



Arizona Branch AALAS Newsletter

Vol. 25 No. 2
June 2012

Arizona Branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science

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President's Message

Hello everyone! 2012 seems to be moving right along. We are still getting a few members here and there and now have 125 members. Thanks everyone for joining.

Just a reminder that AZAALAS is still supporting the AALAS Learning Library (ALL). Last year we had over 30 members take advantage of all the great courses available through ALL and if you are looking for a way to continue your professional development this is a great venue. We are in the 2nd year of a 3 year grant made possible from funds from the 2010 District 8 Meeting in Tempe and are looking for member input on if we should continue after next year. For more information contact azaalas@ahsc.arizona.edu.

The spring video conference was a success thanks to Wendy Sparkman. Nearly 80 people attended at locations all over the state to watch Dr. Kevin Donnelly talk about the pathology of dinosaurs. Everyone really enjoyed his talk and IT departments have said it was one of the most successful video conferences in recent years. Each location had both video and audio!!! We will be planning our Fall Video Conference and if there is something you would like to hear about, or know of someone who would make another great speaker, let us know.

We will be having our Summer Fun Event in the cool climes of Northern Arizona at Bearizona in Williams. So if you are from one of the hotter areas of Arizona come on up and cool down. Bearizona is a drive through Wildlife

Important Dates

- [Summer Fun Event at Bearizona in Williams](#) - 6/23/12
- Award and Officer Nominations Due in September
- Fall Video Conference - TBA
- Louise Brooks Memorial Raffle sales begin in October
- Holiday Installation - Dec 1

Park with buffalo, big horn sheep, black bears, wolves and dont miss the Free Flight Raptor show too. [Look for the registration form online](#) and get yours mailed in today. We are looking forward to seeing many of you there.

As many of you may have heard, Covance recently announced that their Chandler facility will be closing by the end of the year. Many of these experienced and qualified individuals will be seeking new jobs; some here in Arizona. Please help to support all of our Covance members during this difficult time. As such, we have taken over our usual profiles page to define the kinds of positions and experience these folks have and Wendy Sparkman is coordinating the search. We are hopeful to keep these great folks local.

Many thanks to all of the wonderful members in the AZ branch. [Feel free to contact me](#) if you have any questions, additional suggestions and/or concerns. - Chrystal Redding, AZAALAS President

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Covance Facility Closing in Chandler: Talented Individuals Entering the Job Market

Covance has decided to close the facility located in Chandler, AZ due to changes in the pharmaceutical testing business and to align their North America capacity with the lower levels of toxicology market demand. As a result of the site closure, many talented individuals in our field will be soon entering the Arizona job market. Below are some of the key positions/ skills that are available:

In-life Study/ Veterinary Technicians: Responsible for independently carrying out technical phases of toxicology studies, including study management, test material administration, clinical sample collection, data organization, internal and external client communication and quality check procedures in compliance with appropriate SOPs, GLPs, and regulatory agency guidelines. BS, Life Sciences; CVT, AALAS certified

Dose Formulations Study Technicians: Perform and document techniques used in preparing materials for dose administration in compliance with appropriate SOPs, GLPs, and regulatory guidelines. BS, Chemistry

Anatomic Pathology/ Histology Technicians: Performs necropsy and/or histology tasks on a variety of laboratory animals in compliance with the appropriate SOPs, GLPs, and regulatory guidelines. BS, Life Sciences, AALAS certified

Medical Technologists - Clinical Pathology: performs established procedures for non-clinical testing as required in all assigned laboratory disciplines, responsible for analyzing specimens whose results are then reported to the pharmaceutical company. BS, Certified Med Tech

Study Coordinators: Provides administrative and scientific support for toxicology studies including pre-study tasks (i.e., protocol development, costing, scheduling), monitoring the progress of assigned studies, interacting with clients and preparing report components (i.e. drafting progress reports, writing report procedures, and reviewing results and conclusions in final reports for accuracy). BS, Life Sciences

