New policies aimed to guard against abuse

Submitted by University Relations

The UI is expanding safeguards to protect young people who visit its campuses – as well as employees and students – following a broad, 10-month review of policies that began in the wake of the sex-abuse cases at Pennsylvania State University.

The policies, developed by a universitywide task force and already being implemented, include:

- Mandatory reporting: Under a recent amendment to the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, all university employees will soon be required to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and campus police, rather than only a select group of employees such as police officers, and day care and hospital workers. All employees will be required to complete an awareness program on their responsibilities under the new law, and then will receive an annual reminder of their obligation to report suspected abuse and neglect.

- Sexual harassment training: All employees and incoming students will be required to complete an educational program on preventing sexual harassment, misconduct and harassment, and to complete an awareness program on their responsibilities under the new law.

See SEX ABUSE, PAGE 2

**Homecoming housewarming** Al menos en el U1 campus over homecoming weekend had a chance to visit old stomping grounds – like the recently transformed Lincoln Hall, where Ruth Watkins, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (foreground, center), assisted in answering questions about the renovated building. One of the more popular spots in Lincoln Hall was Memorial Hall, where visitors could join students in rubbing the nose on Abraham Lincoln’s bust (background).

By Diana Yates

Life Sciences Editor

Scientists report that they can predict who will improve most on an unfamiliar video game by looking at their brain waves.

They describe their findings in a paper in the *Journal of Psychophysiology*.

The researchers used electroencephalography (EEG) to peek at electrical activity in the brains of 39 study subjects before they trained on Space Fortress, a video game developed for cognitive research. The subjects whose brain waves oscillated most powerfully in the alpha spectrum (about 10 times per second, or 10 hertz) when measured at the front of the head tended to learn at a faster rate than those whose brain waves oscillated with less power, the researchers found. None of the subjects were daily video game players.

The EEG signal was a robust predictor of learning speeds between study subjects, he predicted about half of the difference in month,” Mathewson said. The EEG results predict how fast you’ll learn over the next very first time you play the game, we can find who will improve most on an unfamiliar video game by looking at their brain waves.

The waves of electrical activity across the brain reflect the communication status of millions or billions of neurons, Mathewson said.

“These oscillations are the language of the brain, and different oscillations represent different brain functions,” he said.

The researchers also found that learning to play the game improved subjects’ reaction time and working memory (the ability to hold a piece of information in mind just until it is needed), skills that are important in everyday life.

“We found that the people who had more alpha waves in response to certain aspects of the game ended up having the best improvement in reaction time and the best improvement in working memory,” Mathewson said.

This project is a part of a larger collaborative effort to determine whether measures of brain activity or brain structure can predict one’s ability to learn a new video game. One analysis, led by Beckman Institute director Art Kramer (an author on this study as well), found that the volume of specific structures in the brain could predict how well people would perform on Space Fortress. That study used magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to measure the relative sizes of different brain structures.

But MRI is expensive and requires that subjects lie immobile inside a giant magnet, Mathewson said. With EEG, researchers can track brain activity fairly inexpensively while subjects are engaged in a task in a less constricted, less artificial environment, he said.

The new findings offer tantalizing new clues to the mental states that appear to enhance one’s ability to perform complex tasks, Mathewson said. Alpha waves are associated with relaxation, but they also are believed to arise when one is actively inhibiting certain cognitive functions in favor of others, he said. It is possible that everyone could benefit from interventions to increase the strength of their alpha waves in the front of the brain, a region associated with decision-making, attention and self-control.

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Catán operas

Daniel Catán’s second opera, “Florencio en el Amazonas,” will be presented at Krannert Center Nov. 8-11.

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Gene disruption

Researchers have found a way to disrupt the spread of antibiotic-resistance genes.

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UI researchers show brain waves reveal video game aptitude

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INSIDE ILLINOIS ONLINE: news.illinois.edu/ii/ • TO SUBSCRIBE: go.illinois.edu/iisubscribe
Former UI provost to speak on the university of the future

By Mike Helenthal
Assistant Editor

A lthough Lincoln the president once said “A house divided against itself cannot stand,” und erstood the importance of a solid foundation.

It’s why, even as the Civil War raged, he advocated and signed the 1862 Act, which was designed to, “…without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and without detracting military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts … in order to promote the liberal and practical education of youth, in such manner as the several pursuits and professions in life.”

Former UI provost Robert Berdahl, the past president of the American Association of Universities, a former head of several nation-ally renowned universities, and the next speaker in the chancellor’s speaker series on “The Research University in the World of the Future,” said the country’s current lead-ers would be wise to follow in the spirit of the transformative Morrill Act.

“Lincoln had a very clear understanding that educating the public was very important to the country and required public invest-ment,” he said. “We need to have a robust infrastructure – that was Lincoln’s attitude toward the idea of land-grant universities.”

Berdahl said carrying that standard before a public increasingly skeptical of government intervention – reflected by a sharp decline in higher-education investment during the re-cent economic downturn – is challenging. But he said the stakes are too high to shrink from the challenge because Ameri-ca’s economic strength and stability are directly proportional to the degree at which it invests in the education of its citizens.

“There’s been a change of attitude in v esting in the public good,” he said, “and it’s not just public universities. That’s a tragic development and the long-term con-sequences are pretty serious.

The question of “who should pay” is affecting student debt and access, which threatens the inclusion of qualified students and ultimately opportunities for upward mobility, he said.

