martha Brochin, MD, Award, named after the late Hamden pediatrician and given to a second-year pediatric resident at Yale who "not only takes outstanding care of patients, but does so with intelligence, humility, unbounded energy, selfless concern for others and always with a smile."



Sandra Iragorri, MD, has been appointed as an instructor in pediatric nephrology. She will participate in clinical activities in nephrology in the

Pediatric Specialty Center and the Organ Transplant Center at the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital. An assistant clinical professor of pediatrics at Yale School of Medicine since 2002, Dr. Iragorri received her medical degree at Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario in Bogotá, Colombia and completed post doctoral work at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine at the University of London. She completed residencies at the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital/Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton, England; and at Guys Hospital/Royal Free Hospital, in London. Dr. Iragorri completed her fellowship in pediatric nephrology at the Royal Free Hospital.

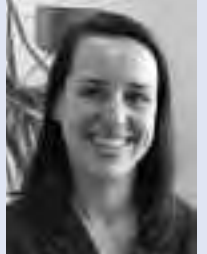
Gary Kupfer, MD, has joined the



faculty as an associate professor in pediatric hematology and section chief of pediatric hematology/oncology at

Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital. Dr. Kupfer is nationally and internationally known for his contributions to understanding the role of aberrant protein complexes in the Fanconi anemia/BRCA1/2 pathway. He received his medical degree at Johns Hopkins University, and completed a residency in pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where he also coordinated the homeless health project. Dr. Kupfer completed a fellowship in pediatric hematology/oncology at Children's Hospital in Boston, Harvard Medical School, and a post-doctoral fellowship at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. Most recently, he was associate professor of microbiology and pediatrics at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Va., and director of the comprehensive hemophilia clinic program there.

Melissa Langhan, MD, has joined



the section of pediatric emergency medicine as an assistant professor. Dr. Langhan received her

medical degree from SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn. She was chief resident in pediatrics at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, and recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship in pediatric emergency medicine at Yale School of Medicine. Dr. Langhan's research focuses on objective measurements of clinical and laboratory criteria as predictors of severity of acute asthma exacerbations.

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