Study Directors: Has overall responsibility for the technical conduct of a study as well as for the interpretation, analysis, documentation, and reporting of results. DVM, PhD

Additional Staff available: Management personnel in various capacities (Laboratory, Vivarium, Scientific); Laboratory Animal Veterinarians; Scientific Program Managers, Data Specialists; Report Coordinators; Facilities Specialists; Purchasing/ Logistics; Quality Assurance, Application Administrators, Security personnel, Training Specialists

Please contact Wendy Sparkman by July 5th if you are interested in discussing possible opportunities for these individuals at wendy.sparkman@covance.com or 480.384.3622

Past Meeting Minutes

11/17/11 Board Meeting

The meeting was held via conference call. The meeting was called to order by President Tim Martin at 12:02.

Secretary Jane Criswell presented the minutes of the September board meeting. Expanded minutes will be sent to board members via e-mail for approval.

Treasurer Grace Aranda distributed the financial report. The branch has \$ 15,845.74 in its various accounts.

The National AALAS meeting in San Diego was the best attended of all time, 5000 people. The seminars

were good. Chrystal, Tom, Tim, Paula and Frank attended the meeting. The national meeting will be held in Phoenix in 2015.

President-elect Chrystal Redding and Northern Board Member Tom Greene have more donated raffle items so Grace asked them to keep them and bring them to the installation event being held at Chrystal's house on Dec 3.

TBR reported that we have 30 members using the ALL to date. Tim mentioned that there will likely be more members wanting to sign on next year. Cindy reminded the board that the branch access runs through March or April and will need to be renewed. Grace will pay this once the invoice is received.

Cindy Madura asked if it would be possible to get AALAS Technician pins for those who have passed their exam this past year. The board agreed and Grace asked for the number of technicians at each institution so that she can get calendar strips, posters and purchase the 3-1 item. Vendor Liaison Frank McFadden was asked to solicit the vendors for free items. Grace will work with Frank on an email to go out to all vendors.

A new perpetual plaque is needed for the Technician and Member of the Year awards as the current one is full. Also we need to be thinking about alternatives to the individual awards as our supply of sandstone awards is getting low.

Grace will check into options and get back to the board.

The 2012 District 8 Meeting will be held in Irvine California April 11-13. The Hyatt has rooms for \$95.00/night and there is a free shuttle from the airport.

Meeting adjourned at 12:32pm.

1/19/12 Board Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held via conference call. President Chrystal Redding called the meeting to order at 12:02pm.

Secretary Jane Criswell presented the minutes of the Nov 17, 2011 meeting and they were approved as read.

Treasurer Grace Aranda distributed the financial report. The branch has \$12,781.28 in various accounts with outstanding checks to Copper Conferencing and the charities for the Louise Brooks Memorial raffle.

Grace reported that the Buyer's Guide has four new companies we haven't had before. There is a May renewal date for the sponsorships in the Buyer's Guide. Board members should check the companies listed and either send Grace a list of companies not listed or forward company rep the vendor form link.

President-elect Wendy Sparkman discussed the Spring, Fall video conferences. She is going to try and get someone from Covance to present. April 20 was suggested as a date for the conference as UAC has seminar space that day and they could attend. Sending sites could be Covance and U of A.

It was suggested that TBR Tracey McNamara and Cindy Madura get together to switch over the ALL to Tracey.

Northern Board representative Tom Greene and Chrystal suggested Bearizona in Flagstaff for the Summer Fun Event. There are wolves and bears and a Bird of Prey show. Picnic tables should be available. Chrystal and Tom will inquire for the cost.

Grace said the items for Technician week will be mailed

tomorrow Friday, Jan 20. For up to 30 people the branch will reimburse \$25.00 and over 30 people \$50.00. The U of A will be having their Tech week celebration on Jan 27th with cake and soda. Grace will need Tech weeks reports for the newsletter.

Meeting adjourned 12:30pm.

3/22/12 Board Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held via conference call. President Chrystal Redding called the meeting to order at 12:05pm.

Secretary Jane Criswell presented the minutes of the January 19 meeting and they were approved as read.