“Upward mobility used to be the hall-mark for the U.S.,” he said. “We have to re-discover the value of investing in ourselves.”

Berdahl said until states are more able or willing to support their universities at greater levels, universities will have to be smart about identifying alternative fund-ing options, including depending more on alumni and foundation support, seeking out private partnerships and reconsidering pro-grams that have become irrelevant or are redundant.

“Some institutions will have to alter their mission and structure,” he said. “I have no idea where it’s going to take us.”

Berdahl is hopeful for the future, but he also is skeptical of the current course.

“I think, ultimately, it comes from the top and what priorities are being set,” he said. “I think this era will be seen ultimately as a time not unlike the 1920s in which we pulled back from public investment. I don’t think this is going to be seen as the golden age for the U.S.”

Berdahl, a retired history professor, earned his master’s degree at the UI and was the vice chancellor for academic affairs from 1987 to 1993. He was AAI president for five years starting in 2006 and is the for-mer head of the University of Texas at Aus-tin, the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Oregon.

He said he looks forward to being on the Urbana campus again. “I enjoyed being at the UI,” he said. “I was the provost when I was here, but they didn’t call it provost back then. Compared with what the classes in the 1970s was like, it was a bit more genteel, but I thought it was better. You see a lot of buildings go up since I was there,” he said. “The last time there was a lot I didn’t recognize.”

SEX ABUSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

An employee will be required to repeat it at least every three years. Sexual harassment training had been required for all incoming students and employees in some campus departments, but there was no university-wide mandate.

■ Background checks: All employees who are granted regular contact with minors will be required to undergo a criminal background and sex offender registry check. Previously, back-ground checks were required for sexu-ally sensitive positions.

■ Tracking of minors: Each campus with regular contact with minors will now track all scheduled activities involving minors, such as youth camps and performances, with details including location, number and age range of participants, and contact informa-tion for authorities who will make arrange-ments for the safety of minors in the event of an emergency. Before the new policy, those events were monitored by depart-ments and units, but not campuswide.

The policies were outlined at the UI Board of Trustees Governance, Personnel and Ethics Committee meeting on Oct. 25. The review of university policies was au-thorized by the Office of the President, with concurrence of the board of trustees. The new policies will be outlined for the board at its Nov. 1 meeting. The new policies were mandated by the state and were for the safety of young people and others in the university’s three campuses and associated facilities.

The university has always had good safeguards, but these new policies take our efforts further – implementing the best practices that have emerged since the tragedies at Penn State,” Parks said. •

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BRAIN ACTIVITY, FROM PAGE 1

You can get people to in-crease their alpha brain waves by giving them some positive feedback,” Mathewson said.

“And so you could possibly boost the meeting’s impact, and per-haps get people putting them in the game.”

The study team also includ-ed researchers now at the Uni-versity of Texas at Dallas and Florida State University.

The U.S. Office of Naval Research, the National Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Beckman Institute supported this research. 

BRAIN waves. Those whose brain waves oscillated most powerfully in the alpha spectrum (about 10 times per second) when measured at the front of the head (left EEG readout) tended to learn at a faster rate than those whose brain waves oscillated with less power (readout on the right), the researchers found.
UI chemist named Packard Fellow in science and engineering

By Liz Althberg

physical sciences editor

U

I chemistry professor Douglas Mitchell has been named a Packard Fellow in science and engineering. He is among 16 early career researchers honored by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation in 2012 for outstanding creative research. Blending chemistry and biology, Mitch-ell works to understand the molecular roots of what make bacteria infectious, with the goal of addressing antibiotic resistance and exploring new antimicrobial agents.

“It has been a true delight watching Doug’s lab grow,” said Jeffrey S. Moore, a professor and the interim head of the chemistry department. “Giv- en the rapid rise of drug resistance and the threat of a post-antibiotic era, new strategies for suppressing antibiotic resistance must be deployed. Doug’s lab is tackling this by developing compounds that are capable of selectively killing pathogens as well as compounds that don’t kill, but rather render the pathogens incapable of causing disease. I’m very excited about the significant role that Doug is likely to have in developing personalized medicines for antibiotics.”

The Packard fellowship includes an unrestricted five-year, $875,000 award to sup- port research of the recipient’s choosing. Mitchell’s award will support a new project that aims to develop unconventional meth- ods to manipulate microbial genomes.

“Although the approach should work for studying the function of any gene, we are doing this for the purposes of discovering natural products more efficiently,” Mitchell said. “Natural products are our most valuable source of all medicines, thus finding new ways to rapidly discover them will be quite useful.”

Mitchell’s group focuses on a particular class of molecules found naturally in bacteria and archaea, called thiazole/oxazole-modif i ed microcins (TOMMs). The group uses chemical and genomic techniques to iden- tify the structure and function of TOMMs and the enzymes that produce them. Then, the researchers can apply that knowledge to develop inhibitors if the TOMM is patho-genic or exploit therapeutic properties if the TOMM is antibiotic.

Mitchell earned his doctorate from the University of California at Berkeley in 2006, then completed a postdoctoral fel- lowship at the University of California, San Diego, before joining the Illinois faculty in 2009. He also is affiliated with the Institute for Genomic Biology and the department of microbiology at the UI.

