

ISU researchers plow new ground

Each week I have been highlighting the many ways that ISU's students and faculty are engaged in a constant quest for new knowledge to make our world a better place. I begin each column by reminding you that research universities like ISU are about much more than training the nation's future work force. They are also about creating new knowledge—finding cures to diseases, inventing new technologies, developing a new understanding of how the world works.

At the ISU College of Pharmacy, faculty and staff are making a difference not only in the lives of their students, but in the lives of all of us.

The college's faculty are undertaking impressive research in the fields of cancer research, alcohol use, and the effects of certain drugs on our bodies. The knowledge they are uncovering is changing the way we look at medicine and its impact on the way we live. Let me tell you about just a few of these outstanding researchers and the world-changing discoveries they are making.

Dr. Alok Bhushan is studying glioblastoma, the most common and malignant of brain tumors. This is the same highly lethal cancer afflicting U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy. The tumor is extremely drug-resistant, and glioblastoma carries only a 2 to 3 percent survival rate after five years.



Along with a multi-disciplinary team of researchers at Idaho State University, Bhushan is studying various drugs and compounds that can interfere with cell growth and possibly block tumors. The team is also studying compounds that could help prevent and treat breast and oral cancer.

Another College of Pharmacy researcher, Dr. Karl Madaras-Kelly, has garnered more than a half million dollars in competitive grants and clinical and research contracts in his time at ISU. Recently, he was awarded a grant from the prestigious National Institutes of Health to study health care associated pneumonia. Madaras-Kelly's work on the effects of antibiotics on the body is known and respected nationally, and his research has been cited more than 235 times in pharmacy and medical journals.

And Dr. Dan Selvage, another nationally respected researcher, was recently awarded a National Institutes of Health grant to study gender-specific reactions to alcohol use. His research could lead to better gender-specific alcohol treatment.

And while ISU researchers are working toward a better future, they are also helping patients today. The Idaho Drug Utilization Review program, operated by faculty and staff at the College of Pharmacy, is designed to improve patient care and reduce overall drug costs in the state of Idaho for Medicaid prescribers.

Through the program, faculty members analyze patient drug usage, prescriptions, and pharmacy dispensing statistics.

They also review critical patient profiles and report findings to Medicaid providers and pharmacies, along with researching drug-related trends. The information they learn is used to create cost-saving plans and educational materials for pharmacists and medical professionals.

Of course, these are only a few highlights of the work being done in the College of Pharmacy. Many other faculty members are also involved in significant research.

In the laboratory, in the classroom and in the community, College of Pharmacy students and faculty are improving our lives, both today and for tomorrow. The advances in their research equate to better health for all of us and provide hope that we will overcome the most challenging and devastating of illnesses.

Next week, I will highlight other academic work being done by ISU students and faculty. I think you will continue to be impressed.

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