Treasurer Grace Aranda distributed the financial report. The branch has \$17,887.56 in various accounts with outstanding checks to Copper Conferencing and 2011 awards winners. ALL renewal is coming up in April.

Grace reported that we have received 23 sponsorships from 24 companies. The due date is at the end of May. Board members should check the list and either send Grace a contact person for any companies not listed or get them the info from the website.

President-elect Wendy Sparkman discussed the Spring video conferences. Kevin Donnelly will be presenting on dinosaur pathology from Covance on April 18. IT folks from Covance, Gore and UA will be contacted to set up for the link up and we are hopeful that all will go well. Fliers and website will be done with information supplied by Wendy on speaker and Chrystal and Grace for the rooms to be used with directions. RSVPs will be needed for those attending at Gore so security can expect them. Wendy is looking for ideas for the Fall video conference so anyone with ideas please forward them to her.

As agreed the branch will be purchasing ALL access again this year. Past TBR Cindy Madura will be getting the new invoice to Grace in April. We don't have numbers for how many took advantage of the opportunity in 2011

Bronze Membership Scholarships Available in the TBR Corner

by Tracey McNamara

AZAALAS is awarding bronze National AALAS memberships to technicians who are financially unable to pay for membership themselves and interested in becoming AALAS certified. Two scholarships per region will be awarded until May 5th; after which, any unused regional scholarships will then be open state-wide.

To apply, you must be an Arizona branch member and preparing to take your AALAS certification exam. Interested applicants should email the scholarship committee at: azaalas@ahsc.arizona.edu stating why they wish to be granted the award.

Not sure what to write? A few things you can include in your letter are: when you plan to take the exam, why you would like the scholarship and your future goals.

Feel free to contact me with any comments, questions, etc. at tracey.mcnamara@covance.com.

and will need to get those number from AALAS or Cindy.

Northern Board representative Tom Greene and Chrystal have been checking into Bearizona in Williams for the Summer Fun Event. There are wolves and bears and a Bird of Prey show. We can get a 50% group discount per person so \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids.

District 8 Council member Tim Martin was to give a report on D8 Council. Tech of the Year Eric Tolotti will be attending the D8 meeting in Irvine, CA as is Tom, Frank, and Wendy. Member of the Year chose the cash option so that will save us some money.

Meeting adjourned 12:34pm.



Avoiding the Top 10 Mistakes Managers Make

Many managers lack fundamental training in managing people. But, even more importantly, managers lack the values, sensitivity, and awareness needed to interact effectively all day long with people. Skills and techniques are easier to teach, but values, beliefs, and attitudes are much harder to teach - and harder for managers to learn. Yet, these are the underlying issues that will most make managers successful - or not.

How important is it to help managers succeed? Beyond description. Managers and how they manage their reporting staff set the tone for your entire business operation. Managers are the front line representation of your business. The majority of communication about the business is funneled through your managers. When employees resign, the top reason for their resignation is their relationship with their manager. People leave managers, not jobs or employers.

In a job description for a manager, core job functions, traits, and abilities are listed. With this as a guide, manager selection should focus on both the management skills and the candidates' cultural fit. Within the cultural fit component of your interview and selection process, a candidate for a manager position must demonstrate that he or she has beliefs, values, and a work style that are congruent with those of your organization.

In a people-oriented, forward looking organization, you'll want to select managers who exhibit these characteristics: Value people; Believe in two-way, frequent effective communication and listening; Want to create an environment in which employees are empowered to take charge of their jobs; Able to hold people accountable and responsible without punitive measures; Demonstrate leadership and clear direction; Believe in teamwork; and, Place the customer at the center of their reason for existence and regard reporting staff as customers.

Mistakes Managers Make Managing:

With all of this in mind about managers, preventing management mistakes and dumb decisions is paramount for a successful organization. Do you want to become a better manager? Here are the managing mistakes you most want to notice, prevent, and avoid.