Since its inception in 1988, the Packard Fellowship Program has named 489 fel- lows, including 13 UI faculty members. Each year, new fellows are chosen from nominations submitted by the presidents of 50 top universities. The Packard Foundation

On the Job Cheryl Westlund

Cheryl Westlund, an office support specialist at the College of Law, has seen the UI change as she moved from UI Extension back to campus. She recently participated in the Central Illinois Honor Flight program.

“TOMMs are highly adaptable to changes in the environment. We’re trying to understand what gives these molecules their unique properties,” he said.

Mitchell’s group focuses on a particular class of molecules found naturally in bacteria and archaea, called thiazole/oxazole-modified microcins (TOMMs). The group uses chemical and genomic techniques to identify the structure and function of TOMMs and the enzymes that produce them. Then, the researchers can apply that knowledge to develop inhibitors if the TOMM is pathogenic or exploit therapeutic properties if the TOMM is antibiotic.

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The car wash industry that operates year-round in Chicago is rife with workplace violations, earning less than the minimum wage – that's $8.25 per hour; 13 percent earning less than $2 per hour; and less than 2 percent of workers earning legal overtime pay.

Violations of wage and hour laws are the norm among car wash workers, with over three-quarters of all surveyed workers earning below the Illinois minimum wage of $8.25 per hour; 13 percent earning less than $2 per hour; and less than 2 percent of workers earning legal overtime pay.

Workplace violations – including workers forefeiting pay through wage theft – result in high costs for car wash workers.

Car wash workers live in poverty, with one-quarter earning below the federal level for extreme poverty.

Car wash workers are hazardous to workers’ health and lives, with more than 80 percent of workers working long hours, going without personal protective equipment that by law should be supplied by employers.

“Going into this project, we suspected that many were bad in this industry, but I don’t think we had any idea just how bad things actually were,” said Bruno, also the director of the Labor Education Program in Chicago.

“It’s pretty obvious that there is a perception among employers that this is a workforce that is easy to exploit,” Quesada said.

“Car washing is generally a cash business, with a lot of workers being paid under the table. It’s also a seasonal workforce where the number of workers fluctuates from one day to the next. Both of those factors usually lead to a whole host of problems.”

The researchers surveyed 204 employees at 57 car washes in Chicago, collecting detailed information about wages and hours worked, occupational health and safety violations, and overall working conditions in the local car wash industry. The data and stories collected represent the experiences of almost one-third of car wash workers and 70 percent of full-service car wash establishments in Chicago, the researchers say.

“We interviewed a representative sample of car wash workers, which leads us to conclude that these are the experiences that the average car wash worker would face throughout the Chicago metropolitan area,” Quesada said.

“The workers we surveyed were overwhelmingly immigrants with very low levels of education and English proficiency. From past research, workers who lack education and English skills are less likely to stand up for their rights. So it’s a particularly vulnerable population.”

According to the research, while more than 80 percent of survey respondents worked more than 40 hours in the previous workweek, less than 2 percent of these workers earned the legal overtime rate of time-and-a-half pay.

“Three-quarters of the workforce earning less than the minimum wage – that’s bad,” Quesada said. “But then when you put a dollar figure on that, especially when you’re talking about the lowest wage workers, that’s a huge chunk of their earnings.”

But there are other ways that workers were suffering from wage theft that didn’t figure into the researchers’ calculations.

“We discovered that workers were being charged illegally for things like safety equipment or other personal protective equipment – things that are the legal responsibility of employers,” Bruno said.

“There were car washes where workers who had a mandatory obligation to pay for the cleaning of their uniforms,” Quesada said. “The law allows employers to charge for uniforms but they can’t charge more than market rate. A lot of workers we surveyed certainly paid above-market rates.”

In the paper, the researchers make three recommendations for improving working conditions in Chicago car washes:

• Increase and improve government enforcement of employment laws in car to

See CAR WASH WORKERS, PAGE 11
Rui Loja Fernandes

the Lois M. Lackner Professor of Mathematics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Education: Postdoctoral (mathematics), Instituto Superior Técnico, Lisbon, Portugal; Ph.D. (mathematics), M.S. (mathematics), University of Minnesota; B.S. (physics engineering), Instituto Superior Técnico

Research Interests: Poisson geometry, Lie algebroids and groupoids

“He is a world leader in the study of Poisson geometry and Lie algebroids,” said Matthew Ando, a professor and head of mathematics. “His work brings both deep insight and technical power to bear on fundamental questions about the nature of geometry. Recently, Fernandes has used Poisson geometry and the theory of Lie algebroids and Lie groupoids to obtain important new advances in the theory of foliations, one of the classic areas of research in geometry. At the same time, his work unifies and clarifies a number of classical results. He also has been a very successful adviser both of graduate and undergraduate research.”

Courses teaching: Math 518/519, differentiable manifolds; Math 522, Lie Groups and Lie Algebras

Why Illinois? After spending part of my career in Europe, and having served as head of a department for the last three years, I was looking for an institution with a tradition of excellence that could provide the right environment to devote myself to research and teaching. The UI provides exactly that with its longstanding tradition of excellence as a world-class leader in research and teaching in mathematics. For these reasons I am very thrilled and proud to join the math department at the UI.

Prita Meier

an assistant professor of art history in the College of Fine and Applied Arts

Education: Ph.D. (history of art and architecture), Harvard University; M.A. (art and art history), University of Iowa; B.A. (art and art history), University of Florida

Courses Teaching: ARTH 113, Introduction to African Art; ARTH 310, African Art and Society; and ARTH 510, Graduate Seminar in African Arts

Research Interests: African and African diaspora art, including the arts of African Islam, contemporary African art and the visual culture of empire and globalization; East African port cities and cultures of exchange; and the cultural and aesthetic history of photography in Africa in relation to modern notions of selfhood.

