

UCSD Investigator Kumar Sharma Receives International Award for Innovative Diabetes Research

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Kumar Sharma, MD, FAHA, professor of medicine, division of nephrology and director of the Center for Renal Transplant, UC San Diego's School of Medicine, will receive the Outstanding Investigator Award from the Japanese Society of Diabetes Complications during their convention October 9-10 in Okayama, Japan.

The distinguished international award recognizes Sharma's work throughout the years in diabetic complications in kidney diseases. Kidney disease is the leading cause of renal failure worldwide and, once acquired, there are few treatments to change course of kidney disease.

"Receiving this international recognition highlights our work throughout the world, especially in Asia where diabetes and obesity are a major problem," Sharma said. "We are developing new strategies and treatments to arrest and hopefully reverse the complications of diabetes and obesity."

He will give a presentation titled "Understanding the Why of Diabetic Kidney Disease." His interest is on the "why" as opposed to the "how" of kidney disease and the mechanisms that explain why glucose or caloric excess would lead to kidney disease in the first place. He feels that there is an evolutionary basis to predict the response of kidney cells to states of excess caloric balance. A research article on this topic from his group entitled "Adiponectin Regulates Albuminuria and Podocyte Function in Mice" was published in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* on May 1, 2008.

His research focuses on finding new treatments for organ failure that are independent of the blood glucose and blood pressure. Specifically, his group is interested in anti-fibrotic strategies. One compound that the Center for Renal Translational Medicine is focused upon is the drug Pirfenidone. The group has found positive data in mouse models of diabetic kidney disease and they have recently completed a randomized trial in patients with diabetic kidney disease. "In the lab we are looking at how we can block the progression of kidney failure once it is apparent so we have new options to present to patients" Sharma said.

Since 2008 Sharma has served as chair of the International Society of Nephrology Nexus Committee. The ISN Nexus organizes international symposia on translational topics in kidney disease. The next symposia is on Vascular Disease and the Kidney to be held in Kyoto Japan in April 2010 and the following one is on Fibrosis and the Kidney to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in June 2010.

Sharma joined UC San Diego in 2007 and is a resident of Del Mar.

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