Fail to get to know employees as people: Developing a relationship with reporting employees is a key factor in managing. You don't want to be your employees' divorce counselor or therapist, but you do want to know what's happening in their lives. When you know where the employee is going on vacation or that his kids play soccer, you are taking a healthy interest in your employees' lives. Knowing that the dog died, expressing sympathy, or that her daughter won a coveted award at school make you an interested, involved boss. Knowing employees will make you a better manager, a manager who is more responsive to employee needs, moods, and life cycle events.

Fail to provide clear direction: Managers fail to create standards and give people clear expectations so they know what they are supposed to do, and wonder why they fail. If you make every task a priority, people will soon believe that there are no priorities. More importantly, they will never feel as if they have accomplished a complete task or goal.

Within your clear expectations, if you are either too rigid or too flexible, your reporting employees will feel rudderless. You need to achieve an appropriate balance that allows you to lead employees and provide direction without dictating and destroying employee empowerment and employee engagement.

Fail to trust: When managers don't trust people to do their jobs, this lack of trust plays out in a number of injurious ways. Micromanaging is one example. Constant checking up is another. Treat people as if they are untrustworthy - watch them, track them, admonish them for every slight failing - because a few people are untrustworthy. Are you familiar with the old tenet that people live up to your expectations?

Fail to listen to and help employees feel that their opinions are valued.

Active listening is a critical management skill. You can train managers in listening skills but if the manager believes that listening is a way to demonstrate that he or she values people, training is usually unnecessary. Listening is providing recognition and demonstrating your values in action. When employees feel heard out and listened to, they feel important and respected. You will have much more information when you daily open the flood gates.

Make decisions and then ask people for their input as if their feedback mattered. You can fool some of the people, but your best employees soon get the nature of your game and drop out. Along the same lines, create hierarchical permission steps and other roadblocks that teach people quickly that their ideas are subject to veto and wonder why no one has any suggestions for improvement. Enabling people to make decisions about their work is the heart of employee empowerment and the soul of employee engagement. Don't throttle them.

Fail to react to problems and issues that will soon fester if ignored. Managers have a habit of hoping that an uncomfortable issue, employee conflict or disagreement will just go away on its own if they don't provoke it or try to resolve it. Trust me. It won't. Issues, especially among people, just get worse unless something in the mix changes. Proactive intervention from the manager to coach and mentor, or to make sure employees have the skills necessary to resolve the issue, is imperative. Drama and hysteria do interrupt productivity, motivation, and employee engagement.

Trying to be friends with employees who report to you. You can develop warm and supportive relationships with employees who report to you. But, you will have difficulty separating the reporting relationship in a friendship. Friends gossip, go out together, and complain about work and the boss. There is no room for their manager in these kinds of relationships.

Fail to communicate effectively and withhold important information. The best communication is transparent communication. Sure, some information is company confidential. You may have been asked to keep certain information under wraps for awhile, but aside from these rare occasions, share what you know.

Being a member of the in-crowd is a goal for most employees and the in-crowd has information - all of the information needed to make good decisions. Ask for feedback, too. Ask people for their opinions, ideas, and continuous improvement suggestions, and if you fail to implement their suggestions, let them know why, or empower them to implement their ideas themselves.

Not treating all employees equally. You don't necessarily have to treat every employee the same, but they must feel as if they receive equal treatment. The perception that you have pet employees or that you play favorites will undermine your efforts to manage people. This goes hand-in-hand with why befriending reporting employees is a bad idea. Employees who are not in your inner circle will always believe that you favor the employees who are - whether you do or not. This perception destroys teamwork and undermines productivity and success.

Throw employees under the bus. Rather than taking responsibility for what goes wrong in the areas that you manage, blame particular employees when asked or confronted by executive leadership. When you know the responsibility is ultimately yours if you are the boss, why not act with dignity and protect your employees? When you blame employees, you look like an idiot and your employees will disrespect and hate you.