“Professor Meier is the kind of scholar who combines ‘hands-on’ work with objects and their specific histories with the most current theoretical concepts shaping how we understand African visual cultures,” said Lisa Rosenthal, the chair of the Art History Program. “Her broad interests and interdisciplinary approach will put her in dialogue with a wide range of scholars and students here at Illinois.”

Why Illinois? “I am excited to join the UI community because it offers so many wonderful opportunities to expand my intellectual horizons, both in the classroom and in my own research,” Meier said. “The students, faculty and staff have been exceptionally welcoming and I’m especially inspired by the collaborative spirit that defines this campus and the originality of the work and research being done here.”
‘Florencia’ production to honor composer, UI opera manager

By Dusty Rhodes
Arts Editor

In February 2009, in the lobby of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, three friends gathered at the bar to celebrate a successful performance of “La Hija de Rappaccini” (“Rappaccini’s Daughter”) – Daniel Catán, the composer of the opera; Eduardo Diazmuñoz, the artistic director of the UI School of Music Opera Program; and Thomas H. Schleis, the general manager of the program and principal coach. Over drinks, Diazmuñoz announced that he had decided to produce all of Catán’s operas, in chronological order (“La Hija de Rappaccini” was the first). His second, “Florencia en el Amazonas” (“Florencia in the Amazon”) opens Nov. 8 and runs through Nov. 11 at Krannert Center.

But for Diazmuñoz, these performances will be bittersweet. In the three years since their toast in the lobby bar, Catán and Schleis died – suddenly and unexpectedly, both at age 62. Diazmuñoz, who was so close to both men that he called Catán his “godfather” and Schleis his “right-hand man,” organized a series of memorial concerts first for Catán, who died in Texas in 2011, and more recently for Schleis, who died in Champaign in July.

Diazmuñoz is dedicating this production to the memory of Catán, and the Opera Program’s 2012-13 season to Schleis. (It would have been Schleis’ 25th season.)

With firsthand knowledge of the rich background leading up to the production of “Florencia,” Schleis would have undoubtedly shaped the kind of informative pre-concert lecture for which he was well-known. In one of the memorials he wrote for Schleis, Diazmuñoz listed some of the qualities that made his lectures so popular – his “quick wit, shrewd intellect, flawless memory and sharp sense of humor.”

“I think that Tom was just about the kindest person I ever met,” Diazmuñoz said. “He was a terrific historian and a great coach. He touched the lives of countless students.”

Diazmuñoz’s friendship with Catán stretched back even further, to their first meeting more than 30 years ago at the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City, where Catán taught a course called composition and research, and Diazmuñoz was his student. Upon graduation, Diazmuñoz was hired as associate conductor of the Mexico City Philharmonic and soon programmed one of Catán’s symphonic works. Upon hearing it, Catán told Diazmuñoz that it was the best interpretation he had ever heard of his composition.

The admiration was mutual. “I have always loved his music,” Diazmuñoz said. “He had so much to say – even in just two chords.”

Their friendship developed when Diazmuñoz returned to Mexico after a few years of working and studying in Paris. Catán confided that he was working on an opera; Diazmuñoz initially tried to dissuade him.

“That was partly because I considered opera to be boring,” Diazmuñoz said. “In this age and time, who is going to hear opera?”

Catán, though, saw opera as his first opera. His name, commissioned by the Boston Lyric Opera, and in 1991, presented Diazmuñoz with a bound score and permission to conduct the world premiere, at the Palace of Bellas Artes in Mexico. Their recording of that opera, made within weeks of the initial performance, became a calling card that helped both men advance their careers, and in 1994, Diazmuñoz conducted the U.S. premiere of “Rappaccini” for the San Diego Opera. Catán soon received a joint commission from the Houston Grand Opera, the Seattle Opera and the Los Angeles Opera for “Florencia,” which premiered in Houston in 1996.

Inspired by the writing of Gabriel García Márquez (best known for his novel “Love in the Time of Cholera”), the opera follows a singer named Florencia as she travels down the Amazon River in search of her long-lost love. (A Denver Post reviewer of the world production described the story as “a piece that manages to be touching, amusing and highly manipulative within a tight two hours.”)


At the time of his death, Catán was working on “Meet John Doe,” an opera based on the 1941 Frank Capra movie of the same name, commissioned by the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin. Catán and Schleis had finished the libretto, and it was to be his first opera in English.

All of Catán’s other operas were written in Spanish, introducing a new language into the operatic repertoire. “What Mozart did for German, what Britten did for English, what Debussy, or for that matter, what Charles Gounod did for French, what Gluck did for Russian – to me, Catán has done for Spanish,” Diazmuñoz said. “His works are in opera houses around the world, being sung in Spanish. I told Daytona, ‘You nailed it. You achieved your dream of having your own musical language married to our mother tongue.’”

While he worked for all of his life, literally, he achieved it,” Diazmuñoz said. “And when he was at his peak, he died.”

Catán operas Eduardo Diazmuñoz (in tuxedo), the artistic director for the UI School of Music Opera Program, poses with Daniel Catán (on his right) and some of the cast from “La Hija de Rappaccini” in 2009.

