

# Pharmacology & Toxicology

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Boonshoft  
School of Medicine  
WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

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## CHAIR'S CORNER



Dr. Jeffrey Travers

The Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology newsletter is designed to keep our alumni, the Boonshoft School of Medicine, and Wright State University apprised of the happenings in the department. The newsletter is published three times per year and can be found on the departmental website:

**[medicine.wright.edu/pharmacology-and-toxicology](http://medicine.wright.edu/pharmacology-and-toxicology)**.

In each issue we highlight a faculty colleague or a program. For this issue, we will be highlighting Jeffrey B. Travers, M.D., Ph.D., professor and chair of pharmacology and toxicology. To receive an electronic version, or to provide content suggestions, email Catherine Winslow at **[catherine.winslow@wright.edu](mailto:catherine.winslow@wright.edu)**.

## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

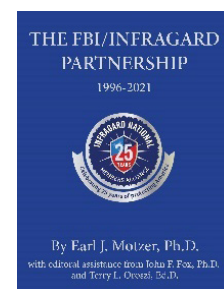
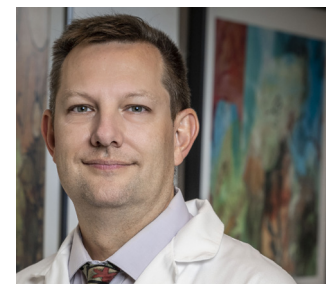
### Dr. Craig Rohan Hired as Newest Faculty Member

It is with great excitement we announce that Craig Rohan, M.D., has been hired as a full-time assistant professor of pharmacology and toxicology. Dr. Rohan is a clinician-scientist who has spent the last two years working part-time in the department. With his recent retirement from the Air Force, Dr. Rohan's goal in this stage of his career is to engage in clinical studies and education of our graduate students. He will be working in the pharmacology translational unit and conducting dermatology clinics at Wright State as well as at the Dayton VA Medical Center.

### Oroszi Promoted to Associate Professor and Vice Chair and Secretary

Special congratulations to Terry Oroszi, Ed.D., who has been promoted to associate professor. She has also been promoted to vice chair with a continued focus on the steadily expanding and highly successful departmental educational programs. Oroszi has also been named secretary to the National InfraGard Board. The InfraGard National Members Alliance, or InfraGard National, is an FBI-affiliated nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening national security, community resilience, and the foundation of American life. InfraGard is one of the FBI's longest-running outreach programs and its largest public/private partnership, with 75,000 members representing 77 InfraGard chapters nationwide. For more details on the InfraGard, please see the recent book Oroszi has published, *The FBI/InfraGard Partnership 1996-2021*, available on Amazon.

Dr. Craig Rohan, and Terry Oroszi, Ed.D., and Oroszi's book



## DEPARTMENT UPDATES (continued)



Dr. Houda Alachkar

### Celebration Planned for October 15

October will be an exciting month for the department, which will include celebrating the 20th anniversary of the M.S. program. The October 15 festivities will include the next Earl H. Morris, M.D., endowed lectureship. Alumna Dr. Houda Alachkar will be the lecturer. Please visit [medicine.wright.edu/pharm-tox-20th](http://medicine.wright.edu/pharm-tox-20th) for details.

### Great Showing at the Virtual OVSOT Meeting

The recent Ohio Valley Society of Toxicology meeting held virtually on October 22, 2020 allowed our graduate students to showcase their talents. All of the three-minute thesis talks were presented by Wright State pharmacology and toxicology students.

M.S. students Rana Essameldin Abbas Abdelgawad, Zaid Mohd Omar Musa Sirhan, and Sydney White,

and M.D./M.S. student: Benjamin Schmeusser presented.

Ph.D. students Miliben Anandbhai Bhakta, Mia Burnett, and Yakshkumar Dilipbhai Rathod also gave presentations.

Sydney White, who works in Dr. Sulentic's laboratory, won the Best M.S. Three-Minute Thesis Presentation award for her presentation "AhR-mediated transcriptional regulation of the human immunoglobulin hs1.2 enhancer."