Trust me. They will find out and they will never trust you again. They'll always be waiting for the other shoe to fall. Worst? They'll tell all of their employee friends about what you did. Your other staff members will then distrust you, too. Your senior managers will not respect you either. They will question whether you are capable of doing the job and leading

the team. When you throw your employees under the bus, you jeopardize your career - not theirs. And, it won't remove one iota of the blame from your shoulders. - By Susan M. Heathfield, [About.com](#)

Experience of a Lab Products Award Winner

As the winner of the 2011 District 8 Lab Products, Inc. Travel Grant, I cannot convey how impressed I was by the experience. Just like many of you, I received an email saying that nominations for this award would be occurring in the upcoming weeks. One of the major requirements to be nominated was to have never attended an AALAS National Meeting in the past. I made a brief, passing comment to my co-workers and they must have listened! Nominations by my supervisor, coworkers and our department veterinarians were secretly submitted without my knowledge. A few weeks had passed and I was notified that I had won and was completely shocked! It was truly a group effort that helped me win this award and I cannot thank everyone enough for their kind words.

The 2011 AALAS National Meeting was held in beautiful San Diego, California and the weather could not be more perfect! The Lab Products Travel Grant Award covered airfare, hotel for 3 nights, and spending money for incidentals. The meeting was held at the San Diego Convention Center and it was packed with just under 5,000 participants. It was truly a great feeling to see so many people involved in animal research and the progress that is being made across the country.

During the national meeting you are able to take advantage of all the seminars and platform sessions that were being offered. There were over 110 presentations available and I often encountered many that overlapped, which made scheduling tricky, but there is definitely something for everyone. Many of the sessions I attended related to both my job and current research interests. The Poster Session, with more than 330 research posters on display, took hours to go

through. Another big event of the national meeting is the Product Show, which took place in the enormous exhibit hall with all the vendors. Multiple company representatives told me they got there a week in advance to set up their booths. Companies were showcasing the newest in innovation of autoclaves, cage washing equipment, animal caging, food and water systems, lab products, diagnostic services and so much more. Almost every vendor was giving away free stuff and you left with bags of goodies!

One of the evenings was set aside by Lab Products, Inc. and they held an awards ceremony for all the winners from each district. This was followed by a more intimate celebratory dinner and cocktails with the owner and executives of the company. It was a great feeling to be honored and to interact with the other winners and discuss their animal background and current job positions. It was an evening to remember!

I am completing my Master's degree this summer and this experience has inspired me to travel back and present my own research poster at this year's National AALAS Meeting in Minneapolis. I encourage anyone who has not had the opportunity to attend the National Meeting to apply and get the experience of a lifetime, I know I did! - Justin Towne, BS, RLATG, Research Technician, University Animal Care - Pathology Services, University of Arizona

Arizona AALAS Members Can Now Access the ALL to Prepare for Certification

The AALAS Learning Library (ALL) provides training that is essential for technicians, veterinarians, managers, IACUC members, and investigators working with animals in a research or education setting. Emphasizing the appropriate handling, care, and use of animals, the courses are designed to meet training mandates of regulatory agencies, improve knowledge in technical areas, and help technicians study for AALAS certification examinations. Launched in 2003, the

ALL has grown from 60 courses in 2003 to 157 courses today, with more added every year. The Animal Care and Use Library has courses on certification, regulatory mandates, bioethics, biomethodologies, biosafety, and management. The JAALAS CEU Test Library offers you the opportunity to earn continuing education units (CEUs) by taking the self-administered test based on the scientific articles in *Journal of the American Association of Laboratory Animal Science (JAALAS)* online.

Why use the ALL? You can access the training courses on your own schedule and set your own learning pace. It is available 24 hours a day and can be accessed from any computer with internet access, whether it is at work or at home (or at Starbuck's). You can also review courses as often as needed - repetition is a great learning tool! It also provides easy documentation of your learning on a transcript, either to meet work training requirements, for professional growth, or to document CEUs for the AALAS Technician Certification Registry.

It is up to you to decide what your career goals are and how you will meet those goals. The AALAS Learning Library can be one tool to help you meet those goals. Contact azaalas@ahsc.arizona.edu for access to the ALL through the Arizona Branch.