Creative collaborators From left, Daniel Catán, Eduardo Diazmuñoz and Thomas H. Schleis, the general manager of the UI Opera Program. In the wake of the death of both Catán and Schleis, Diazmuñoz has dedicated this month’s production of “Florencia en el Amazonas” to Catán and the 2012-13 opera season to Schleis.
American Indian persistence turned U.S. into ‘Indian Country’

By Craig Chamberlain
Social Sciences Editor

Frederick Hoxie starts each of his courses asking students to list three American Indians, and their answers are almost always the same: Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull and Geronimo.

All defeated warrior chiefs. All in the distant past.

And all in keeping with Americans’ historic tendency to see Indians mostly as “brave, exotic and dead,” says Hoxie, a Swanlund professor of history, law and American Indian studies at the UI.

There’s a different list that Hoxie wants Americans to know about, filled with American Indian lawyers, lobbyists, writers, politicians and activists. Through their stories, Hoxie aims in a new book to tell how American Indians over two centuries persisted in claiming their rights in a country that once thought them irrelevant.

The history he tells in “This Indian Country: American Indian Activists and the Place They Made,” is one in which Indians are not just victims in the past, but “fellow participants in the American story,” up to the present.

Through their efforts, American Indians are now accepted as part of society in the U.S. and with rights to self-government and to their cultural traditions, Hoxie said. That’s something the nation’s founders never envisioned, and a contentious subject until later in the 20th century. It is also a distinct American Indian achievement, he said.

“There are so many stories of American Indians who were inventive, were creative, who didn’t surrender, but who did something other than die on a battlefield,” Hoxie said. Their fights instead were in legislatures and courtrooms, and in the court of public opinion.

Hoxie knew about them from his years of teaching and research, but didn’t realize how fully they connected until doing research for “This Indian Country,” being published later this month as part of the Penguin History of American Life Series.

He found “networks of connection” through which ideas, strategies and an insistence on American Indian rights were passed from generation to generation.

Among Hoxie’s subjects is James McDonald, a Choctaw who was the first American Indian lawyer. When it became clear in the 1820s that the U.S. government was determined to remove the Choctaws and other tribes from the southeastern states, through which ideas, strategies and an insistence on American Indian rights were passed from generation to generation.

Hoxie’s history of activism, which in-cludes other figures, is one of many set-backs and small victories. It culminates, however, in a moment at the end of the 20th century when American Indians have been accepted as “a permanent part of the American scene,” Hoxie said, even if many problems remain.

Similar to the story of other rights move-ments, “this is an American story,” he said. “It’s a story about people who had been dispossessed, but who used the American political system to protect and to promote their communities. It’s about how people have overcome barriers of politics and race and a whole range of things to accomplish the goal of living as equals in the United States.”

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ON THE WEB
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Bacterial sharing of antibiotic-resistance genes targeted

By Diana Yates

Life Sciences Editor

T he bacterium Streptococcus pneumoniae – which can cause pneumonia, meningitis, bacteremia and sepsis – likes to share its antibiotic-defeating weaponry with its neighbors. Individual cells can pass resistance genes to one another through a process called horizontal gene transfer, or by “biomimicry,” the uptake of DNA from the environment.

Now researchers report that they can interrupt the cascade of cellular events that allows S. pneumoniae to swap or suck up DNA. The new findings, reported in the journal PLoS ONE, advance the effort to develop a reliable method for shutting down the spread of drug resistance in bacteria.

“Within the last few decades, S. pneumoniae has developed resistance to several classes of antibiotics,” said UI pathobiology professor Gee Lau, who led the study. “Importantly, it has been shown that antibiotic stress – the use of antibiotics to treat an infection – can actually induce the transfer of resistance genes among S. pneumoniae. Our approach inhibits resistance gene transfer in all strains of S. pneumoniae, and does so without increasing selective pressure and without increasing the likelihood that resistant strains will become dominant.”

Lau and his colleagues focused on blocking a protein that, when it binds to a receptor in the bacterial cell membrane, has strong feelings of responsibility to the community and fierce pride in their cultural traditions. The important rituals that are observed in everyday tasks such as greeting and bathing, and the hierarchical positions of power that often dictate these interactions, are prime examples of these traditions.

In their first memoir, “Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and a Writer Encounter Africa” (Crown/Random House, 1993; paperback University of Chicago Press, 1994), Gottlieb and Graham wrote about their first two visits to Bengland. That book focused on Beng culture and described the process of anthropological fieldwork through narratives that offered a rare glimpse into the sometimes messy methods behind the polished publics of events in the cell that makes the bacterium “competent” to receive new genetic material. The researchers hypothesized that interfering with this protein (called CSP) would hinder its ability to promote gene transfer.

In previous work published late last year in the journal PLoS Pathogens, Lau’s team identified proteins that could be made in the lab that were structurally very similar to the CSP proteins. These artificial CSPs can dock with the membrane receptors, block the bacterial CSPs’ access to the receptors and reduce bacterial competence, as well as reduce the infectious capacity of S. pneumoniae.

In the new study, the researchers fine-tuned the amino acid structure of more than a dozen artificial CSPs and tested how well they inhibited the S. pneumoniae CSPs. They also tested their ability (or, more delicately, their inability) to mimic the activity of CSPs in bacterial cells.

“Gene disruption Researchers report they have found a way to disrupt the spread of antibiotic-resistance genes among S. pneumoniae bacteria, which can contribute to pneumonia, meningitis and other dangerous ailments (photo above left). Pathobiology professor Gee Lau and his colleagues targeted a protein that signals bacterial cells to allow the exchange of genes with their neighbors.”

