

Dr. Jaime Matta and researchers at PSM present newsworthy paper at Cancer Research Annual Meeting



A group of investigators at Ponce School of Medicine, led by Dr. Jaime Matta, Professor of Physiology, Pharmacology and Toxicology and co-director of the U - 56 Grant at Ponce School of Medicine, presented their findings at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research, held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, DC. In addition to Dr. Matta, co-workers included Yeidy Vergne, a graduate student in the Public Health Program, Luisa Morales, Wanda Vargas, Carolina Alvarez-Garriga and Manuel Bayona, Acting Chair of the Public Health Program. The presentation is an incident-case, case-control study design involving Puerto Rican women and is titled: "Consumption of Vitamins and Calcium reduces Breast Cancer risk by their regulation of the DNA Repair

Capacity". The objective of the study was to examine the association of the capacity of DNA to repair itself (DRC) and the risk of Breast Cancer (BC) in terms of consumption of vitamin and calcium supplements by means of a large case-control study. A total of 268 breast cancer cases and 457 controls were included in this analysis. Statistically significant associations were found between Breast Cancer (BC) and ageing, low DRC levels, family history of BC, and no breastfeeding. Vitamins and Calcium intake were found to be protective reducing 30% and 40% the odds of having BC respectively. Matta said the findings suggest that the calcium supplements are acting to enhance DNA repair capacity, a complex biologic process involving over 200 proteins that, if disrupted, can lead to cancer. "This process involves at least five separate pathways and is critical for maintaining genomic stability", said Matta.

HABLEMOS DE CANCER: ENCUENTRO EDUCATIVO



The Ponce School of Medicine and the Moffitt Cancer Center share a research partnership. One aim is to develop community outreach programs for cancer prevention and control. Through this efforts, "**Hablemos de cáncer: Encuentro educativo**" was performed for the second time for the benefit of those affected by cancer, such as patients, family, caretakers, and people at risk, from the southern area of Puerto Rico. The meeting place for the activity was the facilities of the Salvation Army, conveniently located in the community. More than 400 persons attended the all day event, successfully participating in the conferences and

workshops, which were focused on the main theme of *Spirituality and Cancer*. Screenings for breast, colon and prostate cancer were carried out as a way of cancer prevention and detection in the community. Furthermore, "**Hablemos de cáncer: Encuentro educativo**" made possible the development of a closer communication between patients



and specialists in the various types of cancer through specific workshops. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and to share their concerns directly with oncologists, psychiatrists and psychologists. The

workshops offered: information about Cancer in women, Prostate cancer, Lung cancer, Colon cancer, Hematologic cancer, the needs of cancer patient's caretakers and family; and the way that thoughts and emotions impact health. The event was evaluated favorably by the attendants, 86% reporting that the objectives were met in a satisfactory manner. Among the participants, one of them emphasized the following: "An excellent event, educational and healing. Congratulations to all who made possible this activity!."



PSM Alumnus receives award

Carl J. Minniti, Jr., MD, PSM graduate 1986, was honored with the Association of Community Cancer Centers' annual David King Community Clinical Scientist Award for his outstanding service, leadership, and commitment to the oncology community. Dr. Minniti, Jr. practices medical oncology and hematology in a single specialty group practice in Mickleton, N.J.

Over his long career, Dr. Minniti, Jr. has coordinated research efforts, opened numerous clinical studies, and has demonstrated the ability for significant protocol accrual to cooperative group trials. He is a firm believer that excellence in cancer care requires a dedication to clinical research, balanced with compassionate care, faith, and hope for patients and their families.

The award was presented at ACCC's 36th Annual

National Meeting on Thursday, March 18, 2010, at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel in Baltimore, Md. The David King Community Clinical Scientist Award recognizes active community clinical research leaders. Award winners have demonstrated leadership in the development, participation, and evaluation of clinical studies and/or are active in the development of new screening, risk assessment, treatment, or supportive care programs for cancer patients.

After graduating from Ponce School of Medicine, Dr. Minniti, Jr. completed his fellowship in oncology and hematology at Fox Chase Cancer Center in 1992. Dr. Minniti, Jr. returned to his suburban roots to enhance a hematology practice that was started by his father, Dr. Carl Minniti, Sr., 30 years earlier. Together, they designed and constructed

a state-of-the-art facility for the delivery of multidisciplinary oncology care to the local community. Tami Bach, MD, PhD, is the newest addition to their practice, complimenting the care that is offered. Through a network affiliation with Fox Chase Cancer Center and South Jersey Hospital, he is able to offer his patients participation in a variety of clinical trials. Dr. Minniti, Jr. has been closely associated with the American Cancer Society for the last 15 years as both a volunteer and a past president, coordinating patient care services, screening programs, and fund raising activities. Dr. Minniti, Jr., also serves as chief in the division of oncology and is the immediate past president of the medical staff at Underwood Memorial Hospital.