



Division of Liver and Pancreas Transplantation

Quarterly Newsletter | January 1, 2021 - March 31, 2021

CHIEF'S UPDATE

Welcome to the Spring Quarter Newsletter. As I reflect on our programs and clinical, research, and educational activities, I cannot help but think of the long-standing quote from Alexander Pope in 1732 – “Hope springs eternal.” To me, this is appropriate for our current climate. I have hope that the pandemic is finally winding down, hope that vaccines will reach millions, hope for a more fair and just country, and hope that comes with the spring season each year. I also hope that each of you remain healthy and safe.

On the more local level, our programs continue their strong performances with high numbers of encounters, surgical interventions, and excellent outcomes. Much of this relates to the strength of our faculty and staff and their dedication to our patients. These professionals work tirelessly and many times without accolades to ensure safe and successful treatments. Every day they instill hope in patients and families when treating their diseases and cancers. I thank them for their ongoing efforts and look forward to this new spring.

I also want to acknowledge the dual 37th anniversaries for our Adult Liver Transplant Program which took place on February 1st, 2021 and our Pediatric Liver Transplant Program on March 20th, 2021. Both represent tremendous milestones in the history of transplantation here at UCLA Health. Unfortunately, the pandemic precluded any formal celebration, but I hope next year we can get together in person for these occasions.

This edition of our newsletter will focus on our medical hepatology program and keep you updated on the ongoing educational forums within our programs. We profile the Chief of Hepatology, Dr. Sammy Saab, who has been at UCLA since 2000. The cover photo depicts the medical hepatology team from left to right: Mohamed El Kabany, MD; Jihane Benhammou, MD; Gina Choi, MD; Sammy Saab, MD; Steve Han, MD; Sherona Bau, NP; and Valerie Shin NP. Together, these professionals bring decades of experience in medical hepatology to our

patients with liver diseases.

Also noted in this newsletter are the dates and times of our monthly educational meetings. We are pleased to announce the 14th Annual UCLA Liver Diseases Symposium which has been our signature and established educational event focusing on various topics in adult liver diseases. Our newest conference, the Solid Organ Transplant Symposium, was started in 2019 and was extremely well-received. It focuses on many hot topics in heart, lung, liver, intestine and pancreas transplantation. It was not held last year due to the pandemic and is back in a virtual format this June.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and feel free to reach out with any questions or feedback.

Douglas G. Farmer, MD
Professor of Surgery
Interim Chief, Division of Liver and Pancreas Transplantation

Personnel Profile

Sammy Saab, MD, MPH, FACG, AGAF, FAASLD



Sammy Saab, MD, MPH is a Professor in the Departments of Medicine and Surgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA (University of California Los Angeles) and an Adjunct Professor of Nursing at the UCLA School of Nursing. He is currently the Medical Director of the UCLA Adult Liver Transplant Program, Medical Director of the Pflieger Liver Institute, and the Chief of Transplant Hepatology. Dr Saab is also the Head of Outcomes Research in Hepatology. He has been on the faculty at UCLA for over two decades.

Dr. Saab received his BS, MD, and MPH degrees from UCLA. He completed his residency in internal medicine at the University of California at San Diego Medical Center and a fellowship in gastroenterology/hepatology at the UCLA Center for Health Sciences. Dr. Saab is board certified in gastroenterology and transplant hepatology. He has received honorary fellowships from the American Gastroenterology Association (AGAF), American College of Gastroenterology (FACG) and the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (FAASLD).

Dr. Saab serves on many local, national, and international committees. He is on Board of Directors for several liver-oriented foundations such as the American Liver Foundation, Liver Wellness Foundation and the Chronic Liver Disease Foundation. Dr. Saab has been an investigator in multiple clinical trials and is a frequently invited speaker worldwide. Dr. Saab originated and leads a popular annual patient education seminar and is co-chair of the Annual UCLA Liver Diseases Symposium for health care professionals. He has mentored countless college and medical students, as well as medical residents and fellows in gastroenterology.

Dr. Saab has published more than 350 peer-reviewed manuscripts. He has authored numerous book chapters, editorials, and abstracts. On the editorial board of over a dozen journals, Dr Saab is the associate editor for the *Journal of Clinical Gastroenterology*, *Digestive Medicine Research (DMR)*, and *Journal of Clinical and Translational Hepatology*.