“Braided Worlds” was about expressing to ourselves and to the Beng what we had learned: That we were adults now, we had a child, we had jobs, we had responsibilities … and we had internalized the Beng notion of obligation and returning to your neighbors and your family.”

“Importantly, it has been shown that antibiotic stress – the use of antibiotics to treat an infection – can actually induce the transfer of resistance genes among S. pneumoniae bacteria,” Lau said. The team identified several artificial CSPs that both inhibited the bacterial CSPs and reduced S. pneumoniae competence by more than 90 percent.

“The chemical properties of individual amino acids in a protein can greatly influence the protein’s activity,” Lau said.

“Accessions of these artificial CSPs show how our lives became braided with those of the Beng.”

In “Braided Worlds,” the reader interacts with the diverse cast of characters just as Gottlieb, Graham and their 6-year-old son did. Through Matatu, a man driven to madness by his despair that he will never have a better life, the reader sees the effects of the nation’s years of political turmoil and economic instability. But the reader also witnesses the great resilience of the Beng in people like Bertin who attended the UI with the authors’ support and will return to Ivory Coast next year to give back to his nation and the Beng community when he takes up a position as a professor at the International University of Grand-Bassam.

“It’s so easy for us outside of Africa to exoticize other people’s practices and beliefs,” Gottlieb said. “One of the gifts of living for a long time in a community of people who live their lives according to different rules from your own is that you begin to see a lot of common, shared humanity behind and beneath the surface of difference. And that, to me, is the gift of anthropology.”

Royalties from “Braided Worlds” are dedicated to the Beng people.

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Tracy Sulkin
Legislative expert on campaign promises

Editor’s note: Can the promises of politicians ever be believed? Very often the answer is yes, says political scientist Tracy Sulkin. In her 2011 book “The Legislative Legacy of Congressional Campaigns,” she makes the case that congressional candidates’ words generally match their deeds in office. Her research for the book involved analyzing campaign ads from the 1998, 2000 and 2002 elections and then matching them with legislators’ records. With this year’s election in five days, Sulkin discussed her research with News Bureau social sciences editor Craig Chamberlain.

Just to be clear, what kinds of promises are you talking about and what qualifies as keeping them?

Promises in this case include any issue the candidate discussed in his or her campaign advertisements. In congressional races, it is not common for candidates to use specific promise-making language, but most do discuss substantive issues. To follow through on a campaign promise requires that the legislator do something tangible on that issue by the next campaign – introducing or co-sponsoring a bill.

Does being more specific about an issue, as in having a detailed plan, make a candidate any more likely to pursue that issue as a legislator?

Interestingly, no. It is common to equate specificity with sincerity, assuming, for instance, that a candidate who lays out a plan for dealing with environmental issues is more intent on action than those who claim to want to “conserve the environment.” My study indicates that this is not the case. Compared to candidates who did not discuss an issue, those candidates who discussed it, be it vaguely or specifically, were more active on it in the next Congress. But there is no difference between those who were vague and those who were specific. It turns out that this is because specificity is a reaction to the competitiveness of the race – candidates in tight races are more likely to make specific appeals – not an indicator of how interested the candidates are in pursuing the issue.

Many members of Congress are in safe seats, free from serious challenge by a candidate from the other party. It’s tempting to think they would be less motivated about following through on promises. Is that the case?

Just the opposite, in fact. It is often the safer legislators who do the best job at promise-keeping, following through on their campaign appeals at higher rates than their more vulnerable peers. At first glance, this may seem counterintuitive, but the logic becomes clearer if we ask ourselves why some legislators are safer than others in the first place. Savvy legislators may be better able to see the benefits of promise-keeping – or are more strategic in their campaigns, focusing on issues on which they know they can demonstrate real action – and so engage in it at higher rates.

My results show that this “good” behavior pays off: representatives and senators who keep their promises do better in the next election. Thus, they are returned to office with an incentive to continue this responsiveness. If we take a snapshot view at any one point in time, we will therefore observe a positive relationship between electoral security and promise-keeping. Of course, there is a small group of very, very safe members of Congress who consistently run unopposed or with only very token opposition, and, for them, rates of promise-keeping are relatively low.

Of course, many candidates’ ads are negative ones aimed at disparaging their opponents for their stands or actions on a given issue. Do those ads tell us anything about what the candidate running the ad will do?

Negative ads don’t tell us very much about a candidate’s own priorities. This is one place where my findings correspond closely to the conventional wisdom. For example, candidates who air ads talking about their own views, no matter how vague, or criticizing their opponents, the less voters will learn about what the winner will do. This does not necessarily mean that the claims in negative ads are inaccurate, but that they don’t carry information about what the winner will do. This is one reason why we might be concerned about the prevalence of negative ads. Most House candidates produce only a small handful of advertisements, so the more they focus on criticizing their opponents, the less voters will learn about what the candidates themselves will do once in Congress.
13th District
Congressional debate to air Nov. 1
Candidates for Congress in the new 13th District – Republi- can Rodney Davis, of Taylorville, Democrat David Gill, of Bloomington, and Independent John Hartman, of Edwardsville – will meet in the WILL-TV studio for a de- bate hosted by Illinois Public Media in collaboration with the League of Women Voters of Illinois and WCIA-TV/WCIX-TV.

