

## UCSD Research Center to Host Scientific Symposium on Celiac Disease

January 19, 2006 |

**A** scientific symposium on celiac disease, “Genetic and Immune Mechanisms in Celiac Disease,” will be held at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine on Friday, February 10, from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. The symposium, hosted by UCSD’s newly established William K. Warren Medical Research Center for Celiac Disease, will be held at the university’s Center for Molecular Genetics conference room.

Geared for researchers, the symposium will include introductory remarks and an overview of the pathogenesis of celiac disease by Martin F. Kagnoff, M.D., professor of Medicine and Pediatrics at UCSD School of Medicine, and director of the Warren Research Center. Other presenters include Lloyd F. Mayer, M.D., professor of Immune Medicine, Medicine and Microbiology at the Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York; D. Brent Polk, M.D., Vanderbilt Dean’s Professor of Pediatrics and Cell and Developmental Biology and Chief of Pediatric Gastroenterology at Vanderbilt University; Hilde Cheroute, Ph.D., adjunct associate professor of Medicine and William K. Warren Research Center Investigator at the La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology; Ludvig M. Sollid, M.D., Ph.D., professor of the Institute of Immunology at the University of Oslo, Norway; and Bana Jabri, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of Pathology from the University of Chicago.

A Continuing Medical Education (CME) conference for San Diego-area physicians and nutritionists on the diagnosis and management of Celiac Disease will be held in conjunction with the symposium at Children’s Hospital and Health Center, 3020 Children’s Way, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturday, February 11.

Celiac disease is a digestive condition triggered by consumption of a common protein called gluten, which is found in bread, pasta, cookies, pizza crust and many other common foods. Estimated to affect one in 100 Americans, it is a disease that often goes undiagnosed. Currently, the only treatment for celiac disease is a change in diet.

“Symptoms of celiac disease might include unexplained anemia, irritability, depression, weight loss, vitamin deficiency and early-onset osteoporosis,” Kagnoff said. “Only about 10% of patients

have what might be considered typical symptoms. We have a huge educational job with primary-care physicians to recognize and treat the disease.”

The CME program features Kagnoff, along with Charles Yang, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics at UCSD School of Medicine and Children’s Hospital, San Diego; Sylvie Level, M.D., assistant clinical professor at UCSD School of Medicine and Children’s Hospital; Michelle M. Pietzak, M.D., assistant professor of clinical pediatrics, Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles and the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine; and Danna Korn, author and founder of “Raising Our Celiac Kids,” a national support group, who will talk about the disease from a parent’s perspective. The objective of the course presented at Saturday’s session is to focus on state-of-the-art screening and diagnostic recommendations, and emphasize the crucial role of pediatric physicians in the care of children with celiac disease.

UCSD’s Research Center and the symposium are funded by a \$2.5 million gift from the Oklahoma-based William K. Warren Foundation, announced in December 2005. Research investigators at the center include Kagnoff, a widely recognized expert in the field of celiac disease; Cheroute, a world authority in the immunology of the small intestine; and Michael Karin, Ph.D., UCSD School of Medicine professor of Pharmacology, widely recognized for his studies on the signaling and regulation of inflammation.

Researchers or physicians and nutritionists looking for more information or to register for either the scientific symposium on February 10 or the CME conference on February 11 can go to <http://health.ucsd.edu/celiac>

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