Milestones and Accolades

- **Jerzy Kupiec Weglinski, MD** received a 20% increase in funding through the NIH-NIDDK, securing 5-year funding at almost \$300,000 per year in direct costs.

Divisional Events

Divisional Grand Rounds

Our Divisional Grand Rounds feature subjects of interest relevant to hepatology, transplantation, and hepatobiliary cancer. The format consists of formal 45-minute lectures led by renowned speakers followed by a Q&A on the selected topic.

The events will be held via Zoom and meeting details are provided upon registration. To sign up, please email vyavila@mednet.ucla.edu or ssaab@mednet.ucla.edu

Past Grand Rounds

- February 2, 2021: “To Tweet or Not to Tweet: The Viral Power of Twitter to Engage in Healthcare” presented by Ravina Kullar, PharmD, MPH
- March 2, 2021: “Liver Diseases and Transplants in Pregnancy: When our Paths Cross” presented by Christina Han, MD
- April 6, 2021: “Contemporary Locoregional Therapy for Hepatocellular Carcinoma” presented by Sid Padia, MD

Upcoming Grand Rounds

- May 4, 2021: Infectious Disease Presentations by Omer Beaird, MD and Joanna Schaeffer, MD

UCLA Liver Hour Series

Our Liver Hour Series are discussions focused on clinically relevant and controversial topics related to hepatology, hepatobiliary, and transplant surgery. The format includes a short, formal presentation followed by an interactive dialogue.

The events will be held via Zoom and meeting details are provided upon registration. To sign up, please email vyavila@mednet.ucla.edu or ssaab@mednet.ucla.edu

Past Liver Hours

- January 7, 2021: “Treatment of refractory Hepatic Encephalopathy”
- February 4, 2021: “Primary Biliary Cholangitis”
- March 4, 2021: “Liver Disease Care during COVID-19 and the new COVID-19 protocol”
- April 1, 2021: “Alcohol Hepatitis (Treatment)” presented by Beshoy Yanny, MD, Sammy Saab, MD, MPH, and Fady Kaldas, MD

Upcoming Liver Hour Topics

- May 6, 2021 @12PM: “Acute Liver Failure” presented by Fady Kaldas, MD and Sammy Saab, MD, MPH

14th Annual UCLA Liver Diseases Symposium

April 24, 2021 (8:30am - 12:30pm)

The UCLA Liver Diseases Symposium will provide a state-of-the-art update and scientific exchange on prevalent liver diseases and their complications using a multi-disciplinary approach with hepatologists and surgeons. We hope you will be able to join us virtually in April! Please reach out to the UCLA CME Office at UCLACME@mednet.ucla.edu for any questions.

[Register Here!](#)

2nd Annual UCLA Solid Organ Transplant Symposium

June 18, 2021 (7:50am - 2:00pm)

The UCLA Solid Organ Transplant Symposium is a virtual conference coordinated through UCLA Health Department of Transplant Services; the UCLA Office of Continuing Medical Education and the UCLA Transplant Multi-Disciplinary teams. We hope you will be able to join us virtually in June!

[Registration Now Open!](#)



Program Highlights

[Learn More Here](#)

ADULT LIVER TRANSPLANT

Phone 310-825-8138

Email adultlivertransplant@mednet.ucla.edu

Web www.uclahealth.org/transplants/liver

PEDIATRIC LIVER TRANSPLANT

Call 310-825-8138

Email pedsLivertransplant@mednet.ucla.edu

Web

www.uclahealth.org/transplants/liver/pediatric-transplant

PANCREAS/ISLET TRANSPLANT

Call 310-825-8138

Email pancreastransplant@mednet.ucla.edu

Web www.uclahealth.org/transplants/pancreas

LIVING DONOR LIVER TRANSPLANT PROGRAM

Call 310-825-8138

Email livingdonor@mednet.ucla.edu

Web

<https://www.uclahealth.org/transplants/liver/living-donor-transplant>

INTESTINAL TRANSPLANT

Call 310-825-8138

Email intestinetransplant@mednet.ucla.edu

Web www.uclahealth.org/transplants/intestinal

LIVER CANCER CENTER

Call 310-825-1412

Email livercancercenter@mednet.ucla.edu

Web <http://surgery.ucla.edu/liver-cancer>

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[Contact Us](#)