Zebrafish Shed Light on Human Melanoma

A transparent member of the minnow family is providing researchers at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City with insight into human melanoma — a form of skin cancer — that may lead to new or repurposed drug treatments, for skin and other cancers.

The experiments will be reported at the "Model Organisms to Human Biology: Cancer Genetics" Meeting, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., which is sponsored by the Genetics Society of America. The meeting brings together investigators who study cancer-relevant biology in model

organisms — such as fruit flies, yeast, fungi, worms and mice — with investigators studying human cancer. Each session includes both speakers from the model organism research community and those focusing on human cancer research.

Each year in the United States, 8,700 people die from malignant melanoma. Yariv Houvras, at Weill Cornell Medical College and Craig Ceol, at the Univ. of Massachusetts Medical School, along with their colleagues, discovered that a previously-identified human gene, SETDB1, accelerated the progression of cancer when a copy of the gene was inserted into the zebrafish genome. This led researchers to believe that this gene may have a similar effect in humans. In fish with the human SETDB1 gene, melanomas appear earlier and spread faster, which is easily seen through the transparent skin of the zebrafish.

Zebrafish are valuable models for people. Their generation time is three to four months, and each female lays hundreds of eggs every two to three days. In addition, researchers can easily manipulate its genes, many of which have human counterparts, and they can even see inside the developing embryos because they are transparent.

The researchers used the fish to probe a part of human chromosome 1 that is involved in melanoma. In humans, cancer gets underway when a sequence of genes mutate, including a key gene called BRAF. About 60 percent of human melanomas have a specific BRAF mutation, and a drug targeting mutant BRAF, Vemurafenib, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last year for the treatment of patients with metastatic melanoma. It's not unusual for cancers to have multiple genetic mutations, so the researchers reasoned that additional genes found in the amplified region on chromosome 1 could also drive melanoma.

And that's where the zebrafish came in. The researchers delivered SETDB1 into single-cell zebrafish embryos that already had BRAF mutations, and the resulting adult fish had the human gene in every melanocyte. They discovered that

SETDB1 is a master regulator, playing an important role in the regulation of many other genes and accelerating the cancer. SETDB1 acts by altering regions of the genome using a biochemical process called methylation, and in doing so prevents many genes from being turned on and making their appropriate protein products.

Methylation of chromatin is an epigenetic change — that is, it doesn't alter the underlying DNA sequence. SETDB1 acts by binding to DNA and changing the methylation pattern, which it does at several thousand places in the human genome, according to the studies performed by Dr. Houvras and colleagues.

"This is a very exciting area. Many new connections are being made between chromatin-modifying enzymes and cancer," Houvras explains. The FDA has already approved a drug that inhibits DNA methylation, Decitabine, for a blood disorder called myelodysplasia. "Within the next few years drugs that inhibit histone methylation will be tested in clinical trials. These drugs may target SETDB1 and other histone methyltransferases and help treat specific cancers that rely on these pathways," Houvras notes.

The zebrafish may be easy to work with, however this project was anything but. The researchers scaled up their experiments to follow several thousand fish for six months. They performed over 35,000 individual observations, Houvras says, as they watched fish develop melanomas individually.

The role of SETDB1 in the cancer isn't black-and-white. In humans it's highly expressed in 5 percent of normal melanocytes, in 15 percent of benign nevi, and in 70 percent of malignant melanomas. Moles that overexpress the gene may be more likely to progress to cancer, the researchers speculate — which could be very useful information, and all thanks to the zebrafish.

(Genetics Society of America, [ALN](#))

Social Media: Connecting with Your D8 Community

Did you know that National AALAS has a Blog, and is on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube? Did you know you could follow AALAS on Facebook and Twitter? Clearly, Social Media matters within the Laboratory Animal Science community.

When you look at a map of AALAS District 8, its geographical size makes it a daunting challenge for D8 members to establish and maintain those interpersonal connections – even within their own states!