### New Studies Begin in the Pharmacology Translational Unit

One of the goals of the department is to foster translational studies to facilitate the process where discoveries at the laboratory bench can be brought to the clinic. Moreover, the pharmacology translational unit (PTU), located in the Wright State Physicians Building on campus, is set up to conduct both translational research studies and pharmaceutical clinical trials. Regarding the latter, the PTU is currently conducting almost a dozen pharma-sponsored studies. These include testing a Phosphodiesterase-4 inhibitor in children with psoriasis, and two new studies testing novel agents for the challenging skin diseases prurigo nodularis and hidradenitis. There is also a novel study testing if high doses of oral vitamin D can treat psoriasis. For more information, call Dr. Travers or PTU director Elizabeth Gates at 937-245-7500.

## KUDOS

**David Cool** was interviewed this year by the *Zippia's Future of the Job Market Report* as an expert in the early scientist job market. *This makes total sense as Professor Cool has trained so many young scientists in his career....*

**David Ellis**, adjunct instructor, has been with NAMRU (Navy Medicine at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base) since November 2019 and was just awarded his second grant. This one-year \$370,000 grant is to study how diesel exhaust exposure affects the lungs. The earlier grant, awarded in October 2020 for \$380,000, combined thermal stress and sleep deprivation effect on cognitive and physical performance.

*Glad someone is studying all the "bad things" out there!*

**Abigail Schmidt, M.S.**, a spring 2021 PTX graduate, was accepted into the Boonshoft School of Medicine and received her white coat at the 48th Annual Convocation Ceremony. She is also

David Ellis



David Cool



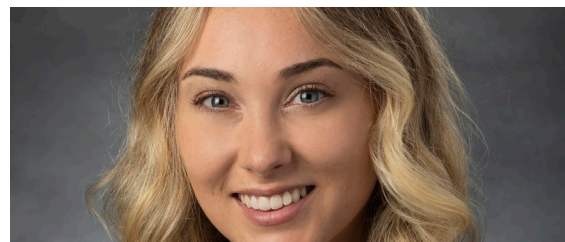
one of the first clinical trials coordination graduates.

**Catherine Sherwin, Ph.D.**, professor and vice chair, pediatrics, with secondary appointment in pharmacology and toxicology, authored three major publications related to the pharmacologic optimization of pediatric therapies.

**Panjak Patyal**, a former student in our M.S. program, earned his Ph.D. from the University of Arkansas School of Medical Sciences.

*Another one of Professor Alvarez-Leefmans' former student does well!*

Right: Patyal, and his mentor, Dr. Patty Wight  
Below: Abigail Schmidt, M.S.





## SPOTLIGHT

Jeffrey B. Travers M.D., Ph.D., is professor and chair of pharmacology and toxicology, professor of dermatology, and Brage Golding Distinguished Professor for Research. Dr. Travers is also a staff physician at the Dayton Veterans Administration Medical Center in Dayton.



*Dr. Jeffrey Travers*

**D**r. Jeffrey Travers started the departmental newsletter when he arrived at Wright State in 2015. At long last, he has agreed to be in the Spotlight section.

A native Buckeye, Dr. Travers was born in and calls Wapakoneta his hometown. He recounts always having a strong interest in medicine and initially planned to return to “Wapak” as a family doctor when he left for college at The Ohio State University in 1980. Following graduation with a B.S. in chemistry, he started medical school at OSU in 1984. It was after working in the research laboratory of noted lipid biochemist Howard Sprecher the summer after his first year in medical school that Travers made a profound career change and joined the M.D.-Ph.D. program. He earned his Ph.D. in pharmacology working under Richard Fertel in 1990 and his M.D. in 1991. Dr. Travers has a unique sense of humor, and often tells people that, looking at his CV, “It appears it took me six years to earn my Ph.D., and one for my M.D.—and it shows!”