The hourlong debate will be broadcast on WILL-TV, WCIA-TV, and the Web – www.will.illinois.edu – on Nov. 1 at 7 p.m. Nov. 1 with live video streaming on will.illinois.edu.

Illinois Public Media’s Jim Meadows will moderate the debate before a live studio audience, with additional ques- tions from Dave Hoekenga, WICL-TV 3 news anchor; Tom Kacich, Champaign New-Gazette columnist; Robert Lowe, UI broadcast journalism student; and Amanda Vinicky, state/something that helped them to quit. The 13th Congressional District stretches from Champa- ign-Urbana west to the Mississippi River and to the Il- linois-Wisconsin border.

WCIA-TV will broadcast the debate at 10:30 p.m. Nov.
3. WILL-TV will rebroadcast the debate at 9 p.m. Nov. 5.
Each candidate has appeared on WILL-AM’s “Focus.”

The 50-minute debate will be available on will.illinois.edu/election, along with excerpts of Illinois Public Media News interviews with the candidates on key issues.

Great American Smokeout
Quitters wanted Nov. 15
The 37th annual Great American Smokeout is coming to the UI on Nov. 15. The UI Wellness Center is encouraging smokers to use the event to make a plan to quit, or to plan in advance and quit smoking that day.

Free consultations are available at the Smoke-Free campus website and will be sent to employees who register to participate in the great American Smokeout.

Quitting is not easy, but people can increase their chanc- es of success with help from the Wellness Center. The center will provide “Quit Kits” and will sponsor activities throughout the day. These activities – such as aromathera- py, relaxation sessions and fitness classes – will help quit- ters get through craving cycles and provide camaraderie with other people who are trying to quit.

The center also is seeking former smokers and former smok- ers to help out. Two ways to help:
Former smokers can send an encouraging statement or share something that helped them to quit. These messages will be posted on the Smoke-Free campus website and will be sent to employees who register to participate in the great American Smokeout.

Former smokers and nonsmokers can sign up to support a quitter on Nov. 15. People who sign up will be assigned to a specific quitter. Ways to support include sending an en- couraging email, or giving something up yourself that day (for example, chocolate).

To register for the Great American Smokeout, contact a Quirky Kit or to volunteer to support a quitter, contact the center at at-wellness@illinois.edu or 217-265-9355.

University Library
Card catalog to be removed, recycled
A large portion of the UI Library’s card catalog will be removed and recycled during the fall semester. This includes the general catalog, which is now an inaccurate representation of the library’s collections since it was last updated decades ago. Sampling has determined that 99.99 percent of all the information on the cards in the gener- al catalog is in the online catalog. While this catalog has served the community for a long time, Illinois is among the last of the large research libraries to discard the catalogs.

The library will retain portions of the card catalog that have current value in providing access to some specialized resources and those that represent a significant manifesta- tion of historical scholarship on campus. These include the second and third floor of the UI main Library will be removed, allowing for much-needed renovation of the hallways, including new flooring, wall paint and lighting. In addition, artwork that celebrates the UI and, in particular, its historic architecture, will be added to second-floor hallways.

The remaining pieces will be removed in keeping with state and university regulations. After being properly recycled, the cabinets will be offered to the local Preservation and Conservation Association where they may be made available for sale to the general public.

CITES
Netfiles to retire Dec. 21
The Information Technology and Educational Ser- vices will retire its NetFiles service Dec. 21. NetFiles has served for many years as the campus’s free solution for per- sonal backup, file sharing and Web publishing, but it is time to move off this system and on to other services that offer new and more contemporary features, such as U of I Box. The retirement of NetFiles has been endorsed by the cam- pus’s Information Technology Council and approved by the CITES directors.

In order to help employees determine how or where to move their NetFiles material, CITES has documented sev- eral alternative solutions, based on different user scenarios. Information to assist with moving files can be found at www.cites.illinois.edu/netfiles/moving/index.html. NetFiles users will need to move their content by Dec. 21 or they will lose that content.

Once the content has safely been moved, it should be deleted from the NetFiles account. NetFiles users will receive a reminder notice. Notices will only be sent to users with content in their accounts.

Questions should be directed to the CITES Help Desk at consult@illinois.edu.

Urbana chapter of AAUP
Faculty roles in governance discussed
The Urbana chapter of the American Association of Uni- versity Professors will sponsor a workshop, “Faculty Roles in Governance at the Department and College Level,” at 3 p.m. Nov. 13 in Room 314A of the Illini Union.

The panelists will be Harry Hilton, former department head, aerospace engineering; Lew Hopkins, former depart- ment head and associate dean, urban and regional planning; Cary Nelson, English, immediate past president of the Na- tional AAUP; and John Prussing, aerospace engineering, former chair of the College of Engineering Executive Com- mittee. The panel will start the program by sharing stories about local faculty governance – when it worked well and when it did not. Panelists will then lead a discussion and take questions from the audience. The workshop will im- prove the skills of faculty members as they participate in department-level decisions involving curriculum, admis- sions, hiring, promotion and tenure, and refining bylaws and practice.

For more information on the workshop or for questions or concerns about a particular current case of governance vulnerability or breakdown at any level, contact Hopkins, ldhopkin@illinois.edu. Hopkins is chair of the workshop and chair of the Urbana AAUP chapter Committee on Shared Governance, which is charged with assisting faculty members in resolving governance problems.