As I write this, the 2012 D8 meeting is just around the corner. While continuing education is a vital component of such meetings, the importance of networking cannot be overlooked. Social Media gives us that opportunity to stay connected with our colleagues – no matter the distance between us.

I recently created AALAS D8 pages on Facebook and LinkedIn. If aren't already a member, I would encourage you to join us on the Social Media landscape! If you have any questions or concerns about Social Media, please don't hesitate to ask me: grukavina@mednet.ucla.edu

I hope to have seen many of you at the D8 meeting and to stay connected via Social Media! - Gene Rukavina, AALAS District 8 Trustee

District 8 Trustee Voting

I wanted to take a moment to remind and encourage all who are national members to vote for the open National AALAS positions this year of Vice President Elect, Secretary/Treasurer and District 8 Trustee.

I am running for my second term as your D8 Trustee and of course would be most appreciative of your vote. Please take the time to read the position statements/bio's for myself and the other candidate, my esteemed colleague Stephen Durkee. You should have received an e-mail with instructions/links on how to go about placing your vote. If you did not

receive this e-mail you can contact the National Office for advice.

Your vote, and the vote of your branch members, is very important so please **be sure to select your candidates before June 30th**. - Kindest Regards, Morag Mackay, District 8 Trustee, Phone: (858) 752-6571, morag@liai.org

Mosquitoes Incapable of Transmitting Malaria Created

Mosquitoes bred to be unable to infect people with the malaria parasite are an attractive approach to helping curb one of the world's most pressing public health issues, according to UC Irvine scientists.

Anthony James and colleagues from UCI and the Pasteur Institute in Paris have produced a model of the *Anopheles stephensi* mosquito — a major source of malaria in India and the Middle East — that impairs the development of the malaria parasite. These mosquitoes, in turn, cannot transmit the disease through their bites.

"Our group has made significant advances with the creation of transgenic mosquitoes," says James, a UCI Distinguished Professor of microbiology & molecular genetics and molecular biology & biochemistry. "But this is the first model of a malaria vector with a genetic modification that can potentially exist in wild populations and be transferred through generations without affecting their fitness."

More than 40 percent of the world's population lives in areas where there is a risk of contracting malaria. According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 300 million to 500 million cases of malaria occur each year, and nearly 1 million people die of the disease annually — largely infants, young children and pregnant women, most of them in Africa.

James says one advantage of his group's method is that it can be applied to the dozens of different mosquito types that harbor and transmit the *Plasmodium falciparum* parasite, including those in Africa. Study results appear in the early online version of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The researchers conceived their approach through mouse studies. Mice infected with the human form of malaria create antibodies that kill the parasite. James' team exploited the molecular components of this mouse immune-system response and engineered genes that could produce the same response in mosquitoes. In their model, antibodies are released in genetically modified mosquitoes that render the parasite harmless to others.

"We see a complete deletion of the infectious version of the malaria parasite," says James, a member of the National Academy of Sciences. "This blocking process within the insect that carries malaria can help significantly reduce human sickness and death."

He and his colleagues have pioneered the creation of genetically altered mosquitoes that limit the transmission of dengue fever, malaria and other vector-borne illnesses.

Alison Isaacs, Nijole Jasinskiene and Mikhail Tretiakov of UCI and Isabelle Thiery, Agnes Zettor and Catherine Bourgoignie of the Pasteur Institute contributed to the study.

(Univ. of California, Irvine, [ALN](http://alumni.ucirvine.edu))

National AALAS Website Member Survey Launched

AALAS is initiating a major redesign of its website. Our goal is to provide you with a more valuable and user-friendly experience. We would like to know your opinions of the current AALAS website and what you would like to see as we plan the new site. Please take advantage of this opportunity to help us design a better website for you and the rest of our members by responding to the emailed survey. Thank you!

Arizona AALAS is continually striving to meet the needs of our members in communication. If you have any ideas or suggestions on how we can improve what we provide, email us at azaalas@ahsc.arizona.edu. We love hearing from you!

Sponsor's Pages

Your handy reference page of our supporting vendors

We ask that members patronize their business and show them our support too!



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