Dr. Travers chose dermatology as a field, in part, because of the interesting diseases, and that there seemed to be profound knowledge gaps in this field. He also likes keratinocytes, which, according to him, have a phosphocholine profile similar to an inflammatory cell like a neutrophil. This is relevant as he has spent his entire career studying the phosphocholine lipid mediator platelet-activating factor (PAF).

Following a transitional (rotating) internship at Riverside Methodist in Columbus, he did his dermatology residency at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and postdoctoral fellowship with professor Robert Murphy at the National Jewish Medical Center in Denver, Colorado. In 1995 he joined the Department of Dermatology with secondary appointment in pharmacology and toxicology at Indiana University. Dr. Travers was at IU for 19 years, spending almost nine of them as chair of the dermatology department (2001–10). In 2015, he came to Wright State to be chair of pharmacology and toxicology.

A translational scientist, one of his goals was to establish the pharmacology translational unit (PTU), which allows NIH/VA-funded translational clinical studies and is supported by pharma-sponsored clinical trials. He has been a successful scientist, garnering approximately \$15 million in direct costs from from NIH and VA grants, and has served as principal investigator for almost 30 clinical trials. He is currently funded by two NIH R01s and two VA merit grants. Of interest, one of his NIH R01 grants has been continuously funded since 1998. Dr. Travers is an expert on PAF and related lipid mediators as well as in photobiology and photocarcinogenesis.

He has mentored almost 30 post-doctoral students, a similar numbers of graduate students, and more than twice that number of dermatology residents. Currently, he has dermatology clinics two half-days per week at Wright State, and one half-day per week at the Dayton VAMC. He also spends considerable time on external grant reviews, having participated in more than 60 NIH/VA grant panels.

“I really enjoy mentoring at all levels, especially working with faculty,” Dr. Travers said. “We have a great group of dedicated faculty in the department who really have helped make PTox successful. Most days, I definitely have the best job in the world!”

When not in the lab or clinic, Dr. Travers enjoys spending time with his wife Joan. He and Joan were foster parents for many years. They recently celebrated their 38th wedding anniversary in August. Jeff and Joan have five children—Justine, Jared, Jeffrey, Juliet, and Jessica. Dr. Travers also belongs to the Big Brothers organization, and for the past three years has mentored 15-year-old Caleb. “Being a Big Brother is an amazing and fulfilling experience, and allows me to ‘pay back’ as I had a Big Brother growing up,” Dr. Travers said. “And, Caleb finally taught me how to use my iPhone.”



*Dr. Jeffrey Travers wakeboarding.*

Dr. Travers is also active in his church and serves on the social action commission of his parish, and is an officer in the Knights of Columbus. His hobbies include boating, fishing, and target shooting. He enjoys waterskiing and wakeboarding, though he states that “it hurts much more these days when I fall.” The department is very pleased to highlight Dr. Travers and his efforts.

—Terry Oroszi, Ed.D.



## SPRING GRADUATES FOR M.S.

Ruchitha Reddy Akkati	Roy J. Chen	Harshini Mallipeddi
Zoe Alexander	Lea Rajeshkumar Christian	Cameron L. McGlone
Rawan Saad S. Alojair	Ryan D. Gabbard	Prashanti Naini
Arwa Mohammed S. Alrasheed	Meghana Reddy Ginugu	Srija Poreddy
Nadeen Anabtawi	Vivek Shashank Nag Gogusetti	Syaza Ayuni Haji Muhammad Salleh
Sabina Bashir	Robert R. Hoopes	Abigail E. Schmidt
Shweta Sudhir Bhadri	Maria Kern	Sri Meghana Yerrapragada
Tejaswini Bolnedi	Ramya Shruthi Kukkutam	
Molly Bookout	Victor Mosinmileoluwa Lasehinde	

## SUMMER GRADUATES

Rana Essameldin Abbas Abdelgawad
Abdullah Khamsan A. Althaiban
Venkata Sravya Arikatla
Sowon Chung
Sri Yerrapragada