No prior registration is required and all faculty members are welcome. Refreshments will be served.

Illinois Public Media
‘Solar Mamas’ featured Nov. 13
India’s Barefoot College, founded by Bunker Roy, provides impoverished rural women from Burkina Faso, Colombia, Guatemala and Kenya with a six-month job- training program that transforms them into solar engineers. As they learn to make their communities self-reliant and independent, these women develop self-confidence and the skills to earn income.

“Solar Mamas,” a documentary film about Barefoot College and its students, will be featured at Illinois Pub- lic Media’s November Community Cinema event. The free screening of the film and a discussion of the issues it raises will begin at 6 p.m. Nov. 13, in Robeson Rooms A & B of the University Library, 200 W. Green St.

Working with Illinois Public Media for the discussion are the National Society of Black Engineers and the Society of Women Engineers. The discussion panel are Robert Pilawa, a UI professor of theater, “Words in the Wind” will begin at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 1 at Faith United Methodist Church, 1719 S. Prospect Ave., Champaign. A suggested donation of $10 per person will be requested at the door.

The reading will feature performances by actors from the Station Theatre, Urbana; Parkland College Theatre, Champaign; Champlain Theatre Company; Zoo Improv, Champaign; and the UI department of theater.


Now in its ninth year, the Book Mentor Project serves 42 Head Start classrooms in Champaign, Rantoul, Savoy and Urbana. Through the project, about 720 underserved families receive free books and educational materials for their children.

For more information about the event, visit http://bit.ly/ wordsinthewind4/.
engaged with their families.”

Because children who live without their fathers in the home are vulnerable to behavioral, psychological, substance abuse and other problems, connecting these families with alternative resources in the community is important for social support. Children also can benefit from interaction with unrelated adult males.

Social networking opportunities that enable single mothers to exchange support with other mothers in similar circumstances might be beneficial as well, Zhang said. Although it was not the focus of the study, the researchers found that regardless of whether a father lived with his children, the primary determinant of paternal engagement was the quality of the parents’ relationship – supporting the “package deal” theory that the parents’ relationship with each other plays an important mediating role in the father’s relationship with the child.

“Nonresident fathers and mothers need to develop and maintain a good relationship with one another for the children’s well-being because that is key for fathers to have ongoing interaction with the children,” Zhang said.

Unlike prior studies, however, the current study did not find that unmarried fathers who lived apart from their children became less involved with them when the children’s mothers had additional offspring. Zhang is a research professor in the Children and Family Research Center, which is a unit in the School of Social Work. Fuller is the director of the center. The study appeared recently in the journal Family Relations.

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Employees who are more satisfied with their pay report lower levels of work-family conflict, according to research by professor Amit Kramer. “Pay, as you might expect, is a relative thing,” Kramer said. “I think most people would agree that a certain level of pay that allows you to meet your needs is critical. However, beyond that level, relative pay becomes an issue and with it, perception of pay or pay satisfaction.”

Kramer, who co-wrote the study with Devashheesh P. Bhave, of Concordia University, and Theresa M. Glomb, of the University of Minnesota, says once workers achieve this “sufficient” level of pay, they shift their reference point from what their actual pay allows them to do, to other social reference points such as how much their peers are paid.

“It becomes ‘my pay’ compared to others, ‘my pay’ compared to the effort I invest, ‘my pay’ compared to the things I give up and miss in life for the effort I invest; ‘my pay’ compared to the sacrifice I invest; ‘my pay’ compared to the things I give up and miss in life for the pay I invest,” Kramer said. “I think most people would agree that a certain level of pay that allows you to meet your needs is critical. However, beyond that level, relative pay becomes an issue and with it, perception of pay or pay satisfaction.”

According to the study, even highly compensated employees report high work-family conflict because they, too, can perceive pay inequity among colleagues. So what can employers do – if anything – to increase pay satisfaction among employees?

A lot, Kramer says. “If employees perceive work as a sacrifice they have to make, then the work environment itself is not ideal.” he said. “If employers can understand the trade-offs employees perceive to be doing – sacrificing family for work, for example – then they can offer different work arrangements and policies that compensate for that. Flexible work arrangements, paid vacation days and compressed workweeks would be good examples of this. It also might be ideal to tailor policies and benefits based on different needs of employees, since each employee will perceive that they are making different trade-offs.”

The only downside to such benefits is that they’re expensive, and they usually can’t be offered to all employees, Kramer says. “Firms will usually only offer these types of working arrangements to workers who are expensive to recruit, retain and replace – the high-performing, star employees,” he said.

With Americans among the world leaders in hours worked and worker productivity, Kramer says the research speaks to the need for more family- and life-friendly policies in the workplace. “In a time when the boundaries between work, life and family are so blurred with the increased use of technology that allows many employees to work everywhere, anytime, I think employers should consider offering flexible work arrangements to employees who can perform their work off-site and off-schedule,” he said. “That type of a flexible policy that would allow all employees – not just those with families – to better balance work, family and life demands as they see fit.”

Family demands can come from many different sources, all of which require different kinds of flexibility, Kramer says. “Young children demand more emergency-type flexibility – for example, leaving work on short notice to pick up a sick child from day care, or staying home with a sick child,” he said. “Older children require more planned flexibility – for example, a week of college visits, or while elder parents, like young children, need more short-notice, emergency-type flexibility.”

The study will be published in the Journal of Organizational Behavior.

Research: Pay satisfaction key driver of work-family conflict